

# **Mary and the Holy Spirit - A Comparison of the Writings of Frank Duff and St. Maximilian Kolbe**

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Published in Queen magazine in 1986

The Immaculata is someone so sublime, so close to the Most Holy Trinity that one of the Holy Fathers did not hesitate to call Her the Complement of the Most Holy Trinity. (St. Maximilian Kolbe).<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the two greatest Marian apostles of the twentieth century are St. Maximilian Kolbe and Frank Duff. Their Mariological writings and conferences are numerous, and both authors feature the proper and exalted place which Mary holds in the plan of Redemption and Salvation. As far as we know, Frank Duff and Fr. Kolbe never met, and yet their Marian teachings are almost identical. One reason for this is that they were influenced by similar authors, especially St. Louis Marie de Montfort. Though their emphases of Our Lady's role may vary, their Mariological doctrines do not differ on any major point. For example, most of Fr. Kolbe's writings on the Blessed Virgin deal primarily with the Immaculate Conception, while those of Frank Duff emphasize Mary's role in Redemption, her mediation of graces and spiritual motherhood. But both authors offer distinctive emphasis on Mary's relationship with the Holy Spirit. Both Duff and Kolbe hold that we cannot have a proper knowledge of Our Lady without an appreciation of her unique relationship to the Holy Spirit. More than any other authors of the twentieth century, Duff and Kolbe attempt to define and explain Mary's intimate union with the Third Divine Person.

The purpose of this essay is to document the remarkable similarity of theological approach and deduction found in the works of these two men on certain Marian themes. Their statements on these major mysteries of Mary will be reviewed, in the light of their vision of the relationship between her and the Spirit.

## **PREDESTINATION**

The Church teaches that from all eternity God foresaw the Fall of Adam and Eve and had in His mind a plan to redeem man. God willed that the Second Divine Person of the Trinity would take flesh, and He knew of a woman He would create to be the mother of His Son. This woman would be named Mary, and she would have a vital role in the Redemption of mankind. Both Duff and Kolbe build their Marian teachings on this point. Frank Duff writes:

From the Beginning and before the World she was in the mind of God. God Himself it was Who first began to tell of her and to sketch out for her a destiny unquestionably unique. For all that greatness of hers had a beginning very far back. It began before the constitution of the world. From the first, the idea of Mary was present to the Eternal Father along with that of the Redeemer, of whose destiny she formed party.<sup>2</sup>

Fr. Kolbe said the same thing when in 1940 he wrote:

Among the innumerable possible beings that could express His different perfections, God from all eternity saw one endowed with perfect form, immaculate, with no slightest taint of sin, a creature that would reflect His own divine qualities in the most perfect degree possible for a created nature. He rejoiced in this vision, and from all eternity decided that in due time He would call such a creature into existence.<sup>3</sup>

Mary, then, would be associated with the intimacies of the Divine plan of grace and Redemption, while at the same time being an immaculate creature never deviating from God's Will or offending Him through sin.<sup>4</sup>

Frank Duff and Fr. Kolbe both hold that Mary was the Woman referred to in Genesis where it was written, "I will set enmities between thee and the Woman, between thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. 3, 15). Frank Duff referred to this statement as "the first prophecy of Redemption," where "the future Redemption [is] summarized by God Himself."<sup>5</sup> About this same sentence Maximilian Kolbe wrote:

It was then [after the Fall] that God in His mercy promised humanity a Redeemer, while He predicted to the devil that his conquest of Eve, the Mother of the future woman who had been foretold, would not change His divine plan. She would still "crush his head," even though Satan would Lie in wait for her heel without respite. <sup>6</sup>

### **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION; FIAT. DIVINE MATERNITY**

Mary, eternally in the mind of God and destined to become the mother of the Second Divine Person, nevertheless retained her free will to such an extent that the Redemption of mankind depended upon her consent. This is one aspect of Our Lady's role which Frank Duff emphasizes more than Fr. Kolbe. According to Duff, Mary belongs to the inner core of salvation, since she initiated the whole process of restoration through her cooperation and free acceptance of the Angel's message. "The fact is the startling one that it was the pleasure of the Holy Trinity to make Redemption depend on the will of a creature, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was to will Redemption; otherwise it would not be wrought."<sup>7</sup> For many outside the Church this is a hard saying, but Duff held it must be understood in order to realize the role which Mary played in Redemption. "The Incarnation would be entrusted to her decision and then to her charge.... If she

refused, the Redemption would not take place. This is a thought staggering to confront."<sup>8</sup>

Because Mary consented to the will of God, she became the Mother of God. The title "Mother of God" is the greatest of all Mary's titles; and it is from the Divine Maternity that "all the graces bestowed upon the most Holy Virgin Mary" flow, as Fr. Kolbe states.<sup>9</sup> The all pure God truly became man in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. It would be against right reason to hold that God, Who is Purity Itself, could take flesh from a creature who was stained or even touched by sin. Furthermore, since God could create His mother to be any way He wanted, why would he not make her the holiest and most pure creature imaginable, a "masterpiece of His hands"?<sup>10</sup> Kolbe believes that "Mary was immaculate because she was to become the Mother of God."<sup>11</sup> The Immaculate Conception of Our Lady would be the necessary prelude to her Divine Maternity. The Church teaches that from the first moment of her conception Mary was preserved from the slightest taint of original sin. Kolbe builds most of his Mariology on this defined dogma of the Faith and from that he expounds his most important study: Mary's relationship with the Holy Spirit.

According to Fr. Kolbe, the Immaculate Conception is not only the privilege in which Mary is preserved from original sin, but the act in which the Holy Spirit unites Himself to Mary.<sup>12</sup> "The Holy Spirit dwells in the Immaculata, lives in her, and does so from the first instant of her existence, and thenceforth forever." Frank Duff had this to say about the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady:

For she was the first absolutely sinless creature who had ever lived. She was the being of all beings most dear to God. She was the Immaculate Conception. All that He could give to her, He gave. All that she could receive, she received. She was perfectly united to Him; she was, as the Angel's message said, Filled with the Holy Ghost."<sup>14</sup> In many of his writings Fr. Kolbe examines Mary's name as the "Immaculate Conception." At Lourdes, Mary replied to St. Bernadette who asked her who she was, by saying: "I am the Immaculate Conception." Fr. Kolbe teaches that not only does this title tell us that Mary was immaculate in her conception, but that she actually is the Immaculate Conception <sup>15</sup>: The Immaculata in her apparitions at Lourdes did not say: 'I am the woman who was immaculately conceived' but 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' With these words she set down not only the fact of the Immaculate Conception but also the manner in which this privilege is hers. She is Immaculate Conception itself; therefore it is not some kind of quality she has, but something that pertains to her nature.<sup>16</sup>

The Immaculate Conception, then, belongs to her very essence: she is "Immaculateness itself."<sup>17</sup> However, Fr. Kolbe explains that this does not mean that Mary is eternal or that she is the cause of her own essence. He says that "the word 'conception' tells us that she was not eternal, that she had a beginning."<sup>18</sup> It is God alone who can say "I am the One Who is." Kolbe uses the example "something white is one thing; the whiteness of a thing is something

else. Something perfect is one thing; the perfection of a thing is something else. [When God spoke to Moses, He was telling him]: 'What is proper to my essence is that I should always be, by My very nature, of Myself, with no other principle of being.'"<sup>19</sup> Mary was created by God in time, and yet she can say in truth that she is the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Kolbe makes the distinction between Mary, who is the human Immaculate Conception, and the Holy Spirit, Whom he calls "the eternal and uncreated Immaculate Conception:" This Eternal Immaculate Conception (the Holy Spirit) immaculately conceives the divine life in the womb [or depths] of Mary's soul, [making her the human] Immaculate Conception. Even the virginal womb of Mary's body is reserved to him, that in it he might conceive in time - just as all material things come to being in time - the divine life, too of the God-man.<sup>20</sup> Fr. Kolbe describes the Holy Spirit as the "fruit of the love of the Father and the Son," The infinitely holy and Immaculate Conceptions and The uncreated, eternal Conception,"<sup>21</sup> Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. As the human Immaculate Conception, Mary falls into a unique and intimate relation to the Holy Spirit, the uncreated Immaculate Conception.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE ETERNAL CONCEPTION**

