

# MARIOLOGY AS A THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE: MARY FROM HISTORICAL REALITY TO THEOLOGICAL DOGMA\*

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## Abstract

This article examines Mariology, an original and systematic sub-discipline of Catholic theology, within the context of its place in theological thought and its relationship with other dogmatic fields. The etymological origin of the term *Mariology*, its historical usage, and the stages of its institutionalization as a theological discipline are analyzed. Particular emphasis is given to the systematic character of this field in light of developments before and after the Second Vatican Council in the twentieth century. The scope of the discipline of Mariology is delineated. Furthermore, Mariology's multifaceted relationship with Christology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, and Anthropology is evaluated. Within this interdisciplinary framework, both Mary's unique relationship with Christ and her role as Mother of the Church and model of humanity are discussed. The article argues that treating Mariology as an independent theological discipline is necessary for both substantive coherence and pedagogical systematicity, and it provides a comprehensive account of its conceptual, historical, and methodological foundations. The study employs the historical-phenomenological method, one of the traditional methodological approaches of the History of Religions.

**Keywords:** History of Religions, Mariology, Mary, Catholic Theology, Christology, Ecclesiology, Anthropology, Theotokos.

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# Teolojik Bir Disiplin Olarak Maryoloji: Tarihsel Gerçeklikten Teolojik Dogmaya Meryem\*

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## Makale Bilgisi

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## Geniş Özet

Maryoloji, İsa'nın annesi Meryem'i sistematik biçimde inceleyen; onun kimliğini, rolünü ve teolojik önemini araştıran bir alandır. Kutsal Kitap'a dayanan Maryoloji, aynı zamanda zaman içinde gelişmiş litürjik uygulamalardan, Kilise geleneklerinden ve kültürel ifadelerden de beslenmektedir. Bu disiplin, yalnızca dogmatik teoloji bağlamında değil, aynı zamanda iman, kültür ve kilise yaşamıyla kurduğu disiplinlerarası ilişki bakımından da önem arz etmektedir.

Meryem'in kurtuluş tarihindeki varlığı, onu hem teolojik bir model hem de bir bağlılık figürü konumuna yerleştirmiştir. Tanrı'nın kurtarıcı planındaki iş birliği, araştırmacıların onun Hristiyanlar için örnek teşkil eden rolünü vurgulamasına yol açmıştır. "Maryoloji" terimi ilk kez 1602'de Sicilyalı rahip Placido Nigido tarafından *Summae Sacrae Mariologiae* adlı eserinde ortaya atılmış; burada Meryem'in onuru, nitelikleri ve teolojik önemi sistematik biçimde ele alınmıştır. Nigido, Maryoloji'nin bağımsız bir teolojik disiplin olarak kabul edilip edilemeyeceğini tartışarak, Meryem'in statüsü üzerine temel soruları gündeme getirmiştir.

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Hristiyanlığın erken yüzyıllarında, dikkatler özellikle Meryem'in mistik rolü üzerinde yoğunlaşmış; onun, inananları kurtuluşa yönlendiren bir figür olarak konumu öne çıkarılmıştır. Zamanla ona yönelik bağlılık, dualar, yortular ve litürjik onurlandırmalar aracılığıyla giderek artmıştır. Kilise Babaları, onun ebedi bakireliğini tartışmış ve bakireliği Hristiyan erdeminin bir modeli olarak teşvik etmişlerdir. Efes Konsili'nde (MS 431), Meryem'in *Theotokos* (Tanrı'nın Annesi) unvanının teyit edilmesi ise Maryoloji'nin temel dogmalarından birini oluşturarak onun Kristolojik tartışmalardaki yerini pekiştirmiştir. Bu teyit, Meryem'in aracılık ve kefarete ortaklığı rollerini, bedensel göğe yükselişini ve kraliçeliğini içeren diğer Maryolojik doktrinlere de zemin hazırlamıştır.

20. yüzyıl, Maryoloji çalışmalarında önemli ilerlemelere sahne olmuştur. 1900'den itibaren uluslararası Meryem kongreleri, teolojik etkileşim için akademik platformlar sağlamıştır. 1920'ler ile 1950'ler arasında dikkat, Meryem'in kurtuluş sürecine katılımına ve Tanrı ile insanlık arasındaki aracı rolüne yönelmiştir. 1921'de Papa XV. Benedict, "Bütün Lütufların Aracısı Meryem" yortusunu isteğe bağlı bir bayram olarak onaylayarak bu teolojik temayı resmen tanımıştır.

Büyük dogmatik ilanlar da alanı şekillendirmiştir. Papa IX. Pius, 1854'te Meryem'in Günahsız Gebeliği'ni; Papa XII. Pius ise 1950'de Meryem'in Göğe Kabulü'nü tanımlamıştır. Bu ilanların ardından, teologlar "Bütün Lütufların Aracısı" gibi yeni unvanlar önermiş ve Meryem'in Mesih'in kurtarıcı misyonuna katılımını vurgulamışlardır. Özellikle onun aracılık ve kefarete ortaklığına ilişkin kavramlar, II. Vatikan Konsili sonrası Maryoloji'de öne çıkmış ve Meryem'in Kilise içindeki teolojik merkeziliğine katkıda bulunmuştur.

1950'lerde ve II. Vatikan Konsili'nin ilk yıllarında Kristosantrik ve Eklesiyosantrik şeklinde iki ana teolojik yaklaşım belirginleşmiştir: Kristosantrik model, Meryem'in ilahi anneliğini temel kabul etmiş ve diğer tüm ayrıcalıklarının buradan türediğini savunmuştur. Buna karşılık, Eklesiyosantrik yaklaşım, Meryem'i Kilise'nin bir prototipi olarak görmüş; saflık, itaat ve ruhani annelik gibi temel özelliklerini bedenleştiren bir figür olarak konumlandırmıştır.

Katolik inancının özünde Meryem'in İsa'nın Annesi ve dolayısıyla Tanrı'nın Annesi kimliği yer almaktadır. Bu rolü, onu Enkarnasyon'un gizemine ve Mesih'in misyonuna bağlamaktadır. Katolikler için Meryem, Mesih için ve Mesih'le birlikte vardır; bu nedenle Maryoloji, zorunlu olarak Kristoloji ile özel bir bağ içinde kalmalıdır. Onun Mesih'le olan birliği, aynı zamanda Kilise ile olan ilişkisini de şekillendirmekte; Kilise, Meryem'in kurtarıcı misyonunu sürdürmekte ve onun ruhani bakireliği ile adanmışlığını yansıtmaktadır.

