

Who is the “Author” of Devotion to Our Lady?

If St. Paul claims that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” why resort to the intercession of the Virgin Mary? Would it not be more appropriate to have recourse directly to Our Lord?



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Throughout the centuries, there has been much discussion over the cult paid to Our Lady, which has contributed not only to establishing the doctrinal basis for such piety, but also to enkindling the fervour of Mary’s true children. However, although devotion to the heavenly Queen has been approved by the Paraclete Spirit in the dogmas and teachings of the Church, doubts still arise in our days regarding its necessity and origin.

Is Christ not the sole Mediator?

Indeed, how many of us would know how to confidently reply if someone were to ask: who is the “author” of this devotion?

Could it have been St. Peter, as the first Pope, who endeavoured to glorify Her because he knew her role as Mother of the Church? Or did it happen, perhaps, that St. John, seized by transports of filial love, decided to propagate the grandeur of her Immaculate Heart throughout the world?

Yet, there is no indication that the Apostles had been great proponents of devotion to Mary Most Holy. To this can be added that addressing Our

Lord directly would seem to be more in keeping with the Sacred Scriptures. After all, if St. Paul affirms that there is “one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tm 2:5), why have recourse to the intercession of the Virgin Mary?

He received human nature from Her

In view of this, it should be noted that many of the statements Jesus made regarding himself, He also attributed to others. For example, He says that He is “the Light of the world” (Jn 8:12), but grants His disciples the same title (cf. Mt 5:14); He portrays himself as “the Good Shepherd” (Jn 10:11), but entrusts the care of His flock to Peter (cf. Jn 21:15-17).

Something similar applies with regard to His mediation: one can attribute to others – eminently to the Blessed Virgin – in a derived and secondary manner, that which is primarily and perfectly ascribable to the Redeemer. In this sense, the Apostle claims to complete in his flesh what is lacking in the Passion of the Lord (cf. Col 1:24), without the merit of the latter being in any way deficient.

Moreover, St. Paul does not simply affirm that the Eternal Word of

the Father, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, is the Mediator between God and humanity, but the “man Christ Jesus”. It was by virtue of the Incarnation in Mary’s virginal womb that the Son assumed this role, and therefore, in Jesus’ own mediation, Our Lady’s collaboration is present, for it was from Her that He received His human nature.

“Has done great things for me...”

Yet the question remains: who is the “author” of devotion to Our Lady?

Leafing through Holy Scriptures we find a summarized chronology of salvation history, which can clarify something in this regard: “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” (Heb 1:1), “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman” (Gal 4:4).

When He entered into the world, He received a body (cf. Heb 10:5): “the Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14), becoming in everything like us, “yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). This work began when “the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a Virgin betrothed to a man whose name was



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Each one of us was placed in Our Lady's arms and begotten as her child by the work of the Holy Spirit

Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints, by Raffaello Sanzio
Metropolitan Museum of New York

Joseph, of the house of David" (Lk 1:26-27a).

"The Virgin's name was Mary" (Lk 1:27b), and her cousin Elizabeth bore witness to Her when she exclaimed, full of the Holy Spirit: "Blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Lk 1:42).

Very well... But who is, ultimately, the "author" of devotion to this blessed Virgin? If we still have any doubt, let us ask Our Lady herself and She will answer as She did in the Visitation: "All generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me" (Lk 1:48-49). The sublime and ineffable role that God has bestowed on Her in Heaven and on earth is the cause of the great devotion of Christians to the Mother of God.

We were placed in Our Lady's arms

If we continue to peruse the New Testament, we will find Jesus performing His first miracle, even before His time had come (cf. Jn 2:4-5), in order to fulfil a request from His

Mother. And, as it was for Her that He initiated His public life, it was also through Her that He wished to conclude His communication with men. Being crucified on the wood, as He made His testament of love, Our Lord left us Mary as His greatest legacy: "Behold your Mother" (Jn 19:27).

After being taken down from the Cross, the same Body that the Blessed Virgin had, years before, laid in the manger (cf. Lk 2:7) now rested lifeless in her embrace. His spirit had been given up into the hands of the Father (cf. Lk 23:46) and the Body was placed in His Mother's arms. What Body? The Body of Christ, the Church (cf. Col 1:18), which is us (cf. 1 Cor 12:27).

Each one of us was placed in Our Lady's arms and begotten as her child by the work of the Holy Spirit. St. Bernard of Clairvaux even affirms: "God wished to grant us nothing except by Mary."¹ In fact, if Christ the Lord is the source of living water (cf. Jn 4:14), the Blessed Virgin is the aqueduct by which all the goods that flow from this sacred spring reach us.

Let us persevere with Her in prayer

After such considerations, is it still necessary to inquire as to the origin of devotion to Our Lady? God is the Author, with a capital "A", of this great and indispensable devotion!

Therefore, let us not be afraid to persevere in prayer "with Mary, the Mother of Jesus" (Acts 1:14), as the Apostles did after the Ascension. Let us imitate the Christians of the first centuries who, as loving children, prayed for Our Lady's help in their difficulties: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God: despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and Blessed Virgin."² ✧

¹ ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX. En la Vigilia de Navidad. Sermón III, n.10. In: *Obras Completas*. 2.ed. Madrid: BAC, 2005, v.III, p.159.

² Antiphon *Sub tuum praesidium*, the oldest known prayer to the Blessed Virgin, sung by the Church in the Liturgy of the Hours.