However, as a title of the Holy Spirit, "uncreated Immaculate Conceptions has no basis in tradition, so it is important to see exactly what Fr. Kolbe means by it. The best exposition of this idea is found in Fr. Piacentini's book. It seems that Fr. Kolbe derives this title primarily from the Spirit's mode of procession within the Trinity, rather than from His role ad extra in the Incarnation. Fr. Piacentini writes that Kolbe draws the following conclusions: Conception is precisely conception by parents, namely, the result of the action of parents, the fruit of their love. If a conception, i.e. the result, the fruit of created love, exists on the creatureal plane, it also exists in God by force of the metaphysical analogy of attribution.... Kolbe concludes his reasoning with a daring statement, one not found in any of the traditional theological dictionaries; he says that the fruit of the love of the Father and the Son the fruit of their uncreated love is a "Conception." While conception or conceptions are creatures, namely the end-products of the created love of parents, in God the Conception is uncreated, eternal, holy and immaculate, the fruit of the eternal love of the Father and the son.<sup>22</sup>

Fr. Kolbe understands that the words used for created things "do not describe the divine perfections except in an imperfect, finite and analogical way."<sup>23</sup> Furthermore he writes: The words taken from the vocabulary of creatures are necessary because we have no others, even if we must always remember that they are very imperfect words. Who is the Father? What constitutes his being? (He is) Generation which begets the Son from eternity; he always begets the Son. Who is the Son? The Begotten, Who is forever begotten of the Father. And Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the fruit of the love of the Father and the Son. The fruit of created love is a created conception. But the fruit of the love that is the prototype of created love, (likewise) is none other than a

Conception. The Spirit is therefore the uncreated, eternal Conception which is the prototype of every conception of life in the universe.<sup>24</sup>

In trying to analyze these thoughts, Fr. Piacentini admits that we stand on "delicate ground." Most of Fr. Kolbe's ideas were written down as incomplete notes which were never fully extended or clarified. Fr. Piacentini states that Kolbe built his assertions upon the principle of the metaphysical analogy of attribution and did "nothing else than transfer to God the concept of human conception, in the same way that we transfer to God the concept of human generation. Father Kolbe, accepting the traditional term of 'generation' for the procession of the Second person of the Blessed Trinity from the Father, calls the second procession, the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, 'Conception.'"<sup>25</sup> Piacentini then explains what the theological implications of this term are when applied to the Holy Spirit:

The problem can be stated as follows: granted that the first divine procession in trinitarian terminology is called "conceptus" (from the Latin meaning of conceptus mantis) or conceptio, (namely the intellectual Word, the intellectual image of the Father), how will the term "conception" be attributed to the second divine procession? Father Kolbe answers that it is applicable only in so far as the term "conception", does not have the same meaning when predicated of the two divine processions. When it refers to the first, we mean only the procession according to the intellect, in that the Second Person of the Trinity is the image-conception of the mind of the Father, namely the intellectual Word of the mind of the Father, his intellectual image. When Conception refers to the Third Person, it must mean the procession according to the will, in that the Holy Spirit can be called the fruit, the result, the end-product of the love of the Father and the Son.<sup>26</sup>

Fr. Piacentini concludes his section on the Spirit as the uncreated Immaculate Conception by saying that, in the framework of orthodoxy, Fr. Kolbe's doctrine "constitutes a real contribution to the theology of the Holy Spirit."<sup>27</sup> Lastly Piacentini remarks:

It is the opinion of some theologians that there is no term which expresses or reproduces the hypostatic and personal properties of the second divine procession in a way perfectly parallel to that of "generation," the term used to denote the hypostatic and personal properties of the first divine procession. Truly, the term "conception" opens the door to many applications because it expresses adequately the hypostatic properties of the second procession.<sup>28</sup>

## **FULLNESS OF GRACE**

Both Duff and Kolbe state that nothing in the realm of grace is lacking in the Blessed Virgin; every grace she could have received, she has received. The Church teaches that the Holy Spirit dwells in the souls of those who are in the

state of grace. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the souls of the just, how much more intimately must He dwell in Our Lady, who is the most perfect and holiest of God's creatures. Fr. Kolbe says that "He must dwell in the most perfect manner possible in the soul of the Immaculata."<sup>29</sup> That "most perfect manner" is no less than a union of the Holy Spirit and Mary.

## **UNION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Fr. Kolbe explains that their union is above all an interior union, "a union of her essence with the 'essence' of the Holy Spirit."<sup>30</sup> A difficulty arises here concerning the term "essence," for if the Holy Spirit truly had a union of essence with Mary it would mean that the Holy Spirit would not be what He is, if He were not united with her. But, because Fr. Kolbe put the word essence in quotation marks, and because of his established orthodoxy, we can assume that he didn't mean this to be taken in the strict sense. Frank Duff writes, what the Holy Spirit has been pleased to do has been to establish between Himself and Mary a union so profound as to stop only at identity," hence the union is not hypostatic.<sup>31</sup> This union, however, does not remove Mary from the human condition, hence it is not a commingling of natures:

At the moment of the Incarnation the Blessed Virgin was associated to the generation of the Eternal Son and thereby was brought into a permanent state of union with the Third Divine Person which was the most intense that could be established without removing her from the human condition. It involved a participation by the one in the action of the other. They would work together in a sort of identity.<sup>32</sup>

Here, Duff says that in the Incarnation, there was "a participation by the one in the action of the other." We shall see later that what Duff means by the word "action" is not mere "instrumentality," but a sort of inter-participation. Thus in the Incarnation, and also in the distribution of grace, Mary is not merely an instrument of the Holy Spirit but a real conscious co-operator.

Frank Duff holds that it is by Mary's association with the Son's Incarnation that she is united to the Spirit. Mary and the Holy Spirit together bring forth Christ and, as will be shown later, she remains united to Him from that time onward.

Through her Immaculate Conception and through her active participation in the Incarnation, "Mary has been so taken up into the Holy Ghost made one with Him, animated by Him, that He is as her very soul."<sup>33</sup>

For this reason, Frank Duff refers to Marian titles such as "sanctuary" or "temple of the Holy Spirit" as inadequate expressions of their union. He holds that the Holy Spirit has "so united her to Himself as to make her the next thing in dignity to Himself."<sup>34</sup>

Both Duff and Kolbe explicitly state, however, that even though there is an intense union between the Holy Spirit and Mary, Mary is not the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Frank Duff says, "through Mary the Third Person of the Holy Trinity makes a presentation of Himself to us analogous to that which the Second Divine Person offers through Jesus Christ."<sup>35</sup> This comparison is only an analogous one he says, because "Jesus is the Second Divine Person, whereas Mary is not the Holy Spirit."<sup>36</sup> And so it is clear that the Sacred Humanity of Jesus possesses a higher union with the Second Divine Person than Mary does with the Third Divine Person. Regarding this point, Frank Duff wrote:

"From the moment when the Second Divine Person became incarnate, He was one with Jesus and does not now exist otherwise. Jesus is the Second Divine Person. Therefore He must render in a human way the very appearance of God the Son whom we will see in Heaven."<sup>37</sup>

He continued:

"In the case of Jesus there will be no question of distinguishing Him [in Heaven] from the Second Divine Person Whom He is, but only of seeing the divine essence. But the Holy Spirit and Mary, however like they may be to each other, are two different Persons, the one divine the other human.<sup>38</sup> [Note: the word 'Whom' appears in the original text.]"