II. Vatikan Konsili sonrası Maryoloji üç temel hat üzerinden gelişim göstermiştir: yenilenme, iyileştirme ve kültürel karşılaşma. *Yenilenme*, Maryoloji doktrininin Kutsal Kitap, Kilise geleneği ve çağdaş teolojik araştırma ışığında yeniden değerlendirilmesini içerir. *İyileştirme*, Meryem'in Kutsal Ruh ile ilişkisini ve inananlar topluluğu içindeki rolünü keşfeder. *Kültürel karşılaşma* ise feminizm, kurtuluş teolojisi, estetik ve Kilise'de kadınların rolü gibi modern meselelerle nasıl ilişkiye girdiğini ele alır.

Sonuç olarak, Maryoloji, Katolik teolojisi içinde canlı ve gelişmekte olan bir alan olarak önemini korumaktadır. Meryem'in teolojik önemini yansıtırken, aynı zamanda daha geniş eklesiyal ve kültürel bağlarla da etkileşim hâlinindedir. Tarihsel gelişim, dogmatik açıklamalar ve çağdaş tartışmalar aracılığıyla Maryoloji, Kilise'nin iman, kurtuluş ve insan deneyimine dair anlayışını hem şekillendirmeye hem de bu anlayıştan etkilenmeye devam etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dinler Tarihi, Maryoloji, Meryem, Katolik Teolojisi, Kristoloji, Eklesiyoloji, Antropoloji, Theotokos.



## Introduction

Throughout history, Mary holding the Child in her arms has been a striking image that has captivated humanity. Among Christians, the place accorded to Mary has been the subject of a wide range of theological reflection, extending from her motherhood to her divine maternity. In this context, particular attention has consistently been given to her person and to her role within God's salvific plan for humanity. Mary's presence beside Jesus not only renders his divine personhood more comprehensible, but also designates her as a privileged "witness."<sup>1</sup>

As a sub-discipline of Christian theology, Mariology is a systematic inquiry into the identity, role, and significance of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Its subject matter extends beyond Mary's place in Scripture to encompass the theological, liturgical, and cultural approaches that have developed over the centuries. Mariology is significant not only as a branch of dogmatic theology but also as a field that investigates the interaction between faith and culture. The figure of Mary within Christianity further lends itself to interdisciplinary study, particularly in light of her role in popular devotion, iconography, hymns, and religious rituals. When the general literature on Mariology is surveyed, it becomes evident that, in contrast to the studies carried out in the West, works explicitly devoted to Mariology or to Mariology within the Roman Catholic Church are noticeably scarce in our country. Among the studies produced in the West on the subject, works such as *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians and Consecrated Persons* edited by Mark Miravalle; Mitch Pacwa's *Mary—Virgin, Mother and Queen*; Hans Küng's *Women in Christianity*; Miri Rubin's *Emotion and Devotion: The Meaning of Mary in Medieval Religious Cultures*; Rev. M. J. Scheeben's *Mariology*; and Chris Maunder's *Our Lady of the Nations*, as well as periodicals dedicated to Marian studies, stand out prominently.

In Turkish literature, on the other hand, although there are in general works related to Mary, there are virtually no studies devoted exclusively to Mariology. The works that may be cited in this context include: Günay Tümer's *Mary in Christianity and Islam (Hıristiyanlıkta ve İslamda Hz. Meryem)*; Mustafa Alıcı's *"The Qur'an and Catholic Marian Theology" (Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Katolik Meryem Teolojisi)*; Sayime Durmaz and Satılmış Gökbayır's *"Mariology in the Triangle of Nestorius, Cyril, and Pulcheria*

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<sup>1</sup> Cyril Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", *Mariology*, ed. Juniper B. Carol (USA: Mediatrix Press, 2018) II/41-68.

and the Emergence of Nestorianism" (Nestorius, Cyrill ve Pulcheria Üçge-  
ninde Maryoloji ve Nasturiliğin Doğuşu); Saliha Gülnur Uzuner's "Mary,  
the Mother of Jesus, according to the Catholic Denomination" (Katolik  
Mezhebine Göre İsa'nın Annesi Meryem); Maksude Kurt's "The Goddess  
Cult and Its Influence on the Figure of Mary in Christianity" (Tanrıça Kültü  
ve Hıristiyanlıktaki Meryem Figürüne Etkileri); Halil Demir and Ahmet  
Türkan's "Catholic Family Traditions in the Feasts of the Assumption and  
the Immaculate Conception of Mary" (Meryem'in Göğe Yükseliş ve Gü-  
nahsızlığı Bayramlarındaki Katolik Aile Gelenekleri); Hülya Yıldız's "From  
the Historical Mary to the Mary who is the Object of Faith: Theological  
Transformations in the Marian Cult" (Tarihsel Meryem'den İmanın Konu-  
su Olan Meryem'e: Meryem Kültündeki Teolojik Değişimler) and "The  
Marian Cult as Nourished by Apocryphal Writings" (Apokrif Eserlerden  
Beslenen Meryem Kültü); and Rumeysa Çiçek's "Mary in Early Christian  
Theology" (Erken Dönem Hıristiyan Teolojisinde Meryem). A review of  
this literature reveals that, while there are studies broadly concerning  
Mary, the mother of Jesus, in particular, no studies are focusing on Ma-  
riology as such, nor on Mariology in the Roman Catholic Church.

This article is methodologically situated within Mariology as a dis-  
cipline that has developed within the Catholic theological tradition. His-  
torically and doctrinally, Mariology is a field that is directly connected to  
the Catholic Church's teaching authority, its Magisterium, and its theo-  
logical heritage, and it derives its conceptual framework and primary po-  
ints of reference primarily from this tradition.

In the qualitative research titled "Mariology as a Discipline," the his-  
torical-phenomenological method was employed. This method was cho-  
sen to trace the historical changes and developments at various stages,  
from the earliest period of the Church to the present day, both in the life  
of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, and in the discipline of  
Mariology that has arisen in connection with her. Accordingly, sacred  
texts, papal documents, and related scholarly works (books, articles,  
encyclopedias, theses, etc.) constituted the primary sources of data;  
these documents were examined to provide definitions, interpretations,  
and analyses of the subject matter.

