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## Bread of Life and Seat of Wisdom

WILLIAM J. MALLEY, S.J.

In recent years a number of prominent theologians have devoted their talent to the study of the mystery of Christ.<sup>1</sup> This specific interest in Christology marks a significant shift from the special emphasis given to the mystery of the Church immediately following the Second Vatican Council.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this change in theological focus is not hard to explain. It should not be surprising that a mature reflection on the nature of the Church should quite logically lead to an attempt to get fresh insight into Christ since he is the head of the Church and its source of life.<sup>3</sup> Modern biblical scholarship, moreover, has challenged the systematic theologian to integrate its recent and, at times, provocative research on the New Testament into a better understanding of the person of Jesus. Finally, the intellectual and spiritual ethos of modern culture finds an instinctive appeal in the humanness of Christ. And this modern fascination with Christ's human experience and his total involvement in this world's personal and social concerns has stimulated the contemporary theologian to explore once more, from a different perspective, his total mystery.

If the spirit that has generated this fresh exploration of Christ's mystery is to bear all the fruit it has promised, it must pursue in a

1. Thomas E. Clarke, S.J., "Current Christologies," *Worship* 53 (September 1979): 438-48. Fr. Clarke gives a critical appraisal of three of the most notable modern Christologies: Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (New York: Paulist Press, 1976); Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, trans. Edward Quinn (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976); Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, trans. Hubert Hoskins (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979).

2. Gerald O'Collins, S.J., *What Are They Saying About Jesus?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. vii. It is of interest to note that the hierarchical magisterium seems to be following in the same direction. Pope Paul VI began his pontificate with the encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), and Pope John Paul II published his first encyclical with the title, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979).

3. Col 1:18; cf. Eph 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23.

systematic way one of the most basic implications of Jesus' humanness — the fact that he had a human mother. Such a systematic treatment of the relationship that exists between Jesus and his Mother should produce more benefits than a better grasp of her place in his life and mission. This new insight into the Marian Mystery could quite possibly shed greater light on the proper expression of devotion to Our Lady in the present-day Philippine Church. In the following pages we hope to briefly indicate a possible direction that a contemporary understanding of the Mystery of Mary might take.

### CHRISTIAN FEMININE SYMBOLISM

Feminine symbolism has always served to help articulate the Christian experience. At first glance this would seem quite natural enough. The New Testament inherited a rich and subtle feminine imagery from the Old Testament. In addition, the intrinsic analogy between the finality of womanhood and the Christian revelation would make it quite congenial to express the Christian experience in feminine terms. For both the Christian revelation and womanhood are intimately involved in the divine and human mystery of bringing life into the world.<sup>4</sup> The Christian use of feminine imagery, however, takes on a surprising dimension when the Christian community became aware that the historical Mother of Jesus realized in her own life all the values of womanhood and of total discipleship of her Son. This remarkable intuition would concretize in a living person the essence of Christian feminine symbolism and explain the unique role Our Lady has played in the Church throughout the whole of the Christian tradition.

This Christian insight into the intimacy between Jesus and his Mother caused a dramatic shift and an entirely new synthesis of the feminine symbolism inherited from the Old Testament. In their preaching, the first disciples of the Risen Lord presented a fresh interpretation of the key texts of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Although these texts consider Divine Wisdom

4. In the Johannine Gospel, for example, Jesus himself makes use of this type of symbolism. He dialogues with Nicodemus on terms of rebirth (Jn 3:1-8) and later he will compare his disciples' experience of the Paschal Mystery to a woman giving birth (Jn 16:21-22). St. Paul will also use the simile of the pains of childbirth and maternal care to describe his apostolate (Gal 4:19; I Thes 5:3; cf. I Cor 3:2).

to be feminine, the New Testament writers freely applied them to the glorified Jesus, because they perceived a similarity between the qualities which the authors of the wisdom literature ascribed to Divine Wisdom and those which they knew the Risen Jesus to possess. Like Divine Wisdom, the Risen Lord pre-existed, created the universe, and is the refulgence of the Father's glory.<sup>5</sup> In the Gospel tradition Jesus presents himself in his public life as the source of wisdom and the only person who can nourish us with its food. He invites all to come to him to find rest and learn of him who is gentle and humble in spirit.<sup>6</sup> He promises to feed all with his heavenly nourishment which is, of course, his own person.<sup>7</sup> And this wisdom that will give us life will be ultimately the revelation of the interior life of the Father.<sup>8</sup> St. Paul, for his part, sees the divine wisdom and power manifesting itself in the cross of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

