The Virgin Mary, Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption: From the Church Fathers to Chiara Lubich.

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Abstract

This article discusses a series of texts on the Virgin Mary that are to be found among the writings by Chiara Lubich known as “Paradise ’49,” which describe the mystical illuminations that she, together with some of her first companions, experienced between 1949 and 1951. I begin by considering illuminations on Mary’s role as Theotokos, the Mother or Bearer of God, and then discuss the part she plays in the Redemption as the Desolata, or Desolate One. I conclude with some remarks about Lubich’s vision of Mary in relation to the Trinity, humanity, and creation (of which Mary is the highest synthesis). I show how Lubich partakes entirely in the tradition that begins with church fathers such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who write of the Virgin as the New Eve in the third century. Yet, I argue, Lubich’s insights add something new, particularly with regard to her understanding of the relationship between Jesus’s cry of forsakenness on the cross and Mary’s desolation as she participates in the agony of her Son and assents to the loss of her divine motherhood. I seek to show that Lubich’s new understanding of these events has profound implications for a variety of doctrinal matters concerning Mary, including her freedom from sin, her co-operation in the Redemption, and her role in actualizing the grace unleashed by Christ’s sacrifice. But more...
some respects, Lubich shows us how it is through losing God out of love for God that Mary, in her desolation, most fully mirrors the kenosis that lie perichoretic relations of the Trinity and offers us a model of how we may live Trinitarian love on earth and participate as cocreators in the renewal and transformation of Creation.

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