### 1. Efforts to Define the Discipline

The term *Mariology* derives from the combination of the Greek  
words *Maria* (Μαρία) and *logos* (λόγος). In Latin, the equivalent expres-  
sion appears as *Maria* and *sermo* (meaning "speech" or "discourse"). In  
this designation, the element "Mary" refers to the mother of Jesus

Christ—acknowledged by Catholic dogma as the Mother of God, conceived without sin, and eternally virgin, and thus regarded as holy on account of these attributes. The suffix “-logy,” added later, conveys the notion of scientific or systematic knowledge. Hence, the term *Mariology* signifies not only knowledge grounded in faith but also knowledge of a scientific character. Accordingly, Mariology may be understood as “the science of the Mother of God.”<sup>2</sup> In this context, revelations concerning Mary in Christian literature, together with the treatises and narratives of the Church Fathers, and what is known about Mary and her salvific role among Christians, have provided the foundation of Marian theology. Likewise, from a Catholic perspective, Mary’s place and function within God’s salvific mission played a decisive role in the emergence and formation of the discipline of Mariology. In other words, the distinct treatment of this field arises from the conviction that Mary is not only the mother of the Redeemer but also the one who stands beside the Son. Indeed, the Catholic Church has regarded Mary not merely as the mother of Jesus Christ, but also as his associate in sharing the mission of salvation. As theologian Cyril Vollert (d. 1980) observed, Mariology is not a mere collection of scattered information about Mary associated with the birth of Christ; rather, it constitutes an organic system of truths logically articulated in the light of principles received from God. Furthermore, according to Catholic teaching, Mariology, as a component of the theological sciences, like other branches of theology, is learned through divine revelation and guides the faithful toward God. For Mary, inseparable from her Son, is conceived as the pathway leading to God.<sup>3</sup>

The term *Mariology* was first employed in 1602 by the Sicilian priest Placido Nigido (d. 1650) in his work *Summae Sacrae Mariologiae (Sacred Studies in Mariology)*. In this book, Nigido presented a systematic and independent study on Mary.<sup>4</sup> In the subsequent period, theologians endeavored to determine the place and significance of the emerging data concerning Mary within Christian dogma. Among the foremost Mariologists of the nineteenth century, Matthias Joseph Scheeben (d. 1888) emphasized Mary's position as a precondition for considering Mariology an autonomous discipline. If no meaning were ascribed to

<sup>2</sup> Paul Mahoney, “The Unitive Principle of Marian Theology”, *The Thomist a Speculative Quarterly Review of Theology and Philosophy*, (Washington: The Thomist Press, 1955), XVIII/445.

<sup>3</sup> Vollert, “The Scientific Structure of Mariology”, II/21-41.

<sup>4</sup> See Nicolao Nigido, “Summae sacrae Mariologiae”, *Summae Sacrae Mariologiae* (05 Mayıs 2024); Manfred Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, çev. Richard Chonak (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 91.

Mary beyond her physical mediation in the Incarnation of the Son of God, she would remain within theology merely as an instrument of the Incarnation. In such a case, Mary—and thus Mariology—would be treated only in the initial sections of Christology. Scheeben, however, argued that in addition to her role in the Incarnation, Mary must also be regarded as the Mother of God, mediator, co-redeemer, and intercessor on behalf of humanity within God’s salvific plan; therefore, Mariology ought to be conceived as a discipline distinct from Christology.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, the task of Mariology in Christian theology is the scholarly investigation of the revelations concerning Mary. The reason for this, as indicated above, is the discovery of Mary’s place and function in the divine plan of salvation. Ultimately, Mariology constitutes a sub-discipline that derives its principles and doctrines from theology proper. It shares in the truths of the other theological sciences and finds its counterpart in Scripture and theological sources. In other words, the sources employed are correlated with God, who is held by Christian faith to be the Truth.<sup>6</sup> Within this framework, the aim of Mariology is to explicate scientifically the graces, offices, and privileges granted to Mary. According to Catholic theology, Mariology concerns itself with divinely ordained realities that include Mary’s cooperation in God’s salvific work.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. The Historical Development of the Discipline and Its Pioneering Figures

In Christian theology, special attention has consistently been accorded to Mary, to her person, and to her role within God’s salvific plan for humanity. Mary’s presence alongside Jesus not only rendered his divine personhood more comprehensible but also contributed to her designation as a privileged “witness.” Since she collaborated in God’s plan of salvation, studies concerning Mariology have been conducted through the lens of her life and her exemplary significance for Christians.<sup>8</sup> In other words, prior to the seventeenth century the discipline was not yet referred to by the name *Mariology*; rather, the life of Mary, together with the views, treatises, and prayers of the Church Fathers concerning

<sup>5</sup> M.J. Scheeben, *Mariology*, çev. M.J. Geukers (London: B. Herder Book, 1946), I/xix-xxv.

<sup>6</sup> Vollert, “The Scientific Structure of Mariology”, II/21-41.

<sup>7</sup> Vollert, “The Scientific Structure of Mariology”, II/47.

<sup>8</sup> Vollert, “The Scientific Structure of Mariology”, II/41-68.

her, constituted the foundation of what would later become the discipline of Mariology.<sup>9</sup>

In the early centuries, particular emphasis was placed upon Mary's mystical dimension as one who leads to salvation through the Redeemer, and a Marian cult began to emerge. Veneration of her increased, feasts in her honor were instituted, and prayers were offered to her in Sunday liturgies. By the fifth century, one of the principal dogmas of Mariology—Mary's divine maternity—was discussed. It was affirmed that she rightfully bore the title *Theotokos*, "Mother of God," and in 431 the Council of Ephesus declared this title to be doctrine.<sup>10</sup> With the definition of the Virgin Mary's divine maternity, other key Marian doctrines also began to be discussed from an early period. Her role as Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix, her Assumption, and her Queenship of Heaven spread rapidly in theological reflection.<sup>11</sup>

During the sixth to eleventh centuries, encompassing the Late Patristic Period and the Early Middle Ages, debates focused particularly on Mary's death. Within this framework, her Dormition, Assumption, Queenship, and her roles as Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix between God and humanity were considered.<sup>12</sup>

Although in the early medieval period the discipline was not yet referred to explicitly as Mariology, Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153), later recognized as one of the most influential Mariologists, underscored Mary's pivotal role in the salvation of humanity. He expressed her importance through the metaphor of an "aqueduct" that channels the waters of divine grace to the earth. Bernard's dictum, "God willed that we should have everything through Mary," became a fundamental principle of Mariology.<sup>13</sup> This statement was reiterated countless times by popes and theologians up to the mid-twentieth century, including by Pope Pius XII, to underline the discipline's significance.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, debates persisted for centuries over doctrines such as Mary's Assumption

<sup>9</sup> E.R. Carrol - F.M. Jelly, "Mariology", *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Berard L. Mart-haler (New York: Thomson&Gale, 2003), 9/168.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen J. Shoemaker, *Mary in Early Christian Faith and Devotion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 203-234.

<sup>11</sup> Malachi J. Donnelly, "The Queenship of Mary During the Patristic Period", *Marian Studies* 4 (1953), 91-92.

<sup>12</sup> Carrol - Jelly, "Mariology", 9/169.