Duff and Kolbe agree totally on this point. In fact, many of their statements are almost identical. Fr. Kolbe uses an interesting phrase, calling Mary the "quasi incarnation" of the Holy Spirit: "Filius incarnates est.: Jesus Christus. Spiritus Sanctus quasi incarnates est: Immaculata."<sup>39</sup> But in other passages he makes certain that no one could misinterpret his teachings:

"The Holy Spirit is in Mary after the fashion, one might say, in which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word, is in his humanity. There is, of course, this difference: in Jesus there are two natures, divine and human, but one single person Who is God. Mary's nature and person are totally distinct from the nature and person of the Holy Spirit."<sup>40</sup>

It is evident from the quotations given above that both St. Maximilian Kolbe and Frank Duff uphold orthodox Catholic teaching. Neither would lift Mary out of the human condition or confuse her person with that of the Holy Spirit. Frank Duff, for example, defends the position that, because of the manner in which Redemption would be brought about, Mary's part would have to remain a purely human one:

"The Holy Spirit stopped short of becoming incarnate in her. He left her in all respects a human personality, a pure creature. Her role in the Incarnation and Redemption was to be a completely human one. This was necessary according

to God's conception of that great drama.... It is the essential principle of the Redemption that Mary's part was human: She was to act on behalf of all mankind."<sup>41</sup>

## **IMAGE OF THE SPIRIT**

Another aspect of Our Lady's relationship to the Holy Spirit found in the work of Frank Duff is that Mary is the most perfect image of the Holy Spirit. He writes, "It is the teaching of the Church that she has been brought to the very borders of the infinite. From this we can go on to say that she furnishes the most complete human expression of Him."<sup>42</sup> The Blessed Virgin reflects the Holy Spirit to the fullest extent humanly possible. She was made "like to the Holy Spirit" as far as a creature could be, without becoming Divine.<sup>43</sup> She affords in a human way a comprehensive portrait of Him, but one which lives and which takes in the inner virtue as well as the outer appearance."<sup>44</sup> Her Immaculate Conception was Mary's spiritual birth into likeness with the Third Divine Person. The Holy Spirit would form Mary into His own image and likeness. Like any progenitor He would imprint His appearance on her, and this would be accentuated by her subsequent growth in grace "which was to make her a worthy mother of Jesus and a fit cooperator of the Holy Spirit Himself."<sup>45</sup> He reveals Himself through her to such a degree that in her we almost see Him.<sup>46</sup> Frank Duff underlined this point more fully in his book *Woman of Genesis*:

"If that Holy Spirit proposes to make a human showing of Himself to us, He would have to choose not mere pictorial or artistic symbols but a person. And that person would need to be at the very height of the human scale. There would have to be a reasonable suitability or compatibility between Himself and that medium whom He would thus choose to mirror Him. As the Second Divine Person did not disdain to use the humanity of Jesus Christ and the womb of Mary for His intervention in human affairs, so there would be no incongruity in the Holy Spirit making a somewhat similar use of an exalted human being like the Blessed Virgin."<sup>47</sup>

It should be stated here that assimilation to the Holy Spirit is the very definition of sanctity, precisely holiness. So, to some extent, the Spirit "makes a human showing" in every one of the saints. Both Duff and Kolbe believe that Mary is the "greatest of the saints" and yet they bring out the deeper, pneumatological aspect of that same truth.

Duff continues his point by saying that the images which we presently have for the Holy Spirit are not fully adequate:

"While such images as the dove or the tongues of fire are presented to us as symbols of the Holy Spirit, it could not be said that they resemble Him. On the other hand the Holy Spirit in establishing such an inexpressible union with Mary is necessarily making a real revelation of Himself through her."<sup>48</sup>



Mary is seen as mirroring for us the Third Person of the Trinity in somewhat the same way that Jesus mirrors the Second Person, but the difference is this: Jesus is the Second Divine Person, whereas Mary is not the Holy Spirit. She displays to us a likeness to the Holy Spirit which is analogous to the likeness of Jesus Christ to the Second Divine Person.<sup>49</sup>

## **ORTHODOX PRECAUTIONS**

Some critics of Duff or Kolbe might say that they have an exaggerated notion of Our Lady's relationship with the Blessed Trinity, that they elevate Mary out of the realm of creaturehood. But this is a thoroughly ungrounded claim if one reads and studies them objectively. For both state time and again that Mary is a creature of God and that compared to Him she is as nothing. For example, Frank Duff says "We believe that He is God and that she is a creature, and that infinity yawns between."<sup>50</sup> He also writes:

"But what is the place of Mary herself in relation to God? It is that He brought her as He did all the other children of earth, out of nothing; and though He has since then exalted her to a point of grace immense and inconceivable, nevertheless, in comparison to her Maker, she still remains as nothing."<sup>51</sup>

It has been stated earlier that in many sections of their writings Frank Duff and Fr. Kolbe use almost identical words and expressions. This discussion of Mary's creaturehood is one such example. In a conference given in April of 1938, Fr. Kolbe stated:

"Every creature, and everything in creation, comes into existence through God's creation. God alone exists of Himself. Everything else receives its being, moment by moment, from God; this is true even of Jesus' humanity. Our Lady also is a creature made by God. In this sense, and of herself, she is nothing. Everything she possesses was given to her by God."<sup>52</sup>

It is evident, therefore, that neither of the two authors contradict Church teachings about the Blessed Virgin. Mary is a creature, she is redeemed by Christ and her role in Redemption is less than His: "It is true that she is redeemed by her Son like every one of us is, and it is true that she is completely dependent on Him."<sup>53</sup> Frank Duff also writes that Mary's part in Redemption was not equal to Christ's, since He is God and she a creature. But, such as her part was, God willed that she play a necessary role in the Redemption. He chose to use her, and would not have come to earth without her free consent and co-operation. Both authors believe that Mary was redeemed by Christ-the one creature, in fact, who was most redeemed. She is created and formed into the most perfect of them through the merits of Christ. Even her Immaculate Conception was the application of the future merits which would be won by Christ. Fr. Kolbe calls Mary the most perfect of God's creatures: "True the

Immaculata is made by God; and like any other work of God she is incomparably inferior to him because she depends on him completely. But she is the holiest, most perfect of creatures."<sup>54</sup> She is the Mother of God and yet at the same time receives all she has from God. Fr. Kolbe expounded on the subject of Mary's perfection in a conference he gave in 1936 when he said:

"The creature most completely filled with this love, filled with God himself, is the Immaculata, who never contracted the slightest stain of sin, who never departed in the least from God's will. United to the Holy Spirit as his Spouse, in an ineffable manner, she is one with God in an incomparably more perfect way than can be predicated of any other creature."<sup>55</sup>