The message of the New Testament would seem to be clear and consistent. Because of their experience of the glorified Christ in their midst, the Christians of the New Testament period were thoroughly convinced that Jesus was the total fulfillment of the search for wisdom of the authors of the Old Testament and indeed every sincere person. As the incarnation of Divine Wisdom, Jesus nurtured with the Bread of Life those in communion with him, since he alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.<sup>10</sup>

The first Christians were also fully aware that their experience of Christ as the Bread of Life was not only something personal but communal as well. For the divine and human wisdom he communicated to them was channeled in and through the Church. From this inner awareness of Christ's presence in the community, the New Testament writers also transformed the conjugal imagery of the Old Testament into a Christian context. These new Christian communities were certain they were living the actual fulfillment of the Old Testament's prophecy concerning the messianic marriage of Yahweh and his redeemed people. But as a striking proof of their awareness of the divinity of Christ, the New Testa-

5. Hb 1:3 with Wis 7:22-27; cf. Col 1:15.

6. Mt 11:28 with Sir 24:18, Prov 3:17.

7. Jn 6:35 with Sir 24:18-21; Prov 9:2-5.

8. Mt 11:27 with Wis 2:13.

9. Cor 1:19-25.

10. Jn 14:6.

ment replaces Yahweh with the Glorified Christ as the bridegroom in the mystical union. We find therefore the Church designated in the New Testament as the new Daughter of Zion, the Virgin Bride of Christ who brings forth her members and nurtures them through the life and wisdom she receives from her communion with her Spouse.<sup>11</sup> Like the learned scribes of the Scriptures themselves, the authors of the New Testament knew how to bring out of their storeroom of Old Testament feminine imagery things both new and old.

### SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF MARY

The first Christians also drew inspiration from another source besides the Old Testament in their attempt to explain their experience of the Risen Lord in their midst. They reached back into the period of Jesus' life before his resurrection and discovered in the events and persons of this time suitable symbols of how Jesus was actually relating to them in the Church. The Mother of Jesus took on a special symbolic significance in this amazing rereading of the past in light of the present. For these early Christians, Mary was not simply a person who brought Jesus into this world. She became the symbol of his ideal disciple, the image of the Church herself and the model of all feminine and spiritual values.<sup>12</sup> This initial symbolism will trigger a process that will continue and deepen in the course of the history of the Church. In fact, by the time the patristic period blossoms, Mary and the Church will almost be used interchangeably.<sup>13</sup> Another fascinating

11. Gal 4:26-27; Eph 5:32; Apoc 12:1-6.

12. Modern exegetes debate to what extent this symbolism is present in the mind of the New Testament authors themselves. For example, John McHugh holds that Mary does symbolize, in the Lucan infancy narratives, Israel and the Church. See John McHugh, *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1975), p. 37. A more recent study of a Catholic and Protestant task force on Mary in the New Testament came to the conclusion that Mary is simply presented in the tradition of the great mothers of the Old Testament and also anticipates the characteristics of the disciples of Jesus. See Raymond Brown et al., eds., *Mary in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 134.

13. Fr. de Lubac comments on this relationship of Mary and the Church: "The links between Our Lady and the Church are not only numerous and close; they are essential and woven from within. These two mysteries of the faith are not just solidary; we might say that they are one single and unique mystery. At any rate they stand in such a relation one to the other that each is enriched when elucidated by its fellow; more contemplation of the one is indispensable if the other is to be understood." Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Splendour of the Church* (Glen Rock: Paulist Press, 1956), pp. 199-200.

feature of this period of Church history was the new application of the wisdom texts of the Old Testament. Unlike the New Testament writers who saw in these texts references to Christ, the Church Fathers and the liturgy after the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) applied them to Mary.<sup>14</sup> Meditating on the intimate relationship between Mary and her Son not only in his historical life, but also in the life of the Church herself, the theologians and liturgists of that period perceived that Mary embodied the qualities of wisdom of the Old Testament since she had a unique knowledge of her Son and a maternal love for all his disciples, indeed for all mankind. If Jesus then could be aptly called the Bread of Life, Mary could aptly be called the Seat of Wisdom.