<sup>13</sup> Alessandro M. Apollonio, "Mary Mediatrix of All Graces", *Mariology*, ed. Mark Miravalle (USA: A Division of Queenship Publishing, 2007), 441-442. Juniper B. Carol, *Mariology* (Milwaukee: Mediatrix Press, 2018), 747.

<sup>14</sup> Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (HarperOne, 1994), 1239-1240.

—her being taken into heaven after death like Jesus Christ —and her freedom from original sin—controversies that persisted until the proclamation at the Council of Trent in 1854.<sup>15</sup>

In the subsequent centuries, significant developments occurred within the study of Mariology. The rejection of Mary's privileges by the Protestant Reformers, the denial of her mediation and spiritual maternity by the Jansenists, and the attacks directed against Marian devotion and doctrines in Adam Widenfelt's 1673 pamphlet *Monita salutaria B. Mariae Virginis ad cultores suos indiscretos* ("Salutary Warnings of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Her Indiscreet Devotees"), all prompted a notable acceleration of Mariological studies, particularly among Catholic Christians.<sup>16</sup> In this context, Catholics, albeit in works that were not always systematic, produced writings that emphasized Mary's perfection and holiness as the Mother of God, her freedom from both original and actual sin, and her universal mediation in the acquisition and distribution of graces.<sup>17</sup>

The first such work belonged to the German Church Father Saint Peter Canisius (d. 1597). He authored the earliest defense of Catholic doctrine and Marian devotion against the Reformers. In his work *De Maria Virgine Incomparabili* (On the Incomparable Virgin Mary)<sup>18</sup>, he explained Marian doctrines by drawing extensively upon Scripture and the Church Fathers.<sup>19</sup>

db | 611

Francisco Suárez (d. 1617), regarded by Catholics as the father of systematic Mariology, laid the foundations of the discipline in the seventeenth century by elaborating on the sections of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* concerning Mary.<sup>20</sup> Suárez grounded his theory on the conviction that Mary was the Mother of God, endowed with dignity, and therefore predestined by God. He argued that this privilege of election preceded original sin.<sup>21</sup> For Suárez, the Blessed Virgin was sanctified at the very moment of her conception in the womb and preserved from

<sup>15</sup> George W. Shea, "Outline History of Mariology in the Middle Ages and Modern Times", *Mariology*, ed. Juniper B. Carol (Milwaukee: Mediatrix Press, 2018), 1/267.

<sup>16</sup> Shea, "Outline History of Mariology", 1/267; Carrol - Jelly, "Mariology", 9/171.

<sup>17</sup> Shea, "Outline History of Mariology", 1/267-268.

<sup>18</sup> Petrus Canisius, *De Maria Virgine Incomparabili, et dei genitrice sacrosancta* (Roma: Excudebat Daud Sartorius, 1577).

<sup>19</sup> Michael O'Carroll, *Theotokos-A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1982), 282-283; Carrol - Jelly, "Mariology", 9/171.

<sup>20</sup> O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, 334.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Suarez, *The Dignity and Virginity of the Mother of God*, trans. Richard J. O'Brien (Indiana: West Baden Springs, 1954), 23.

original sin.<sup>22</sup> In *Munificentissimus Deus*, the following principle, cited from Suárez, encapsulates this view: “The mysteries of grace that God effected in the Virgin Mary are not bound by ordinary laws, but are attested in Scripture without contradiction or inconsistency; therefore, they must be revered with the same respect accorded to a divine reality.”<sup>23</sup> Suárez elaborated on the metaphysics of the mother-son relationship, clarified which New Testament sacraments Mary observed or was exempt from, and explained the reasons and consequences of her perpetual virginity.<sup>24</sup>

Another prominent Christian theologian of the period, Lawrence of Brindisi (d. 1619), also produced extensive works on Mary, especially in response to the Protestant movement following the Reformation. Lawrence formulated his Mariology as follows: the first principle of Mary’s nobility and dignity is her being *Theotokos*, the genuine and natural mother of the only-begotten Son of the living and one true God. For him, Jesus Christ is the foundation of all creation, grace, and glory, for all things were created for him. Within this framework, the destiny, birth, life, death, Assumption, and glorification of the Virgin Mary are patterned after Christ himself. This parallel, he argued, demonstrates her dignity and exaltation.<sup>25</sup>

Among seventeenth-century theologians, Giovanni Battista Novati (d. 1648) adopted and developed many of Suárez’s positions in his work *De eminentia Deiparae Virginis* (On the Eminence of the Virgin Mother of God), discussing Mary’s mediation, divine maternity, and her role in salvation. These topics were also addressed by the Christian theologian Bartolomé de los Ríos y Alarcón (d. 1652), whose work *De Hierarchia Mariana* (On the Hierarchy of Mary) contributed, along with other theologians, to the foundational development of the discipline of Mariology.<sup>26</sup>

Among the leading figures of Mariology and one of the most prominent Mariologists of his century was Matthias Joseph Scheeben (d. 1888), whose work made a substantial contribution to the field. Scheeben considered Mariology as a discipline distinct from, yet related to and integrated with, other branches of theology. He treated Mariology as an

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<sup>22</sup> O’Carroll, *Theotokos*, 334-335.

<sup>23</sup> *Munificentissimus Deus* (November 1, 1950), *Vatican (VA)* (30 Mayıs 2024).

<sup>24</sup> O’Carroll, *Theotokos*, 334-335.

<sup>25</sup> O’Carroll, *Theotokos*, 215-216.

<sup>26</sup> Shea, “Outline History of Mariology”, 1/269.

independent discipline governed by its own foundational principles.<sup>27</sup> Scheeben elaborated in detail upon the views of the early Church Fathers concerning Mary, her role in expiation for sins, and the relationship between the Church and Mary.<sup>28</sup> Scheeben also addressed Mary's sinless conception and her Assumption. Even before her bodily resurrection and Assumption had been formally defined as dogma, he maintained that Mary had indeed been assumed bodily into heaven. He distinguished Mary's mediation on behalf of believers from that of other saints, illustrating the distinction through the following metaphor: "Mary is not, like the other saints, merely an instrument that conveys the fruits of redemption to individuals; she is, rather, the instrument that generates and bestows those very fruits."<sup>29</sup>

In addition, Scheeben established a connection between Mary and the Church. Just as Paul, in his Letter to the Ephesians, likened the Church to a spouse and a bride, and as patristic writings and the Church Fathers used the expression "Bride of Christ" for the Church, Scheeben applied a similar analogy.<sup>30</sup> For him, Mary's maternity constitutes the origin and essence of the Church's maternity. The Church can attain the sanctity of motherhood and faithfully carry out its mission only insofar as it incorporates and acts through Mary's motherhood.<sup>31</sup> In conclusion, Scheeben demonstrated the first modern attempt to integrate Mariology into Catholic dogmatics and to establish it as an independent discipline. In this respect, his final work, *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik* (Handbook of Catholic Dogmatics), inserted Mariology within the broader framework of studies concerning Jesus Christ and the Church.<sup>32</sup>

By the nineteenth century, the Romantic movement, though characterized by opposition to medieval practices and dissatisfaction with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, nevertheless witnessed a spread of devotion to Mary, aided by figures such as Frederick William Faber (d. 1863) and John Henry Newman (d. 1890).<sup>33</sup> Among the leading Mariologists, Newman defended Mary's divine motherhood and emphasized that she ought to be regarded as the New Eve. In a letter to Reverend E.