### **MAXIMUM OF CREATURELY PERFECTION; BORDER OF THE DIVINE**

Mary, because she is filled with Divine life, is the epitome of creation. She is spoken of by Fr. Kolbe as the place where heaven and earth meet. Through her intense union with the Holy Spirit there is more than just the love of two beings. In the Holy Spirit there is all the love of the Trinity itself, and in Mary, the love of all creation. In Mary is found the converging of the fullness of Divine Love with the plenitude of created love.<sup>56</sup> The expression which both Duff and Kolbe use in describing what God has done for Mary, is that He has taken her to the very borders of the infinite. Again their choice of words nearly coincide. Maximilian Kolbe: "All that is created is finite and develops more and more with time, but she, the Immaculata, touches upon infinity."<sup>57</sup> Frank Duff:

"She is of course very far above us. She is the Immaculate Conception. This means that she has a life in her which is definitely beyond human realizing. It is something which has carried her to the very borders of the divine."<sup>58</sup>

And Kolbe again:

"We must acknowledge, that in his creative omnipotence God made the Immaculata all holy. As a creature she is close to us; as Mother of God she touches divinity itself."<sup>59</sup>

Mary as a fellow creature is close to us and yet through her Immaculate Conception and her subsequent growth in grace has been placed above the Angels and set at the very borders of the infinite. This same concept is brought out another way when the two authors say that Mary has been immersed in the Godhead. According to Fr. Kolbe the Immaculate Virgin has been raised above all other creatures and "shares in the divinity in an unspeakable manner."<sup>60</sup> Frank Duff says that though Mary was not divine, she was immersed in the Godhead to the maximum degree to which that would be possible while still leaving her a creature

## FROM THE DIVINE MATERNITY TO MEDIATION OF GRACE

Mary's sublime role in the Redemption of mankind did not end after she gave birth to Jesus Christ. Mary was chosen to play a necessary part in the Incarnation of the Word, and God would not disregard her after she had cooperated so fully. He would make her as necessary in distributing the fruits of the Redemption as He had in bringing the Redeemer into the world. Large sections of Frank Duff and Fr. Kolbe deal with Mary's mediation of graces. Frank Duff writes that this mediation of Mary began before the constitution of the world in the mind of the Blessed Trinity.<sup>62</sup> God destined that the Virgin would be given the treasury of grace to distribute. Maximilian Kolbe says that the truth of Mary's mediation is a consequence of the dogma of her Immaculate Conception.<sup>63</sup> Even though the Church has not yet formally declared Mary's mediation of graces a dogma of the Faith, numerous popes and saints have appropriated that title to her, Maximilian Kolbe among them. He holds that from Mary's Immaculate Conception and her relation to the Holy Spirit we can reason to Mary's mediation of graces. He shows this by first explaining how everything natural and supernatural comes to us from God:

St. Maximilian Kolbe holds that from Mary's Immaculate Conception and her relation to the Holy Spirit we can reason to Mary's mediation of graces. He shows this by first explaining how everything natural and supernatural comes to us from God:

"And just as everything in the natural and in the supernatural orders comes down from the Father through the Son and the Spirit upon creatures, so, in like manner, all creatures go back to the Father by the Spirit and by the Son.<sup>64</sup>

Fr. Kolbe also states that God the Father is the First Principle and the Last End, and that every action proceeds from the Father through the Son, by the working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>65</sup> Of course it must be remembered that the acts of the Trinity are common to all three Divine Persons, but through appropriation we attribute various operations to the different Persons. This is what Fr. Kolbe means when he speaks of action proceeding from the Father through the Son and by the Holy Spirit, going on to say that the inversion proceeds from the creature, through the Holy Spirit and through Christ, back to the Father.<sup>66</sup> Because of Mary's intense union with the Holy Spirit, Kolbe then identifies Mary's role with that of the Holy Spirit, placing Mary in the position of Mediatrix:

"When we reflect on these two truths: that all graces come from the Father, by the Son and the Holy Spirit; and that our holy Mother Mary is, so to speak, one with the Holy Spirit, we are driven to the conclusion that this Most Holy Mother is indeed the intermediary by whom all graces come to us.<sup>67</sup>

Frank Duff also holds that it is through Mary's union with the Holy Spirit that she is the Mediatrix of grace, and he offers a further reason for this:

She became truly the Mother of the Godman Jesus Christ and freely co-operated with the power of the Holy Spirit in the sublime mystery of the Incarnation. As Mary is forevermore the Mother of Jesus Christ, so likewise is she forevermore the co-operator with the Holy Spirit in all the works of salvation. This would certainly constitute her the Mediatrix of all graces.<sup>68</sup>

Because of Mary's co-operation with the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation she remains the co-operator with the Holy Spirit in giving Christ to the world:

Could we not even think deeper and say that as she freely co operated in the Incarnation of the Son of God, she is thereby, through the Divine good pleasure, associated with the Father and the Son in their giving of the Holy Spirit in all works of sanctification just as through her free will she gave Jesus Christ to the world. This is a point of magnitude and the reason, which transcends all other reasons, why she is styled Helpmate, Advocate, Co-operatrix, Mediatrix.<sup>69</sup>

The Incarnation, for Duff, constitutes the history and the pattern of every grace given us by the Trinity. The Holy Spirit unites Himself with Mary and together they bring forth the Holy One of God, Jesus Christ. Hence, any grace that comes to us is through the power and operation of the Holy Spirit and always in concert with Mary.<sup>70</sup> Kolbe too refers to the Incarnation as a supporting argument for her mediation (though he mainly concentrates on Mary's relation to the Holy Spirit with regard to her mediation of graces): "Since Christ, the source of grace, has become her 'property,' she has the right to distribute grace."<sup>71</sup>

## **MEDIATION OF GRACE AND UNION WITH THE SPIRIT**

Kolbe uses an interesting phrase when he says that the Holy Spirit "manifests his share in the work of Redemption" through the Mother of God.<sup>72</sup> In a certain sense we see the working and operation of the Holy Spirit in Mary. She is, as Frank Duff calls her, "the making visible of His very action."<sup>73</sup> We do not touch her without touching Him, and she is so much His agent that in her He is seen at work.<sup>74</sup> Fr. Kolbe explains that the union of Mary and the Holy Spirit is not in the same order as the hypostatic union which links the human and divine natures in Christ, but it can be said that Mary's action is the very action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>75</sup> Frank Duff is in complete agreement with this. He writes that it is always the Holy Spirit who regenerates the world, even to the giving of the smallest of graces, but His agency is always Mary.<sup>76</sup> When God became man it was accomplished by the operation of the Holy Spirit in Mary. Fr. Kolbe explains that in a certain sense Mary and the Holy Spirit have a common single existence:

The Immaculata is united to the Holy Spirit so closely that we really cannot grasp this union. But we can at least say that the Holy Spirit and Mary are two persons who live in such intimate union that they have but one sole life."