#### ACTUAL PERSONALITY OF MARY

A crucial question arises here that will have far-reaching consequences for a person's understanding of the Christian faith. Is this extraordinary personalization of Christian feminine symbolism in the historical Mother of Jesus and the designation of her as the Seat of Wisdom with all its theological implications, a revelation of the actual personality of Mary herself? Or is it rather an ideal picture of her drawn by the imagination of the Christians because this is the way they would like Jesus' Mother to have been or to be? In other words, can we be certain that no dichotomy exists between the type of person Mary really was and the image and symbolism that the tradition of the Church attributes to her?

A great deal rides or falls on how this question is answered. If there are serious reservations concerning the vital connection between the real Mother of Jesus and the portrait of her that we find in the authentic Christian tradition where she is depicted as his ideal disciple, the symbol of the Church and the Seat of Wisdom, then it would be next to impossible to cultivate any devotion to her. For it would be difficult to see how a Christian today could foster a deep personal affection for Our Lady and earnestly pray to her, unless she was really the truly exceptional woman who became Jesus' Mother and followed him to Calvary and beyond.

While this question is relevant, its answer would seem to be

14. Louis Bouyer, *The Seat of Wisdom, An Essay on the Place of the Virgin Mary in Christian Theology* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), pp. 45-48.

quite simple. For a careful exegesis of the Marian texts of the New Testament would seem to be an obvious and valid method of ascertaining whether a vital link does exist between the Mary we meet in the Gospels and tradition, and the Mary who brought Jesus into this world and raised him as her Son. But at present this method runs into a disconcerting snag. A sizable number of competent biblical scholars have serious doubts about the extent to which the scriptural texts can be used to reach the historical Mary.<sup>15</sup> While such hesitations do not necessarily deny the connection between the Mary of history and the Mary of the New Testament, no consensus exists among all reputable biblical scholars that a definite connection can be positively affirmed on the basis of the passages of the New Testament where the inspired authors speak of Jesus' Mother. Perhaps at some future date a general agreement will emerge among the exegetes on this issue. But while the debate continues on the full meaning of the Marian texts, it would seem more profitable to pursue alternate routes in the search for the actual historical personality of Our Lady.

One of these possible avenues for establishing the essential identity of the historical woman who mothered Jesus and the woman who is the object of Christian devotion might be to discover the mother through her son. This approach would entail three presuppositions. The first presupposition would be that the general contours of the personality of Jesus are faithfully delineated in the Gospel narratives.<sup>16</sup> Even if the Easter faith and the kerygmatic intent of the authors of the New Testament did undoubtedly affect profoundly their presentation of the historical Jesus, we are convinced that the Gospels do preserve the genuine attitudes of the man who was the carpenter's son from Nazareth.<sup>17</sup> The second presupposition for this method of finding the connection between Jesus' historical Mother and the Mary of the Christian tradition is rooted in the mysterious rela-

15. As evidence that this is not a universal view by any means see R. Laurentin, "Bulletin sur Marie, Mere du Seigneur," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Theologiques* 60 (April 1976): 314-15.

16. Peter Chirico remarks apropos of Hans Kung's present book, *On Being a Christian*: "There is mounting evidence that Scripture scholars are moving toward substantial agreement on the basic drives, patterns, and values present in Christ's earthly life." Peter Chirico, S.S., "Hans Kung's Christology: An Evaluation of Its Presuppositions," *Theological Studies* 40 (June 1979): 259.

17. Mt 13:55; Jn 1:45; 6:42.

tionship that exists between the human mother and her child. Modern psychology has shown her unique importance in the unfolding of the psychic life of her child. Because of the special physical and psychological flow of life between the mother and her offspring especially in the period of gestation and the early years after birth, she has a critical influence on the growth and eventual integration of her child's personality.<sup>18</sup> The final presupposition of this approach to Mary through Jesus is that Jesus' own human psychological growth followed the normal laws of human development and integration.<sup>19</sup> The true *in-carnation* of God's Son would demand that he was also susceptible to the influence of others and indeed vulnerable to them especially in the earliest stages of the awakening of his human personality. If these three presuppositions are found to be reasonable, then the way perhaps is open to coming to know the real identity between the historical Mary and the Mary found in the Christian tradition. In other words, instead of going to Jesus through Mary, we can go to Mary through Jesus.