<sup>27</sup> Scheeben, *Mariology*, I/XV-XVI.

<sup>28</sup> Genesis 2:18.

<sup>29</sup> O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, 319.

<sup>30</sup> Scheeben, *Mariology*, I/167-181; Flanagan, "Scheeben and the Basic Principle of Mariology", 379.

<sup>31</sup> O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, 319.

<sup>32</sup> McBrien, *Catholicism*, 1243.

<sup>33</sup> McBrien, *Catholicism*, 1243.

B. Pusey (d. 1882), he strongly affirmed that Mary should not be understood as a source of intercession but rather as a mediator between God and the faithful.<sup>34</sup> In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Newman undertook a comprehensive study of Marian research in the patristic period and throughout Catholic history, discussing matters such as Mary's status, her divinization, her cult, and her privileges.<sup>35</sup>

With the twentieth century, significant developments in Mariology took place. In 1900, the era of international Marian congresses began. In 1946, the Croatian Franciscan theologian Carl Balić (d. 1977) established the *Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis* (PAMI, the International Pontifical Marian Academy), which organized international Mariological-Marian congresses every four years, publishing the proceedings thereafter.<sup>36</sup> This academy subsequently became a papal institution in 1959. From the 1920s through the 1950s, efforts were devoted to clarifying certain terminologies regarding Mary's cooperation in God's salvific mission (*co-redemptrix*) and her mediation between God and humanity. The definition of Mary's universal mediation reached its conclusion in 1921, when Pope Benedict XV authorized the optional celebration of the feast of "Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces."<sup>37</sup>

614 | db

Among the developments in the field of Mariology, the most noteworthy were the declarations by Pope Pius IX and Pope Pius XII between 1950 and 1953, which defined the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the bodily Assumption of Mary into heaven after her death.<sup>38</sup> Following the definition of the Assumption in 1950, it can be said that new titles and attributes began to be sought for Mary. Among these, for instance, were the views that Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces and that she shares in Christ's work of redemption. Particularly after the Second Vatican Council, these two perspectives gained a central place in Mariology.<sup>39</sup>

In the Second Vatican Council, the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, accepted as a dogmatic constitution, was devoted to Mary under

<sup>34</sup> John Henry Newman, *A Letter Addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., on* (The National Institute for Newman Studies, 2007), 50.

<sup>35</sup> John Henry Newman, *Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, ts.), 181.

<sup>36</sup> "Pubblicazioni - PAMI", *Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis* (26 Eylül 2024).

<sup>37</sup> Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, 93-94.

<sup>38</sup> "Fulgens Corona (September 8, 1953)", *Vatican (VA)* (06 Haziran 2024).

<sup>39</sup> Avery Dulles, "Mary Since Vatican II: Decline and Recovery", *Marian Studies* 53 (2002), 9.

the title: “*The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church*”.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in *Lumen Gentium*, Mariology is revisited through the theological anthropology of Mary as the New Eve, and her significance for the Church is re-emphasized. The papal teaching neither denied nor diminished Mary’s privileges but instead restored the functional meaning of the titles accorded to her.<sup>41</sup> Later, in *Sacramentum Caritatis* (The Sacrament of Charity), Pope Benedict XVI emphasized that Mary serves as a model for the faithful as a symbol of the Church, and highlighted the truth that the Mother of God is involved in the distribution of all graces.<sup>42</sup>

Following the Second Vatican Council, it was often asserted that Mary posed an obstacle to unity between Protestants and Catholics. Yet in recent times, several Protestant groups have undertaken significant efforts to revive Marian devotion within their own communities. These groups have established Mariological societies and organized numerous conferences on Mary. Such developments suggest the possibility that, in the future, Mary may serve as a mediator of reconciliation not only between Orthodox and Catholics, but also among Anglicans, Lutherans, and Reformed Christians.<sup>43</sup>

### 3. The Subject and Structure of the Discipline

Building upon papal teachings, theologians have occupied themselves with explaining Mariology, and consequently Mary’s role as the Mother of all humanity, particularly in relation to the salvation of believers and her participation in the distribution of the graces necessary for salvation. This not only preserved Mariology as a distinct theological discipline but also necessitated its study alongside the other theological fields.<sup>44</sup>

Mariologists first sought to understand the structure of the discipline by asking the question: what constitutes the “first principle” or “fundamental mariological principle” by which Mariology may be defined? For instance, the Capuchin theologian Lawrence of Brindisi (d. 1619)

<sup>40</sup> “Lumen Gentium”, *Vatican (VA)* (06 Haziran 2024).

<sup>41</sup> Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, 100.

<sup>42</sup> “Sacramentum Caritatis: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission (22 February 2007)”, *Vatican (VA)* (10 Eylül 2024).

<sup>43</sup> Dulles, “Mary Since Vatican II”, 22.

<sup>44</sup> William F. Hogan, “The Fundamental Principle of Mariology According to the Magisterium”, *Marian Studies* 10 (1959), 57.

considered Mary's divine maternity to be the first principle, while Eadmer, as early as the twelfth century, emphasized that Mary's significance derived from her being *Theotokos*. The eleventh-century Greek poet Ioannis Geometres regarded Mary's virginity as the fundamental principle, whereas the French scholar Jean Gerson (d. 1429) understood her as a perfectly redeemed creature. In general, Christian theology, and particularly Catholic theology, is grounded in two mysteries: the mystery of the Trinity and the mystery of redemption through the Incarnation. Mariology, therefore, is situated within the second mystery.<sup>45</sup> Yet, as already mentioned, many theologians continue to stress that Mary's divine maternity must be regarded as its primary principle. Moreover, this maternity embraces all believers and grants Mary a paradigmatic role within the Church. In other words, considering both her relation to Christ and her relation to the Church is crucial for grasping the structure of the discipline.<sup>46</sup>

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616 | db

The structure of the discipline—the construction of Mariology—thus entails a comprehensive analysis of Mary's divine maternity, together with her other virtues, and an analogy with human motherhood. Mary's divine privileges originate in her divine maternity, which, in turn, entrusts her with the roles of redemptive collaborator for believers on earth and intercessor for their sanctification in heaven.<sup>47</sup> In general terms, Mariology is examined under three main areas. First, the nature of Mary's divine maternity and its connection with the hypostatic order is established. Here belong also Mary's special relationship to the Triune God, her cooperation with Christ as the New Eve, her mediatorial role in the salvation of believers, her motherhood of all humanity, and finally her graces and personal privileges—all of which constitute the framework of Mariology. Second, Mariology considers the prophecies about Mary in the Old Testament and her salvific acts for humanity as Mother of God in the New Testament. Third, Mariology studies Marian devotion and cult, including *hyperdulia* (the special veneration accorded to Mary) and the ecclesial practices of Marian consecration.<sup>48</sup> In recent decades, particular interest has also grown in areas such as feminist Mariology and anthropological Mariology.