Mary and the Holy Spirit are distinct Persons yet operate in perfect accord with one another. Frank Duff comes, pares this association to that which she has with her Son. He advances the theme that in Redemption Mary was the new Eve beside the new Adam. To the same degree that Eve co-operated in the Fall of man, Mary co-operated in his Redemption. In like manner Mary has an equivalent association with the Holy Spirit in bestowing the fruits of the Redemption as she had in being the Helpmate to Christen

In a letter to Fr. Mikolajczyk in 1935 Fr. Kolbe said: "The union between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit is so inexpressible, yet so perfect, that the Holy Spirit acts only by the Most Blessed Virgin, his Spouse. This is why she is the Mediatrix of all grace given by the Holy Spirit."<sup>79</sup> The Holy Spirit chooses to act in no other way than through Mary. The action of the Holy Spirit and the action of Our Lady are one. Mary, as the spouse of the Third Divine Person accomplishes in all things the will of the Holy Spirit.<sup>80</sup> From the first moment of her conception He dwelt in her and during her earthly life her will never contradicted His. According to Fr. Kolbe she always fulfills whatever God wants from her: "She makes perfect use of the powers and privileges God has given her, so as to fulfill always and in everything whatever God wants of her, purely for love of God, One and Three."<sup>81</sup> There is no separation of aims or conflict of interest between Mary's will and God's will:

She is God's instrument. With full consciousness and total willingness she allows God to govern her; she consents to His will, desires only what He desires, and acts according to His will in the most perfect manner, without failing, without ever turning aside from His will.<sup>82</sup>

Mary's will never deviated in the slightest from the Divine Will, and with all her strength she attached herself to God.<sup>83</sup> It is Fr. Kolbe's thought that the will of the Immaculata is so closely united to the will of God that it seems "as if there were but one."<sup>84</sup> Frank Duff explains that Mary is filled with the Holy Spirit without at the same time being constrained in the slightest by Him.<sup>85</sup> Her own will remains intact and is neither dispensed with nor limited. Mary is able to distribute the graces of the Holy Spirit with a complete freedom of will.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, he thinks that their wills are in such a unified state that graces would be given in exactly the same degree if the Holy Spirit were to work without her:

With all her heart and with all the fullness of her will she reflects His will. It is not being forced upon her; she could not possess greater freedom nor exercise it more fully. Such is the delightful marvel of the divine plan that it would even be possible for the Holy Spirit to confide to her the entire management of His graces; and yet the result would be the very same as if He worked alone.<sup>87</sup>

For Maximilian Kolbe and Frank Duff Our Lady is not merely the channel through whom all graces flow; she is the intelligent, conscious co-operator (with the Holy Spirit) in the very distribution of grace.<sup>88</sup> Mary is not merely an

instrument being used by the Holy Spirit. Their co-operation is so close that as Frank Duff puts it: "When she acts, it is also He Who acts; and that if her intervention be not accepted, neither is His."<sup>89</sup> He further explains that we receive no grace which we do not owe to a positive intervention on her part. Mary does not just transmit all grace: she obtains all for us.<sup>90</sup> Note this synonymous passage by Fr. Kolbe:

The Holy Spirit does not confer any grace, the Father does not give supernatural life to any soul by the Son and the Holy Spirit, unless these gifts are bestowed through the Mediatrix of all grace, the Immaculata, who co-operates in the giving, and distributes them as she wills. She obtains from God all the treasures of grace, as belonging to her, and she distributes them to whomever she wills, as she wills.

It is common to both Kolbe and Duff that Mary obtains all grace for us and distributes all grace. When we compare the above quotation of Fr. Kolbe to a prayer composed by Duff, we see a very similar set of ideas proposed:

But I know that Thou [Holy Spirit], Who hast come to regenerate the world in Jesus Christ, hast not willed to do so except through Mary; that without her we cannot know or love Thee; that it is by her, and to whom she pleases, when she pleases, and in the quantity and manner she pleases, that all Thy gifts and virtues and graces are administered....<sup>92</sup>

It is interesting to find Frank Duff including in this prayer a passage from the Sermon on the Nativity by St. Bernardine: "All the gifts and virtues and graces of the same Holy Spirit are administered by her to whom she pleases, when she pleases and in the quantity and manner she pleases."<sup>93</sup> That same statement is almost a twin to words found in the writings of St. Albert the Great as well. And although we do not know for certain whether or not Fr. Kolbe was expounding upon the works of these two saints, striking similarities can be found as well in his writings and theirs. Another example of this theme is Fr. Kolbe's statement that there is no grace which Mary cannot dispose of as her own.<sup>94</sup> She determines what is to be given. Frank Duff also declares this when he says: "She was to be given in the administration of grace the same decisive activity which she had exercised in the Incarnation."<sup>95</sup> Thus the flow of grace from God to us is made to depend on her. For both authors this includes all graces, from the least to the greatest. Fr. Kolbe says that "every grace" that comes to a soul falls from her hands.<sup>96</sup> And Duff agrees:

She was the means of introducing the Lord into the world. Without her He would not have come. We would not have Him. And that law which initiated things continues as the Christian Law today. Without her He is not given; without her there is no grace, not even the small graces.<sup>97</sup>

These two Marian thinkers are not here promoting a new idea in Mariology. These same thoughts are found in the writings of the Saints. For example, in his *Senno de Aqueductu*,

St. Bernard declares: "All we have of hope, all of grace, all of salvation, all -I say and let us doubt it not- flows to us from her."98

Some might claim that Kolbe and Duff put Mary on the same level as Jesus in regard to the Mediation of Grace and Redemption. But this is clearly not so. Frank Duff says that "Jesus is the great Mediator and Accomplisher of Salvation," that "she is as nothing compared to Him," and that "she has not any jurisdiction independent of His; she is totally dependent on Him."99 Mary, as a creature is infinitely less than Christ and yet she was made necessary by God's good pleasure, being joined to Christ in every phase of His great Mediation.100 God's design for Redemption included Mary as Helpmate from the very beginning to the end of Christ's Redemptive mission. Mary is totally dependent on Christ and yet not a mere mechanism: "She is a responsible co-operator with His Will. She fulfills faithfully the office which he has committed to her. Subject to Him, she is also most perfectly united to Him "101

In both the writings of Duff and Kolbe Our Lady is called the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the few titles of Mary which refers to the Holy Spirit. Frank Duff writes that "as Mary is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, full of His grace, His inseparable partner in His external mission, it follows that she has become like unto Him to the ultimate extent that a creature can be" 102. Fr. Kolbe also uses this title: "So perfect is she, so closely bound to the Holy Spirit, that we can call her his Spouse" 103, and again: "The Most Blessed Virgin is the one in whom we venerate the Holy Spirit, for she is his Spouse" (104). What do they mean when they refer to the Blessed Virgin as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit? Frank Duff explains that the term "Spouse of Mary" is not meant to contain the idea that the Holy Spirit is the husband of Mary or the Father of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is rather the agency and power through Whom the Father produces His Son in Mary 105. Mary is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit because of the intense union which they have. The Immaculata is a creature so pure that the Third Divine Person is able to dwell in her from the first moment of her conception, during her entire earthly life and now in Heaven. Fr. Kolbe compares Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit with that of a bride who takes the name of her spouse. At Lourdes Mary called herself the "Immaculate Conception" after her Spouse Who is the eternal and divine Immaculate Conception:

"If among creatures the bride receives the same name as that of her husband because she belongs to him, is united to him, becomes like him, and in union with him initiates the creative activity of life, how much more so the name of the Holy Spirit, 'Immaculate Conception,' is the name of her in whom He lives with a love so fecund for the entire supernatural order" 106.

In another passage he explains that among creatures made in God's image and likeness the most intimate of all unions is the one brought about by married love. Mary's union with the Holy Spirit is much more intimate than that, Kolbe holds. He says that in a much more precise, more interior and more essential manner the Holy Spirit lives in the soul of Mary, in the 'depths of her very being' 107.

It is another interesting similarity in the writings of these two men that even though they call Mary the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, they both believe that it is an inadequate expression. Kolbe feels it is too weak a title for so intimate a union:

"The third Person of the Blessed Trinity never took flesh; still, our human word 'spouse' is far too weak to express the reality of the relationship between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit. We can affirm that she is, in a certain sense, the 'incarnation' of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that we love in her; and through her we love the Son" 108.