#### RELATIONSHIP OF MOTHER AND SON

Caution must be exercised, however, in the pursuit of this method. The fact that the Gospels present Jesus as having a remarkably integrated human personality does not immediately mean that this integration is due to the direct influence of his Mother. No one person can be totally responsible for the help necessary for another to achieve his personality. And certainly in his formative years, Jesus' human personality would have been aided in its integration through the influence that the various persons and events of his life had on him.<sup>20</sup> But there was one area where a man's relationship with his mother can be crucial and even determinative. And this is his own sexual identity and

18. Karl Stern, *The Flight From Woman* (New York: Noonday Press, 1969), pp. 9-39.

19. Cf. Lk 2:52.

20. St. Joseph, of course, would have played also an essential part in the development of Jesus' well-balanced and integrated personality. Through his close and constant contact with him, St. Joseph would have helped to achieve Jesus' sexual identity as a man and would also have shaped Jesus in his human and religious values. It is interesting to note in this regard that while Luke emphasizes the role of Mary in his infancy narratives, Matthew stresses the part played by St. Joseph.



integration. A man's mother is the first woman he comes in contact with and his relationship with her is one of intense intimacy. In the context of this special relationship of mother and son, the mother has a unique opportunity to communicate attitudes and values to her son. And these can be inculcated on a deep subconscious level. Among the values and attitudes that the mother instills in her son is his appreciation of the feminine.

Part of this process of communication of values at this very first stage of the son's existence is the very quality of the relationship itself. The son's future perception of the nature of womanhood and his manner of interrelating with women are greatly conditioned by the manner in which his mother interrelated with him in his infancy and childhood. If his mother is careless or possessive in her love of him, a man can be seriously traumatized and develop an instinctive fear and contempt for women later on in his life. If, on the other hand, a son experiences the genuine warmth of a mother's love that includes the necessary liberty to become himself, he will have been given the atmosphere that will enable him to have the inner space to integrate and expand his personality. And one of the salient features of his personality would be his mature attitude toward other women. Because he had experienced a healthy relationship with his mother, he would not automatically look on all women as a threat; rather he would instinctively have a deep respect for them, even for those women whom others might despise or ridicule. Since he would have intuited the life-giving force of a mother's love in his own life, he would also be able to perceive the life-giving potential of women whose femininity might need to be radically cured.

#### JESUS' RESPECT FOR WOMEN

It is precisely in this area of Jesus' personality that the Gospels present him as having exceptional maturity. From all the Gospel material, Jesus is perceived to be singularly free from fear in his relationship with women and he manifests not a single trace of contempt for them. It is in fact remarkable that he does not exhibit any condescension towards them nor is he tainted with the normal prejudices that characterized his contemporaries in their

treatment of women. In fact he felt no constraint to observe the social conventions with regard to women that were prevalent in his culture.<sup>21</sup> His genuine concern and sensitivity reached even beyond the so-called decent women to those whom society considers feminine outcasts such as prostitutes and adulteresses.<sup>22</sup>

If this is the real Jesus, and we are certain that it is, then we are in the presence of a person sure of his own masculinity and at the same time deeply respectful of the dignity real or potential of every woman. If Jesus developed his human psychology according to the normal laws of human growth, then this marvelous integration would not be attributable uniquely, or even directly, to his divinity or a special type of infused knowledge. Rather, he would have achieved the beauty and power of his mature masculine personality through his human experience and through the assistance of other human persons who entered his life. And if we suppose, as is quite legitimate, that a mother has a privileged part in the development of her son's psychological and emotional growth, then Jesus' exceptionally healthy attitude toward women would be largely attributable to his experiencing in his earliest human existence an ideal maternal environment in which he could feel secure, accepted, and yet free to become himself.