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<sup>45</sup> Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", II/39.

<sup>46</sup> Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, 116-119.

<sup>47</sup> Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", II/24.

<sup>48</sup> Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", II/23-24.

It can be said that with the twentieth century, Mariological research witnessed significant developments. Numerous institutions and societies dedicated to Mariology were founded, journals were published, and various congresses were organized. Marian congresses, in particular, have made significant contributions to Marian devotion and scholarship in this period. The first international Marian Congress was held in 1900, and after the Marian Year of 1954, the frequency and scale of these congresses increased substantially.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, websites, encyclopedias, and dictionaries of Mariology were established. Among the many Marian organizations and publications, several deserve particular mention. The Pontifical International Marian Academy, founded in 1950, fosters Mariological research by organizing international congresses and coordinating the activities of Marian academies and societies worldwide. Collectively, these efforts underscore the importance of Mariology as an autonomous discipline within Christian theology.

#### 4. The Relationship of Mariology With Other Disciplines

Within the discipline of Mariology, it is possible to encounter almost all theological branches contained in Catholic dogma. For instance, in matters such as Christology, Ecclesiology, Eschatology, and others, nearly all theological debates are connected to Mariology. For this reason, it may be argued that Mariology has become a bridge where all major theological disciplines converge. In addition to theological disciplines, Mary and Mariology have also become a field involved in contemporary discussions within cultural encounters, anthropology, feminism, interreligious dialogue, aesthetics, art, film, and questions related to the role of women.<sup>50</sup>

Within Christian theology, two distinct schools of thought concerning Mariology emerged in the 1950s and at the beginning of the Second Vatican Council: a Christocentric approach and an Ecclesiocentric tendency. The Christocentric perspective emphasized Mary's divine maternity and sought to explain her other privileges on the basis of this principle. By contrast, the Ecclesiocentric approach primarily defined Mary as a "type of the Church," claiming that several essential characteristics of ecclesial reality were already present in her.

<sup>49</sup> Eamon R. Carroll, "Marian Congresses", *Mariology*, ed. Juniper B. Carol (USA: Mediatrix Press, 2018), 3/281.

<sup>50</sup> Naumann, "Mariology at the Beginning of the Third Millennium", 14-15.

Considering first the relationship between Christology and Mariology, it may be noted that in medieval Christianity the humanity of Jesus Christ became increasingly important for the faithful. For them, the incarnate Word was not merely a model to be imitated or a light to illuminate the soul, but rather a friend who moved with them in both body and spirit, in his full humanity. During this period, the question of *Cur Deus Homo* "Why did God become man?" was intensely debated. Put differently: how could a sinless human being emerge from a humanity universally tainted by sin, according to Christian theology?<sup>51</sup> The significance attributed to Mary and the sanctity ascribed to her may well be understood as an attempt to provide an answer to this very question.

Christology itself may be understood in both a narrow and a broad sense. In the narrow sense, it is the discipline that investigates why the title *Christ* was conferred upon Jesus and what this title means. In the broader sense, Christology explores the divine plan as expressed in the attributes ascribed to Jesus and examines their implications for his personhood.<sup>52</sup>

618 | db

From a Catholic perspective, Mary embodies the perfect harmony of the internal and the external. She is the one who, in a visible and concrete manner, gave birth to the Incarnate Word of God. Thus, within salvation history, Mary is the most significant and representative figure among humanity. By her obedience to God's commands and her self-giving surrender in conceiving Jesus, she is the exemplar of Christian discipleship. For this reason, she is also the one who most fully reveals the meaning of grace, redemption, and divine salvation within the Church—she is the New Eve. While Eve is the mother of sin and death, Mary, through her submission to God, becomes the symbolic mother of life and redemption. Through Mary, God became incarnate and was made manifest on earth as Jesus Christ.<sup>53</sup> In this sense, Mariology, being closely tied to Christology, cannot be studied in isolation. The concept of "mother" necessarily presupposes the concept of "child," and thereby implies a relation of belonging. Since all who are spiritually united to

<sup>51</sup> Eugene M. Burke, "The Beginnings of Scientific Mariology", *Marian Studies* 1 (1950), 120-121.

<sup>52</sup> Zafer Duygu, "Hristiyanlığın Erken Yüzyıllarındaki İsa Teolojisi Tartışmalarında 'Dinamik Monarşiyenist' Akıma Özgü 'Monoteist' Kristoloji ve Bunun 'Ebionit' Kristolojiyle Mukayesesi", *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 31 (Nisan 2018), 331.

<sup>53</sup> Edward L. Shirley, *The Relationship Between Christology and Mariology in the Writings of Karl Rahner* (New York: Fordham University, PhD Thesis, 1990), 233-238.

Christ through baptism also, in some measure, recognize his Mother as their own spiritual mother, Mariology, by its very nature, is organically interwoven with both Christology and Ecclesiology.<sup>54</sup>

Divine motherhood is the bond that unites Mary to Christ and, consequently, Mariology to Christology forever. For Catholics, divine motherhood is not merely a biological reality; it is the foundation of Mary's enduring union with her Son in his earthly life, in his mediatory work in heaven, and in his glorification. At the core of all Catholic belief about Mary lies the truth that she is the Mother of Jesus and, therefore, the Mother of God. Her motherhood incorporates her into the mystery of the Incarnation; thus, both the mission and the work of Christ are inseparable from her. For Catholics, Mary exists for Jesus Christ. Since they were united and inseparably bound together on earth, Mariology must also remain united with Christology.<sup>55</sup>

Another reason for this inseparable bond is Mary's collaboration with Christ in the plan of salvation. This collaboration can be explained as follows: by enabling the incarnation of the Son of God, by reconciling humanity with God, and through her obedience to God, Mary became a participant in the acquisition and distribution of grace. Just as she obeyed before and during Christ's earthly life, she continues to be associated with him in heaven. Although the act of distributing grace belongs properly to Christ, the Divine Mother shares in this work, entirely subordinate to and in harmony with her Son, thus exercising a real role in the life of believers.<sup>56</sup> In other words, by opening the door of the world to the incarnate Savior, Mary has been granted a rightful participation in God's salvific plan.<sup>57</sup>

The very word "Church" derives from the Greek *ek-kaleo*, meaning "to call out," "to summon," or "to gather." From this comes *ekklesia*, meaning "assembly" or "community."<sup>58</sup> While *ekklesio-* denotes the Church, the suffix *-logy* signifies "science" or "study." Ecclesiology, there-

<sup>54</sup> Mark Miravalle, *Mariology* (USA: Seat of Wisdom Books Queenship Publishing, 2007), XXI.