Frank Duff agrees: their relationship is "somewhat incorrectly called that of spouses" since it is deeper than that 109. Mary is united to the Holy Spirit and becomes the channel for His graces. Together Mary and the Holy Spirit bring forth the Eternal Son and form men into the image and likeness of Christ. Fr. Kolbe spends much time trying to explain why the term spouse is not sufficient. He says that the Holy Spirit penetrated her being to such depths that to call her His spouse "is to use a pale, distant, most inadequate (even though correct) comparison to express their union" 110. In another passage he writes:

The expression 'Spouse of the Holy Spirit' is far from adequate to express the life of the Spirit in her and through her. In Jesus there are two natures, divine and human, but one single Person Who is God; here on the contrary we have two natures and two persons, the Holy Spirit and the Immaculata, but united in a union that defies all human expression" 111.

One reason why it is difficult to define their union is because we are dealing with a Divine Person. It is always a problem to attribute a human expression like "spouse" to a Divine Person. The relationship must necessarily go beyond human expression. Fr. Kolbe sums it up this way: the Divine indwelling in Our Lady would constitute a relationship more intimate than that of spouse:

Our Most Holy Mother is totally suffused with the divine. For this reason we call her the spouse of the Holy Spirit, even though we know that this name is only a distant shadow of the reality. For the Holy Spirit fashioned the humanity of Jesus in her womb, in a miraculous manner. If Jesus says of the souls of the just: 'We will make our abode in them' (Jn 14:23), then what an immense difference there must be between us and our most Blessed Mother, in regard to this indwelling" 112.



## **SPIRITUAL MATERNITY**

The Mariological teachings of Duff and Kolbe also touch on Our Lady's spiritual motherhood. This follows from Mary's mediation of graces and her union with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit Who forms men into the image and likeness of Christ even though the work of Redemption depended on the Second Person of the Trinity. It is Jesus Christ, who through the shedding of His blood reconciled the world to the Father and made up for Adam's sin 113. He merited for us the right to enter , Heaven and won for us the gifts of sanctifying and actual grace. However, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity also shares in the work of Redemption.114 By the merits won by Christ the Holy Spirit transforms the souls of men into living temples of God, making them His adopted children and heirs to the eternal King dom.115 It is Fr. Kolbe's teaching that since the Holy Spirit has united Himself to Mary, He forms men into the image of Christ through her: "Every grace comes from the Father in consideration of the Son Whom He begets from all eternity. And the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Father and from the Son uses these graces to shape souls to resemblance with the first-born, the God-man, He does this in the Immaculata and by her".116

Mary gives grace to men and molds them as she wills. Fr. Kolbe states that God confides to Mary the communication of His mercy to souls: "He makes of her the Mediatrix of the graces merited for us by her divine Son, for she is full of grace, the mother of all souls born of grace, reborn, and always being reborn, becoming ever more God-like".117 She strives to shape them after the model of her son, Who is the archetype of all sanctity and the God-man.118 Frank Duff compares what Mary does for mankind with what she did for her Son. He says that Mary bestows on the Mystical Body of Christ "every service which she rendered to His actual Body".119 She protected Him, cared for Him, nourished Him, taught Him and guided Him as He grew to full maturity. Our relation to Mary is almost the same. We are as much dependent on her for our spiritual well-being as Christ was for His natural well-being. In the womb and during His first years Christ made Himself totally dependent on her. We, in our spiritual lives are made fully dependent on her. Duff explains the extent of Mary's influence over our souls: ``In these titles [Mother of Divine Grace and Mediatrix of all Graces] is expressed a sway over the life of the soul, so complete that even the closest of earthly unions -the mother and the babe unborn- is inadequate to describe its intimacy".120

Mary is truly our mother in every sense of the word. Again, very similar passages about this can be found in Kolbe. In a prayer book entitled Aim Higher Fr. Kolbe writes: "It is enough to mention that every grace received each day, hour, and moment of our life is Her grace, flowing from Her motherly heart that loves us".121 Compare this to a passage in Duff's book *Virgo Praedicanda*:

"She is fully Mother; everything connected with the children of God is placed under her influence. She administers the divine life to them, and by her

incessant maternal care she causes them to grow up in Christ. Her hand is on every item of the Christian life, each grace, prayer, duty".<sup>122</sup>

Mary became our mother, Duff writes, when to the Angel's message she pronounced her humble assent "Behold the handmaid of the Lord be it done to me according to thy word." But it was at the foot of the Cross when Redemption was consummated that her motherhood was proclaimed and expanded into mankind.<sup>123</sup> In the midst of the pain and sorrows of Calvary Jesus said to her from the Cross: "Woman, behold thy Son," and to St. John: "Behold thy Mother." Through St. John these words were addressed to all mankind. And "fully co-operating by her consent and sorrows in this spiritual birth of mankind, Mary became in the fullest and most perfect sense our mother".<sup>124</sup>

A final aspect of Mary's spiritual maternity dealt with in both Duff and Kolbe is that Mary is the mother of each person, whether they are inside the Church or outside it, whether they know of her or not. Kolbe says that only at the last judgement and only in Heaven will we discover with what loving attention Mary watched over each individual person, without ceasing, from the beginning to the end of that life.<sup>125</sup> He says "all are her children." There are no exceptions.<sup>126</sup> Frank Duff matches this point perfectly:

"She is the Mother of every soul in the spiritual order and thus is necessary to their life and growth. Not only is she the Mother of those in the Church. but also of all those outside it. of those that do not know her. and even those who hate her."<sup>127</sup>

Duff also explains that even in those who degrade her or do not know her there is a seed of love for Mary in their hearts. He often quotes Leo X<sup>111</sup> who said that Mary is the Mother of all men and that God has implanted the germ of love for her in every heart.<sup>128</sup> That germ is meant to grow and develop to its full capacity in the heart of each man.

A further topic discussed in these dual writings concerns devotion to Mary and devotion to the Holy Spirit. Duff says that where Our Lady is, the Holy Ghost is, and that Mary is in the Holy Spirit with such intensity that they are virtually one and possess identity of action. "so that devotion to one comprises devotion to the other."<sup>129</sup> Therefore in going to Mary one necessarily goes to the Holy Spirit, and in going to the Holy Spirit one necessarily includes Mary.<sup>130</sup> Fr. Kolbe himself said: When we honor the Immaculata we are, very specifically, adoring the Holy Spirit."<sup>131</sup> According to Duff, Mary helps us to know the Holy Spirit. She makes Him real to us:

"If Mary did no more than reflect in her own person the splendor of her spouse. it would be much. But that extraordinary Mirror of Justice does more; she projects an image of His perfection and action. She makes Him tangible to minds and in a sense visible to the world. He presents Himself to our consciousness as a real Person and claims our homage."<sup>132</sup>

Mary not only reflects the Holy Spirit but gives us an image of His perfection and action, much more so than does the Dove or the Tongues of Fire. Without Mary it would be very hard to have a proper image of the Holy Spirit to pray to. For this reason Mary increases our knowledge of and devotion to the Third Divine Person. Duff says that without her He recedes into the shadows. It is she who ' makes Him familiar to us as a Person. The mind if visualizing them together has necessarily to form some image of Him equivalent to hers. This renders Him vivid to us."<sup>133</sup>

