

Can Mary be a Co-Redemptrix?

by Sebastian R Fama

Can Mary be a co-redemptrix? Before we can answer that question, we need to define our terms. To begin with, and contrary to what you may have been told, no Catholic this side of sanity ever believed or taught that Mary was in any way equal to Jesus. That would be heretical and idolatrous. Heresy and Idolatry are mortal sins. Anyone who dies with a mortal sin on his soul cannot go to heaven.

So, what do we mean by Co-Redemptrix? It should be noted that the Catholic Church has never given Mary this title. However, she does agree with the theology behind it. The title comes from tenth century theologians who explain that redemption was accomplished in three steps: (1) The Incarnation, when the Word was made flesh, (2) The performance, Christ's death and resurrection (the essential sacrifice which redeemed man), and (3) The application, whereby redemption is communicated to believers.

Jesus alone accomplished the second step. Mary cooperated in the first and third steps. Indeed, we are all commanded to participate in the third step: "Make disciples of all nations" (Mark 28:19). In 1 Corinthians 3:9 we are referred to as "God's co-workers." Does that make us equal to God? Does our work have the same value as His? Of course not! We merely work with God for the furtherance of His kingdom. It is only in this sense that we can be co-workers or co-redeemers with Christ.

Mary was given a choice when she was asked to be the mother of our Savior (Luke 1:26-38). Without any hesitation, she agreed. It is perfectly natural that we would honor her for her willingness to serve God's people. Do we not routinely honor pastors and missionaries for their faithful service? Does not the Bible instruct us to do so: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Timothy 5:17).

Bottom line; it was God's will that not only Mary, but every Christian should work for the redemption of their fellow man. To acknowledge as much is certainly no blasphemy. Mary receives special honor because she participated in this mission to a greater degree than the rest of us ever will.