The point of this line of argument to prove the identity of the historical Mother of Jesus and the one presented in the Christian tradition is simply this: the personal traits of Mary as a mother are discernable in the personality of her son. She must have been an outstanding mother who had a profound and beneficial impact on the life of Jesus because all our Christian sources indicate that Jesus was without any emotional scars left by wounds of neglect and possessiveness that a mother might inflict. More positively, Mary's impact on the growth of Jesus' inner life can be perceived in the ease and maturity of his dealings with women in his public life. The most reasonable explanation for this emotional and sexual maturity on Jesus' part would seem to be that Mary gave him an exceptional experience of the feminine in their intimate relationship as a human mother and son. In this context, Mary would have a large responsibility and should be given credit for the early formation of Jesus in his cultural and religious values.

21. Cf. Jn 4:24.

22. Jn 8:3-11; Lk 7:36-50, etc.

While naturally she would not be the exclusive influence on his life, she would have a predominant role to play in communicating to Jesus his Jewish cultural and spiritual heritage because of his constant and intimate contact with her.

### INSIGHTS FROM THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

The method of using the insights of the behavioral sciences, like psychology, to bridge the putative gap between Jesus' real Mother and the woman we meet in the New Testament should be employed in studying all the various facets of the privileged relationship that blossomed between Jesus and Mary. The data derived from the scholarly exegesis of the Old and New Testaments must be interpreted and enhanced with the valid contributions that the behavioral sciences and personalist philosophy can give us regarding the nature of the mutual and reciprocal relationship that exists between a mother and her child. Besides these insights of modern philosophy and science, a proper reading of the Old Testament can also deepen our understanding of Mary and Jesus from this new perspective. Mary's personal identity as a woman and as a mother would have been perceived in Jewish categories, since she would have been undoubtedly immersed in her culture and religious tradition.<sup>23</sup> The Old Testament's appreciation of the feminine should give us probable indications of how Mary viewed her own self-identity and the religious and human values that she was anxious to inculcate in her child. In this way of combining all the means that modern scholarship have put at our disposition, we are in a better position than ever before to investigate the awesome mystery that "when the designated time has come, God sent his Son born of a woman. . . ."<sup>24</sup>

### SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE OF MARY

While modern scholarship into the phenomenology of femininity, and the interpretation of the Old and New Testament, can serve as important tools in demonstrating that the Church has solid reasons for the choice of Mary as the living epitome of Christian

23. Luke indicates this dimension of Mary's personality in the way Mary praises God in her *Magnificat* in Luke 2:46-55.

24. Gal 4:4.

feminine symbolism, they are really only partial and tentative in coming to know who she actually is. They certainly are helpful in proving that our devotion to her is not absurd but eminently reasonable. But the ultimate truth about Jesus' Mother is discovered on a deeper level than reason. The full impact of the person of Mary will only be realized in an experience of faith and prayer. This spiritual knowledge of Mary differs radically from what science can reveal to us. Reason can tell us about Mary, but the faith allows us to know her personally. In the midst of our prayer to Our Lady, we contemplate her directly as both person and symbol and are made aware that she is not only the Mother of Jesus but our Mother too. In this encounter with Mary in faith and prayer, the Christian believer directly experiences Mary's personal love and she does not hesitate to open her heart to him in the same way she opened her maternal heart to her first-born. Ultimately, this experience of Mary in Christian prayer is the source of our complete conviction that Our Lord's own Mother, the Mary in the whole of Christian tradition, and the person we meet and love in our Marian devotions, are really one and the same.

This experience of Mary in faith and prayer opens up a new horizon in our understanding of the unique relationship that exists between her Son and herself. From the concrete awareness of Mary's presence in our lives, we can get a glimpse not simply of the influence that Mary had on Jesus' psychological growth, but the extraordinary influence that Jesus had on the formation of the Christian personality of his Mother. This formation, which was a lifetime process in the lives of Jesus and Mary, reached its perfection when her Son fully revealed himself to her as her Risen Lord after his resurrection and when he finally came to take her where he also is.<sup>25</sup> This is the Mary that the Christian believer experiences firsthand in prayer, as Our Lady exercises her spiritual maternity toward him in his life of faith.