<sup>55</sup> Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", II/25-29.

<sup>56</sup> Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", II/27.

<sup>57</sup> Dulles, "Mary Since Vatican II: Decline and Recovery", 21.

<sup>58</sup> Mehmet Aydın, "Kilise", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2002), 26/11.

fore, is the theological discipline that studies the nature and mission of the Church—literally, “the study of the Church.”<sup>59</sup>

For Christians, Ecclesiology and Mariology constitute two essential paths through which they draw closer to Jesus Christ. For this reason, they have devoted special attention to both disciplines. For instance, in the early conception of the Church, the idea prevailed that one should “see the Church in Our Lady, and Our Lady in the Church.” This attitude resulted in the emergence of a group of believers prepared to accept all possible dogmatic developments concerning Mary. One of the foundational elements of Church theology is reflected in the Gospel of John: “When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, ‘Woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’”<sup>60</sup> Interpreted by the early Church Fathers (such as Justin, Irenaeus, and Augustine), this passage gave rise to the concept of Mary as the “Mother of the Living,” thereby reinforcing the unity between Mary and the Church. This idea is linked with Eve, the first mother of the living; the concept is fulfilled in Mary by her giving birth to the living God.<sup>61</sup>

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620 | db

For theologians in the first centuries of Christianity, the triad of Eve, Mary, and the Church formed a single image marked by a threefold transparency. According to Catholics, Mary, as the second Eve and Mother of God’s new humanity, owes her dignity to her divine motherhood. In a similar way, the Church owes its position to its claim of being the mystical body of Christ, to its role as mediator of religious life, and to its motherhood of all those whose lives are rooted in Christ. This similarity is often expressed in the statement: “As Mary gave birth to your Head, so too the Church gives birth to you; for the Church is at once both Mother and Virgin.”<sup>62</sup>

In the mid-twentieth century, ecclesiology rediscovered the close relationship between Mary and the Church. With Mary’s proclamation as “Mother of the Church” (*Mater Ecclesiae*) on 21 November 1965 during the Second Vatican Council, this title endowed the Church with a more human face and a more pastoral framework. In his 1987 encyclical

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<sup>59</sup> J.R. Lerch - D.M. Doyle, “Ecclesiology”, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Berard L. Marthaler (New York: Thomson&Gale, 2003), 5/36.

<sup>60</sup> John 19:26-27.

<sup>61</sup> Hugo Rahner, *Our Lady and the Church*, trans. Sebastian Bullough (Zaccheus Press, 2004), 3-10.

<sup>62</sup> Rahner, *Our Lady and the Church*, 3-14.

“Mother of the Redeemer” (*Redemptoris Mater*), John Paul II stated: “Mary embraces everyone in the Church, and through the Church she embraces all. In this sense, Mary as Mother of the Church is also its model and typology.”<sup>63</sup> This statement, by the Pope, ties the relationship between Mary and the Church, and thus between Mariology and Ecclesiology, to the very life of the ecclesial community. Through the title *Mater Ecclesiae*:

I. The Church began to read and interpret herself in light of Mary.

II. A corporate personality was attributed to Mary so as to enable a comparison with the Church.

III. The Church and Mary were identified religiously.

IV. *Mater Ecclesiae* united both Mary and the Church inseparably to Jesus Christ, who is God and Savior, thereby magnifying Mary’s importance for the Church.<sup>64</sup>

Pope Paul VI expressed the matter in “The Great Sign” (*Signum Magnum*): Mary is Mother of the Church not only because she is the mother of Jesus Christ and his closest associate in the new economy of salvation, but also because she is the model of the entire community of the elect. Her maternal role, nourishing and fostering divine life in the souls of the redeemed. This reality is profoundly consoling and, in God’s wisdom, has been made an integral part of the mystery of human salvation.<sup>65</sup>

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In conclusion, the Second Vatican Council marked a turning point in the Church’s understanding of her own identity and mission, which in turn influenced Mariology and Marian spirituality. With Mary proclaimed as Mother of the Church, she is understood, in a concrete and personal way, to represent the Church’s very identity, mission, and activity.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> “Redemptoris Mater (25 March 1987)”, *Vatican (VA)* (03 Ekim 2024); Bogusław Kochaniewicz, “Specificity and Originality of Pope John Paul II’s Mariology”, *Angelicum* 2/82 (2005), 268.

<sup>64</sup> Johann G. Roten, “Mater Ecclesiae: History, Theology, and Consequences”, *Marian Studies* 66/5 (2015), 1-48.

<sup>65</sup> “Signum Magnum (May 13, 1967)”, *Vatican (VA)* (12 Eylül 2024).

<sup>66</sup> Naumann, “Mariology at the Beginning of the Third Millennium”, *Mariology at the Beginning of the Third Millennium*, ed. Kevin Wagner vd. (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 7-8; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 31.

When examining the relationship between Mariology and Eschatology, it should be noted that the term *eschatology* derives from the Greek word *eschatos* (ἔσχατος), meaning “last,” and refers to the science of the last things. In its simplest sense, eschatology refers to death, judgment, heaven, and hell, while collective eschatology addresses the end of the world, the Second Coming of Christ according to Christians, the resurrection of the dead, and similar topics. In the twentieth century, however, the term eschatology acquired a broader meaning, coming to denote all transcendent dimensions of Christian revelation. In this way, it also encompasses the fundamental attitudes of Christians toward life and their striving to attain fulfillment by following the path of Scripture.<sup>67</sup>

According to Christians, Eschatology considers God’s entry into human history through Mary, by means of Jesus Christ. From this perspective, the divine has already become part of the process of human existence. Within the framework of Eschatology, Catholic Christians maintain that salvation is possible only through the Church. For this reason, since Mary represents the typology of the pious Church and is regarded as the model for the Church itself, she is directly connected with Eschatology insofar as she is the partner of the Redeemer. In other words, Mary is the type of the Church, which, by the Word entrusted to her in Christ, undertakes her religious journey and carries it out within eschatological dynamism. Mary’s faith and obedience to God have made her an integral part of eschatology. Hence, as affirmed in the Second Vatican Council: “Mary is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. In the meantime, she shines forth on earth until the day of the Lord shall come, as a sign of sure hope and solace to the people of God.”<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, Mary, for Christians, is the model of the Church within eschatological reality—she who receives God and gives Him, who experiences the world and responds with faith.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, according to Christian belief, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary stands as a powerful exemplar of eschatological reality. For them, the final earthly stage was inaugurated with the elevation of the Mother

<sup>67</sup> M.E. Williams, “Eschatology”, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Berard L. Marthaler (New York: Thomson&Gale, 2003), 5/342.

