

MARIOLOGY

On Mary Co-Redemptrix, it is better to deepen our understanding than to misunderstand

ECCLESIA

27_01_2026

**Robert
Fastiggi
and Mark
Miravalle**



Second part of two ([here the first part](#))

Bishop Staglianò's position against Mary as Co-redemptrix also seems to be based on the denial of true human merit, a merit that Protestant Christianity denies but the

Council of Trent and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirm (see Denz.-H., 1546, 1548, and 1582). Based firmly on the teachings of the Council of Trent, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that *God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of grace*”(CCC 2008).” The Catechism further states: “Filial adoption, in making us partakers by grace in the divine nature, can bestow *true merit* on us as a result of God’s gratuitous justice.” (CCC 2009). As St. Augustine teaches, “Grace has gone before us....Our merits are God’s gifts” (*Sermo* 298, 4-5, CCC 2009). If our sufferings and good works can be supernaturally meritorious, how much more are the sufferings and good works of the Immaculate Mother of Jesus, who was providentially chosen by the Father to accompany the divine Redeemer in the historic accomplishment of Redemption.

Msgr. Staglianò is correct to affirm Mary as “the first disciple.” This does not, however, adequately affirm Mary’s unique role in the Redemption, as well as her subsequent role in the secondary mediation of all graces—a doctrine supported by 4 centuries of papal teaching, including 12 popes and four papal encyclicals, yet nonetheless rejected in *Mater Populi Fidelis*. Bishop Staglianò is correct to state that “a mother does not offer an alternative to her father’s; she shares and interprets his love.” Yet, this is precisely what Our Lady does in her role as Mediatrix of all graces: sharing and distributing the loving graces of her Son among her earthly spiritual children in absolute service to the one Mediator and Redeemer. She, in no sense, offers a “parallel” mercy. This alleged “risk” is more of a red herring, which distracts from a potentially valuable dialogue of the theology of Mary’s role in Redemption.

Bishop Staglianò’s gravely flawed understanding of the Co-redemptrix title and role was also previously expressed in his December 9, 2025 [article](#) posted on the website of the Pontifical Theological Academy. This article, written in reaction to the *Response to Mater Populi Fidelis of the Theological Commission of International Marian Association* [IMATC], is filled with numerous caricatures and misconceptions of what the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, truly denotes.

Msgr. Staglianò writes that “in common and theological language, the prefix ‘co-’ indicates a partnership, a collaboration in a common work. Applied to the Redemption – a work that by definition is absolutely unique and unrepeatable – it inevitably creates a semantic tension.” Why, though, should the notion of collaboration with Christ’s redemptive work be a source of “semantic tension?” St. Paul, in 1 Cor 3:9, says we are God’s “co-laborers,” In other words, we collaborate with God in building up the Body of Christ. As Co-redemptrix, Mary cooperates with Christ’s work of redemption. She does

not add to or take away from the unique and unrepeatable work of Christ, the divine Redeemer. She certainly collaborated with God's work of redemption when by her obedience she became "a cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race" (*Lumen Gentium*, 56 quoting St. Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* III, 22, 4). Collaboration or cooperation with Christ's redemptive work is not a source of "semantic tension." It is, in fact, the very meaning of Mary's role as Co-redemptrix. The great Mariologist, Gabriele Roschini defined the title Co-redemptrix this way: "The title Co-redemptrix of the human race means that the most holy Virgin cooperated with Christ in our reparation as Eve cooperated with Adam in our ruin" (*Chi è Maria?: Catechismo mariano* quest. 83).

Msgr. Staglianò claims that the defense of the title Co-Redemptrix "often betrays, consciously or unconsciously, an 'accounting' or 'juridical view' view of salvation." Where is his evidence for these false projections against traditional and contemporary defenders of Marian Coredemption? He further claims that God's justice is seen as so severe that "in addition to the sacrifice of the Son, He also needs the 'contribution' of the Mother to be fully appeased." The author confuses the God-given privilege of human cooperation with divine inadequacy. The Bishop, yet again, puts forth the view that believers in Marian coredemption see Mary as a "lightning rod," who protects us from the bolts of divine wrath. Msgr. Staglianò offers this grave critique without any corroborating evidence. What Catholic theologians who defend Mary as the Co-redemptrix are presenting her as a "lightning rod" to protect us from the bolts of divine anger? Where are the People of God who say Mary needs to be the Co-redemptrix in order to offer a maternal contribution to the sacrifice of Christ to appease the demands of God's severe justice? These unsubstantiated assertions amount to nothing more than a gratuitous caricature and do not contribute to the present synodal discussion on Mary. In reality, Mary as Co-redemptrix unites herself to the merciful love of Christ expressed by his death on the Cross. This is why she is called the "Mother of Mercy," a title Pope Francis added to the Litany of Loreto in 2020.