#### FOURFOLD EVOLUTION OF MARY'S MYSTERY

In his attempt to fathom the mystery of Mary's motherly presence in his life, the devout Christian can discern a fourfold evolution in the ever-deepening intimate relationship between Our

25. Jn 14:3; 17:24.

Lord and his Mother. In the first period of her life, Mary's maturing personality would have been shaped by two predominant forces. On one level, she would have been affected in her personality development by her parents, community, and cultural and religious traditions. But on a more profound level in the very depth of her heart, she would have experienced in a unique way the direct influence of the pre-existing Word as he revealed himself to her through the grace of the Spirit. The Word of God would have in this way formed Mary's inner space and values in order to prepare for his conception within her womb.<sup>26</sup> After the conception of Jesus, Mary would begin the unique privilege of her maternal vocation of assisting Jesus in the unfolding of his human personality. At this phase of their relationship, Jesus, of course, would also have influence on Mary, because every child has an effect on his mother's personal growth, and because Jesus was so special.<sup>27</sup> But as Jesus matured in his human personality, the type of influence he had on his Mother would be transformed more and more as he revealed to her in so many ways the mystery of his kingdom. Since she was so attuned to the inner life of her Son, the time would come when she would be recognized as the choicest branch on the vine and Jesus' most privileged disciple.<sup>28</sup> In this third phase Mary would of course make progress in her understanding of the cost of discipleship, as she resolutely followed her Son and his teaching throughout his public life to the foot of the cross.<sup>29</sup> The final phase of her pilgrimage on earth in the company of her Son would be her life in the young Christian Churches after the resurrection.<sup>30</sup> It is not difficult to imagine her happiness as she would receive her divine Son when the liturgy was celebrated, and when she shared her memories with the new followers of her Son who had so enthusiastically accepted him as their Lord and Savior.

26. Luke presents the Annunciation as an apparition of Gabriel to Mary. But the real point of the annunciation is Mary's submission to the concrete "word" (*rhema*) of the Lord. Lk 1:38.

27. Again it is Luke who mentions so delicately this influence when he remarks that Mary pondered the events of her life with Jesus deeply in her heart. Lk 2:19 and 51.

28. Cf. Jn 15:1-11.

29. Exegetes have pointed out the significance of Mary's presence at Cana at the beginning of Jesus' public life (Jn 2:1-11) and at the end when everything was completed (Jn 19:25-30). In the mind of John, she was with him all the way if she was with him at the beginning and the end.

30. Luke is the only source that mentions Mary's presence after the resurrection but the context is important. She is waiting with the others in the Cenacle for the Spirit to come (Acts 1:14).

The culmination of this final period of Mary's earthly life was the moment when Jesus returned to take her where he was. Now she began a new way of life and her spiritual maternity reached its perfection. In total dependence upon her Son and having completely assimilated the Bread of Life, Mary becomes for all eternity the Seat of Wisdom in her maternal care for all those whom Jesus wishes to save and come to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>31</sup> This maternal solicitude consists in its essence in Mary's inviting her spiritual children to participate in her own spiritual dynamism. She is constantly explaining to us in her wisdom that true devotion to her means that we must be attracted beyond her to her Son and through her Son to the Heavenly Father.<sup>32</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Each period of the life of the Church has responded in a personal way, according to its own time and culture, to this invitation of Our Lady. And in this age of Christian renewal, the Philippine Church can not refuse the challenge implied in Mary's invitation. In other words, a genuine devotion to Mary here in the Philippines in the last part of the twentieth century, without abandoning the valid insights of the past, should search to integrate into a revitalized vision of the Marian mystery the three following elements: the best contemporary reflections on the psychological and philosophical meaning of womanhood; the best exegesis and interpretation of the scriptural texts that either directly or indirectly refer to Our Lady; and finally a doctrinal synthesis of Mary's present relationship to her Son in the mystery of the Eucharist.<sup>33</sup> If this challenge is met, then the traditional devotion to Mary here in the Philippines will be preserved and indeed will flourish as never before. For the faithful will understand why it is impossible to separate either in the celebration of the liturgy or in the concrete circumstances of their daily lives, the experience of the Bread of Life from the experience of the Seat of Wisdom.

31. Cf. I Tim 2:4.

32. Cf. Eph 2:18.

33. In their pastoral letter on Mary, the Philippine Hierarchy has insisted that devotion must be subordinated to the Eucharistic celebration. *Ang Mahal na Birhen, A Pastoral Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1975), no. 81.