<sup>68</sup> “Lumen gentium” (06 Haziran 2024).

<sup>69</sup> Matthew F. Morry, “Mary, Type of the Church: Eschatology Realized (Presidential Address)”, *Marian Studies* 45 (1994), 275-281.

of God into heaven, and with her, and through her, the ascent of humanity into paradise has begun.<sup>70</sup>

When considering the relationship between Mariology and Anthropology, it is generally observed that the connection is established through the Incarnation and the role of women within the Church. The Incarnation establishes both the laws of biological and spiritual life.<sup>71</sup> Yet, the human being in question is not the natural, biological human, but rather the one created in the image of God in Christ, endowed with spiritual power. By accomplishing this, the Virgin Mary revealed, through the Incarnation, God's purpose in creating humanity. Through the Incarnation: (1) God has been revealed; (2) God has, through the Incarnation, entered into human history, acting not only by means of divine energy but also personally; and (3) the Incarnation has perfected humanity and the human body. In this sense, for the Incarnation to become possible, Mary had to fulfill all the required parameters. Thus, it can be stated that Mariology itself lies at the foundation of Anthropology, since in Mariology the aim is to find answers to the mysteries of humanity and of the human person in Christ. By directing herself to God and living unceasingly with Him, bringing forth Jesus Christ into the world, Mary revealed both God and humanity. Consequently, the Virgin Mary, by standing between humanity and God, enables humanity to resemble the Creator, while also enabling the Creator to resemble humanity.<sup>72</sup>

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The exaltation of Mary as the only human being perfectly redeemed bears significant implications for Anthropology. This influence is expressed in the vision of human personhood and also in the image of womanhood. The importance of Mary as a feminine subject has only recently begun to be developed through Anthropology.<sup>73</sup> Pope John XXIII, in his 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), identifies three features that characterize the modern age: progressive improvement in the economic and social conditions of working people, the political independence of nations, and the increasing role of women in political life.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Pope Paul VI, in his 1974 apostolic exhortation *Mariialis Cultus*, directed attention to the condition of women, and under the heading of Anthropology, advised close attention to the findings of the human sciences. The Pope noted that Mary constitutes a model not because of her

<sup>70</sup> Vollert, "The Scientific Structure of Mariology", II/67-68.

<sup>71</sup> Naumann, "Mariology at the Beginning of the Third Millennium", 16-17.

<sup>72</sup> Vasile-Răzvan Teacu, "The Mariological Anthropology" (06 Ekim 2024), 43-49.

<sup>73</sup> Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, 124-126.

<sup>74</sup> "Pacem in Terris (April, 11 1963)", *Vatican (VA)* (05 Ekim 2024).

social environment two thousand years ago, but because she was the first and most faithful disciple of Christ. Observing the continual presence of the Mother of Jesus throughout various epochs, he summarized her as the “new woman and perfect Christian... as virgin, spouse, and mother,” thereby encapsulating the most characteristic states in a woman’s life.<sup>75</sup>

The relatively new discipline of theological anthropology has also been associated with Mariology. Theological anthropology is concerned with the question of how humanity participates in the life of God. Theologians answer this question through the concept of grace. In this context, Mary is understood as one who owes everything she possesses to grace, while also standing as the perfect believer within the economy of grace. Through her lived experience, Mary exemplifies the doctrine of grace in a manner that rescues it from abstract and purely spiritual understandings. Mary, as the concrete realization of the proper relationship between God and creation, surpasses all other creatures. For Christians, by her creation and by her mission, she safeguards the goodness of embodiment—that is, of being human—together with the complementarity of the sexes, the dignity of women, and human freedom. Likewise, Mary safeguards the unique contribution of womanhood to the human race. Contemporary approaches to Mary emphasize that such realities can be lived without denying the sanctification of both man and woman through marriage and family life. In these respects, Mariology has entered the domain of theological anthropology.<sup>76</sup>

624 | db

### Conclusion

Mariology is a theological discipline that studies Mary—acknowledged as the Mother of God—in terms of her position and function within the divine plan of salvation, and is based on the scientific examination of revelation concerning her. In this regard, although in the early centuries no reference was made to Mariology as a distinct discipline, emphasis was placed on the mystical dimension of Mary as a savior who leads to salvation, and a cult of the Virgin Mother began to emerge. Subsequent doctrinal elaboration concerning her divine maternity, perpetual virginity, Immaculate Conception, Assumption, and mediatorship progressively established Mariology’s foundational framework.

<sup>75</sup> “Marialis Cultus (February 2, 1974)”, *Vatican (VA)* (06 Ekim 2024); Dulles, “Mary Since Vatican II: Decline and Recovery”, 14; Hauke, *Introduction to Mariology*, 124-126.

<sup>76</sup> Dom Elias Carr, “The Decisive Role of Mary in Catholic Anthropology”, 2008, 10-13.

Since the Vatican Council II, the discipline has experienced renewed dynamism through scholarly institutions, societies, and ecumenical dialogue. Contemporary research prioritizes the scriptural rediscovery of Mary, while expanding into hermeneutical, anthropological, historical, and liturgical studies. Current investigations critically analyze Marian liturgy and devotion in historical context, engage interreligious dialogue—particularly regarding “Mary and Women”—and explore processes of enculturation.

Post-conciliar development can be characterized by three primary trajectories: renewal, healing, and cultural encounter. *Renewal* denotes the reintegration of Mariology with Scripture, dogma, and related disciplines like Christology and Ecclesiology, enriched by historical, linguistic, and ecumenical inquiry. *Healing* emphasizes Mary’s relationship with the Holy Spirit and her role within the People of God and Christian life. *Cultural encounter* reflects Mariology’s engagement with modern discourses, including feminism, theological anthropology, liberation theology, aesthetics, and the arts.

In conclusion, the interaction between dogmatic certainty and historical process remains an area of ongoing methodological reflection in contemporary Mariology. Post-conciliar renewal has contributed to clarifying this interaction, though without effecting a comprehensive methodological reconfiguration.

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