Bishop Staglianò further states that, "Mary's unique greatness lies not in a supposed 'co-redemption' that would ontologically place her alongside Christ, but in her faith... Mary adds nothing to Christ; she perfectly receives everything from Him. This is the meaning of her "cooperation": not a parallel action, but a total consent and adherence of faith that makes her the prototype of the Church." In a strange dichotomy, the author separates "faith" from "meritorious human suffering", as if both were not completely integrated in the Catholic concept of redemptive suffering. He also demotes Mary's role at Calvary to mere passivity and receptivity. Mary certainly is a model of faith, but Bishop Staglianò once again manifests a misunderstanding of Co-redemptrix when he

says this means Mary offers a “parallel action” to that of Christ. What theologian who affirms Mary as Co-redemptrix believes her coredemptive role is a “parallel action” to that of Christ? Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix is always united to Christ’s redemptive action in a manner that is subordinate, secondary, and dependent but nevertheless necessary according to God’s providential will. Bishop Staglianò says that “Mary adds nothing to Christ; she perfectly receives everything from Him.” Mary, though, is not in competition with her divine Son. St. Louis de Montfort explains that God had no absolute need of Mary. Nevertheless, He chose to associate her in his work of Redemption like no other creature. Mary’s cooperation in the work of redemption is more than that of faith. Mary is not a Protestant Christian who operates by “faith alone.” Pius XII, in his 1954 encyclical, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, 35–37 describes Mary’s *active role at Calvary* in the work of salvation in these terms:

"God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of our eternal salvation. ... For "just as Christ, because He redeemed us, is our Lord and king by a special title, so the Blessed Virgin also (is our queen), on account of the unique manner in which she assisted in our redemption, by giving of her own substance, by freely offering Him for us, by her singular desire and petition for, and active interest in, our salvation" (Denz.-H, 3914)."

Mary actively assisted in our redemption in a unique manner. Her unique cooperation in the work of redemption as the New Eve is precisely what is meant by her role as Co-redemptrix.

Msgr. Staglianò claims that the IMATC fails to appreciate the different weight of magisterial documents. This is an unusual allegation from someone who defends and perhaps contributed to a DDF document that completely omits 4 centuries of papal teaching on the doctrine of Mary as Mediatrix of all graces, inclusive of four papal encyclicals, each of which individually has far greater magisterial weight than one Dicastery doctrinal note. Moreover, Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium*, 56, 58, and 61 directly teaches the doctrine of Marian coredemption. *Lumen Gentium*, 54 also says that it is not the mind of the Council “to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified.” According to Vatican II, “Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her” (LG, 54). In other words, the Council allowed for and anticipated further doctrinal development on the themes of Marian coredemption and mediation.

Msgr. Staglianò also maintains that the IMATC does not appreciate authentic

doctrinal development. This is simply a fictional claim. It is precisely authentic doctrinal development under the guidance of the living Magisterium, from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries up to the contemporary Magisterium that the IMATC response to MPF ubiquitously quotes, including numerous teachings of post Vatican II popes: Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. Yet, the same papal magisterial teachings are so often omitted or only minimally or selectively quoted in *Mater Populi Fidelis*, as well in the Bishop's efforts to defend the DDF document. Unlike Monsignor's commentaries, the living Magisterium also manifests a deep respect for and adherence to the Church's Tradition in harmony with Vatican II's teaching of *Dei Verbum*.

Bishop Staglianò further believes the IMATC minimizes the ecumenical reasons why Vatican II omitted the title, Co-redemptrix. These ecumenical reasons, though, did not prevent John Paul II from using the title Co-redemptrix seven times. The IMATC believes ecumenism would be better served by explaining what the title Co-redemptrix means and what it does not mean. Ecumenism is not served by distorting the true meaning of the Co-redemptrix title.

In conclusion and with all due respect, Msgr. Staglianò's commentaries seem to rest upon the assertions of perceived risks without providing theological or factual evidence. He fails to show how these supposed risks have any causal relation to the Co-redemptrix title and doctrine when they are properly understood. He relies upon false impressions, stereotypes, and unsubstantiated assertions that show little awareness or appreciation of what popes, saints, and theologians have meant by the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, both in the past and in the present.

Msgr. Staglianò's opposition to the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, in many ways resembles the position of *Mater Populi Fidelis*. His opposition, though, goes beyond the concerns expressed by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. When he suggests the title implies a "parallel" work of salvation, he distorts the meaning of the title. As Co-redemptrix, Mary is always united to and never separate from Christ, the Redeemer. In the final analysis, it is not the Co-redemptrix title that constitutes a distortion of the Catholic doctrine of Redemption. It is, rather, a distortion of the Co-redemptrix title that does so.