Duff also holds that it is Mary who gives us due order and sanity in our dealings with the Third Divine Person. In other words, it is Mary's presence which assures orthodoxy. He says that "devotion to the Holy Spirit must be Marian to be orthodox and safe."<sup>134</sup> If Mary has on any pretext been edged out, things will always proceed to go astray. The Holy Spirit departs with her, just as she took the Divine Infant with her when there was no room for her in the Inn.<sup>135</sup> The Holy Spirit is the safeguard of orthodoxy. Where He is present there will be found sound doctrine and truth will thrive. But as Duff says, Our Lady and the Holy Spirit are always found together. If one of them is rejected the other is rejected also. This could be the reason why certain theologians deviate from the orthodox teachings of the Church: they do not have a proper understanding of Our Lady and thus have lost the safeguard for orthodoxy. Duff believes that "if we find we have diverged from her, it is a sign that we have left the Christian road. She is one of the special outward marks of grace and orthodoxy."<sup>136</sup> By repudiating her, one automatically rejects what she stands for: the human intellect in its utmost integrity, undefiled by original sin.<sup>137</sup> Denying her in the smallest way will soon lead to a collision with common sense:

"She is a sort of blueprint for human behavior. She represents the perfect mind oriented towards God. Any deviation from that blueprint betokens some lack of alignment with God Himself, and sooner or later this will show itself in damaging ways. The dryrot spreads to our attitude to the angels, sin, the Divinity of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and finally God Himself. I think it is true to say that the simpler person who has his principles right in regard to Our Lady will walk a straight path and go far, while the learned ones with everything in their kit except Mary will make headway like the ship without compass and rudder."<sup>138</sup>

What are the consequences for those who ignore Mary, reject or insult her? Do they still receive grace? Duff answers that they do indeed receive grace, for failure to acknowledge her may be excused on the grounds that they do not know her or have been taught error about her. But it is a sorry title to Heaven to treat her in such a way, she who is Mother of each individual and the giver of every grace. Furthermore, the graces which come when acknowledging Mary as Mother and Mediatrix flow much more abundantly.<sup>139</sup> Concerning this point Fr. Kolbe writes:

"But if anyone does not wish to have Mary Immaculate for his Mother, he will not have Christ for his Brother; the Father will not send the Son to him; the Son will not come down into his soul; the Holy Spirit will not make him a member of the mystical body through the gift of his grace; because all God's marvels of grace take place in Mary Immaculate who is full of grace- and in her alone."140

The above quotation gives us a clue as to why Maximilian Kolbe spent his entire life trying to make Mary better known and loved. He realized the importance of Mary in the life of each individual soul. Frank Duff too, desired only to magnify Our Lady and through this to win the world for Christ. Some critics aside, Duff and Kolbe do not esteem Our Lady as an end in herself. In their writings, both explain over and over again that Mary's role is to bring men to her Son. Duff describes her as the infallible means of winning the world to Jesus.<sup>141</sup> Her work is to crush the head of the serpent and advance the reign of Christ. Fr. Kolbe says his objective is to "extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus"<sup>142</sup>, to win each soul for Jesus and Mary, now and in the future, on to the end of time:<sup>143</sup>

"We must introduce the Immaculate into the hearts of men that there she may erect the throne of Her Son and lead all to the knowledge of Him and inflame them to a love of His Most Sacred Heart."<sup>144</sup>

## **SOURCES**

We might ask why the works of Duff and Kolbe are so similar since the authors apparently never met or corresponded. The primary answer is the influence of St. Louis Grignion de Montfort. Maximilian Kolbe states that "The devotion taught by Blessed Grignion is ours exactly",<sup>145</sup> and many of his pages contain quotes from the theology of Montfort:

"Till the end of the world it will be the task of the Holy Spirit to form the new members predestined to glory in the mystical body of Christ. And as St. de Montfort shows, this task is carried to completion with Mary and through Mary".<sup>146</sup>

In another place Kolbe discusses the love which the Eternal Son had in becoming man, and the desire of the Third Person to show His mediation through a concrete sign. This sign is the Immaculate Heart of the Virgin. Kolbe says that this point is based on the writings of the saints, especially those like St. Louis de Montfort who consider Mary as the spouse of the Holy Spirit.<sup>147</sup> Montfort was also the one who enabled Kolbe to refine his understanding of self-surrender to Jesus through Mary.<sup>148</sup>

Like Kolbe, Frank Duff, also a pupil of St. Louis, was greatly influenced by the "True Devotion to Mary" and thoroughly incorporated it into the system of the Legion of Mary which he founded in 1921- so much so that Montfort has become

known as the "Tutor of the Legion." And Maximilian Kolbe's movement, the Militia Immaculatae, begun in 1917, also promotes the total consecration to Jesus through Mary as taught by Montfort. It is safe to say that these two men have been more instrumental in fostering Montfort's Marian spirituality than most others in the twentieth century.

## **CONCLUSION**

Upon examining many of the writings of Frank Duff and Maximilian Kolbe we have found their teachings to be almost identical. On no major point do they differ. Both agree completely on Mary's creaturehood, her perfection, her predestined role, her mediation of grace, and spiritual motherhood. Both place her as high on the human scale as a creature could be, using the astonishing phrase that she borders on the infinite.

However, their most striking similarities come to the fore when they deal with Our Lady's relationship with the Holy Spirit. They hold that the Third Divine Person has united Himself to Mary, a human person, without the latter becoming divine: Mary is so close to the Holy Spirit that she can be said to be His living human portrait. Both called Mary the "spouse of the Holy Spirit" and mutually believed the title does not satisfy, does not go deep enough into the mystery of this union. Both taught that Mary exposes the Holy Spirit most perfectly to us and that devotion to the one necessitates devotion to the other. As followers of Montfort, both promoted True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and popularized Montfort's spirituality through two contemporary organizations, which have spread to all parts of the world. Their writings have magnified Our Lady and brought her to the notice of millions inside and outside the Church. They were not only theologians, not only apostles: they were brothers, twin sons of Mary in the twentieth century.

## **FOOTNOTES**

1 Maximilian Kolbe, *Aim Higher! Marian thoughts of Blessed Maximilian Kolbe O.F.M. Conv.* (Zambia: Mission Press, 1976), p. 8.

2 Frank Duff, *The Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary* (Dublin: Concilium Legionis Mariae, 1975), p. 252; hereafter cited as *Handbook*.

3 Fr. H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, *The Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Marian Teachings of Father Kolbe* (Kenosha: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1977), p. 78. [This passage of Kolbe's can be compared with the remarkable doctrine of the Greek bishop Theophanes Nicaenus, who held that God understood Mary as the holiest possible creature before He even decided to create material things. Thus Theophanus can say that, if God had not decided to make her a human being, she would have been the highest of the angels.]

- 4 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 72.
- 5 Duff, Handbook. p. 253.
- 6 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 79-80.
- 7 Frank Duff, Victory through Mary (Dublin: Praedicanda Publications, 1981), p. 269; hereafter cited as Victory.
- 8 Frank Duff, Mary Shall Reign (Glasgow: John S. Burns and Sons, 1962), pp. 134-135; hereafter cited as Mary.
- 9 Kolbe, p. 9.
- 10 Manteau-Bonamy, pp. 47-48.
- 11 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 53. [In this Fr. Kolbe is echoing the teaching of Pope St. Pius X in the encyclical Ad diem ilium.]
- 12 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 47.
- 13 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 49.
- 14 Duff, Mary. p. 135.
- 15 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 72. [This idea 'conveys a strikingly similar point made by Fr. Peter D. Fehlner, O.F.M. Conv. in his unpublished manuscript, Mary and Theology: Scotus Revisited (St. Anthony-on-Hudson, Rensselaer, N.Y.), pp. 37-38:...Mary is not simply most holy in comparison with other creatures. She is not simply immaculately conceived. She is holiness itself in created form; she is the Immaculate Conception."]
- 16 Ernesto Piacentini, O.F.M. Conv. S.T.D., Panorama of the Marian Doctrine of Bl. Maximilian Kolbe (Kenosha: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1975), pp. 25-26.
- 17 Kolbe, p. 4.
- 18 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 123.
- 19 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 72.
- 20 Piacentini, pp. 23-24.
- 21 Piacentini, pp. 19-20.

- 22 Piacentini, pp.18-19.
- 23 Piacentini, p. 19.
- 24 Piacentini, pp. 19-20.
- 25 Piacentini, pp. 20-21.
- 26 Piacentini, p. 21.
- 27 Piacentini, p. 21.
- 28 Piacentini, pp. 21-22.
- 29 ManteauBonamy, p. 52.
- 30 ManteauBonamy, p. 4.
- 31 Duff, Victory, p. 436.
- 32 Duff, Victory, p. 270.
- 33 Duff, Handbook, p. 134.
- 34 Duff, Handbook, p. 176.
- 35 Frank Duff, *The Woman of Genesis* (Dublin: Praedicanda Press, 1976), p. 283; hereafter cited as *Woman*.
- 36 Duff, *Woman*, p. 182.
- 37 Duff, *Woman*, p. 276.
- 38 Duff, *Woman*, p. 277.
- 39 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 63.
- 40 Manteau-Bonamy, pp. 40-41.
- 41 Duff, *Woman*, p. 279.
- 42 Duff, *Woman*, p. 274
- 43 Duff, *Woman*, p. 284.
- 44 Duff, *Woman*, p. 285.

- 45 Duff, *Woman*, p. 284.
- 46 Duff, *Woman*, p. 284.
- 47 Duff, *Woman*, p. 275.
- 48 Duff, *Woman*, p. 275
- 49 Duff, *Woman*, p. 280.
- 50 Duff, *Mary*, p. 147.
- 51 Duff, *Handbook*, p. 9.
- 52 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 69.
- 53 Duff, *Mary*, p. 82.
- 54 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 70.
- 55 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 36.
- 56 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 46.
- 57 Kolbe, p. 10.
- 58 Frank Duff, *Virgo Praedicanda* (Dublin: C.J. Fallon Limited, 1967), p. 237; hereafter cited as *Virgo*.
- 59 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 76.
- 60 Manteau-Bonamy, P 72.
- 61 Duff, *Woman*, pp. 276-277.
- 62 Duff, *Woman*, p. 72.
- 63 Manteau-Bonamy, PP. 89-90.
- 64 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 72.
- 65 Manteau-Bonamy, P. 59.
- 66 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 59,
- 67 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 102.



68 Duff, *Woman*, pp. 285-286.

69 Duff, *Woman*, p. 286. [This passage of Duff's can be compared to the point made by Origen about the events which occurred during the life of Christ. In the *Theology of Revelation* by Rene Latourelle, S.J., (Staten Island: Society of St. Paul, 1966), p. 119, Latourelle quotes a passage from a sermon of Origen: "All the facts of His life are historical, but, at the same time, they are the model of things to come," (Com. Mtt. ser 78).

70 Duff, *Victory*, pp. 269-270.

71 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 98.

72 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 91.

73 Frank Duff, *Walking with Mary: The Spirit of the Legion of Mary* (Glasgow: John S. Burns and Sons, no date given), p. 230; hereafter cited as *Walking*. [This idea would do much to answer the German theologian Heribert Muhlen, who has attacked the traditional doctrine of Mary's mediation of grace as a usurpation of the work of the Holy Spirit. On pp. 266 in *Victory Through Mary* Duff writes: "Some years ago an ingenious idea came to certain Protestant theologians which they proceeded to promulgate. Of course some of their Catholic fraternity took it up with due reverence, and now I see that is being seriously discussed. It is the notion which I started off by referring to that Catholics have substituted the Blessed Virgin for the Holy spirit; wherever He should appear we put her; wherever He should be given praise, we mention her instead; He is ruled out; she is exaggerated practically or actually to the divine level: we are treating Mary as a goddess! On the part of its Protestant originators that folly is due to the fact that they do not know any better. So we must say: Father forgive them. On the part of the Catholics who echo them, it may be due to wickedness because they know it is not true. But perhaps it springs from the law which I have been proposing, namely that those who shut their eyes to Mary fail as a consequence to see any portion of the divine scenery.]

74 Duff, *Woman*, p. 183.

75 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 91.

76 Duff, *Hundbook*, p. 133.

77 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 44.

73 Duff, *Victory*, p. 264.

79 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 99.

80 Manteau-Bonamy, P 47.

81 Fr. James McCurry, O.F.M. Conv., The Mariology of Maximilian Kolbe, Presented to the Mariological Society of America, Dayton, 30 May 1985, p. 14.

82 McCurry, p. 14.

83 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 71.

84 Kolbe, p. 17.

85 Duff, Victory, p. 264.

86 Duff, Victory' p. 264.

87 Duff, Victory, p. 273.

88 Duff, Handbook, p. 134.

89 Duff, Handbook, p. 134.

90 Duff, Handbook, p. 10.

91 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 128.

92 Duff, Handbook' P 43.

93 Duff, Handbook, p. 179.

94 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 99.

95 Duff, Victory, p. 270.

96 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 99.

97 Duff, Mary, pp. 82-83.

99 Duff, Handbook, p. 10.

99 Duff, Virgo, pp. 60-61.

100 Duff, Woman, p. 72.

101 Duff, Virgo, p. 60-61.

102 Duff, Woman, p. 274.

- 103 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 46.
- 104 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 49.
- 105 Duff, Woman, p. 287.
- 106 Piacentini, p. 23.
- 107 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 57.
- 108 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 50.
- 109 Duff, Victory, p. 264.
- 110 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 72.
- 111 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 128.
- 112 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 52.
- 113 Manteau-Konamy, p. 90.
- 114 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 90.
- 115 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 90.
- 116 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 98.
- 117 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 109.
- 118 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 99.
- 119 Duff, Handbook, p. 257.
- 120 Duff, Handbook, p. 105.
- 121 Kolbe, p. 13.
- 122 Duff, Virgo, pp. 60-61.
- 123 Duff, Handbook, p. 11.
- 124 Duff, Handbook, p. 11.
- 125 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 99.
- 126 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 99.

- 127 Duff, *Woman*, pp. 69-70.
- 128 Duff, *Handbook*, p. 239.
- 129 Duff, *Victory*, p. 276.
- 130 Duff, *Victory*, p. 436.
- 131 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 71.
- 132 Duff, *Woman*, pp. 183-184.
- 133 Duff, *Victory*, p. 440.
- 134 Duff, *Victory*, p. 438.
- 135 Duff, *Victory*, p. 438.
- 136 Duff, *Mary*, p. 151.
- 137 Duff, *Victory*, pp. 265-266.
- 138 Duff, *Victory*, p. 266.
- 139 Duff, *Handbook*, p. 257.
- 140 McCurry, p. 17.
- 141 Duff, *Handbook*, p. 104.
- 142 McCurry, p. 4.
- 143 McCurry, p. 5.
- 144 McCurry, pp. 6-7.
- 145 Manteau-Bonary, p. 46.
- 146 Manteau-Bonamy, p. 91.
- 147 Manteau-Bonamy, pp. 90-91.
- 148 McCurry, pp. 8-9.

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This is the final installment. Fran Peffley is now studying for the Priesthood. We wish him all the best.