



Theotokos and Unity in the Context of the Theological Image of God: A Hypothesis of Dependence

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Abstract: This article addresses the presence of the *Theotokos* within the mystery of unity, analyzed in light of the theological image of God. It examines the hypothesis that the image of Mary is shaped by the theological image of God. Through an analysis of three Marian titles—*Mater unitatis*, *Mater unionis*, and *Mater communionis*—the study reveals how each reflects a distinct understanding of unity: as absolute oneness, reconciled diversity, and Trinitarian communion. The research confirms a dynamic and dialogical character of this dependence: the image of God conditions the development of Mariology, yet it is also Mariology—through its sensitivity to relationship, communion, and participation—that may inspire a deeper theological vision of God, especially in its Trinitarian dimension. Reflection on Mary in the context of unity not only enriches the doctrine of the *Theotokos* but also contributes to a renewed vision of both God and humanity.

Keywords: *Theotokos*, unity, image of God, Mariology, Holy Trinity, *Mater unitatis*, *Mater communionis*, *Mater unionis*, *koinonia*, communion

The theological hypothesis regarding the dependence of the image of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, on the image of God has been positively verified in the course of numerous studies by Polish theologians on Marian and Mariological texts (Ferdek 2007, 183–85; A. Napiórkowski 2024, 779–80; Pek 2009; S. C. Napiórkowski 2000). One of the key areas supporting this dependence has been a broad study of the Mariological teaching of the Church in Poland and the theological contributions of Polish scholars in the 20th century. The analysis of the source material has allowed the formulation of the following conclusion: wherever the history of salvation was grasped in a Trinitarian perspective—as the work of the Father accomplished through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit—Mary was presented in the role of a participant and witness of God's action. The growing conviction of God's providential guidance of history simultaneously resulted in an intensification of encouragement to give glory to the Triune God, after the model of the Magnificat hymn of the Mother of Jesus. A certain distortion of the Christian image of God, however, occurred when Mariological texts were limited to declarations about the oneness of God, while ignoring His Trinitarian nature. Equally theologically insufficient were those interpretations of the history of salvation which assigned to Mary a central place—supposedly by

divine institution—while at the same time passing over the fundamental significance of the Word of God and the sacraments. Consequently, wherever the Trinitarian vision of God was lacking, redemption was interpreted reductively, as the joint work of Christ and His Mother (Pek 2009, 307).

This study takes up the hypothesis in a new way: not merely as a historical affirmation of dependence, but as a tool for theological analysis of the relationship between Mariology and the development of the doctrine of God. The article aims to show that the image of Mary not only reflects, but at times provokes a correction of the image of God—especially when that image has been reduced to non-Trinitarian formulations.

This theological dependence gains special relevance in the context of the concept of unity, particularly in the title referring to Mary as Mother of Unity. This designation is not merely a devotional invocation or metaphorical expression but also emerges from deep theological reflection on the person of Mary—as *Theotokos*—in the economy of salvation. The title *Theotokos*, bestowed at the Council of Ephesus-Alexandria, was intended to safeguard the truth of the unity of divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ. In later acceptance—often simplifying the original meaning—the emphasis shifted primarily to the aspect of divine motherhood. Although *Theotokos* (literally “God-bearer”) expresses first and foremost the act of bearing (not conception, which is a key dimension of motherhood), it is the title *Mater* that became entrenched in Marian teaching and Mariology in reference to Mary as the Mother of Christ.

The history of Mariological development shows that this had theological consequences. The term “Mater” does not inherently imply reference to God, and this is what occurred. Christotypical and ecclesiotypical Mariologies clearly emerged. There is also a need to speak of a pneumatotypical Mariology, which attributes functions of the Holy Spirit to Mary. The human experience of motherhood came to the fore, fostering an affective Mariology. In this context, when reflection on unity extended to ecclesiological, ecumenical, and social dimensions, the title *Mater unitatis*—Mother of Unity—emerged.

In the 20th century, particularly during the Second Vatican Council, the complexity of the title *Mater unitatis* came to light. Though the term resonates with both devotion and doctrine, it was ultimately excluded from the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, despite its presence in preparatory documents and Catholic devotion (notably since 1947 in the Focolare Movement—Chiara Lubich, and the Schoenstatt Movement) (Królikowski and Kupiec 2000, 181–96). One reason for this reservation was the Mariocentric interpretation of the title, suggesting that Mary possesses a unifying function not only among the faithful of various Christian denominations, but even between humanity and God (Napiórkowski 1992, 33–42, 150–151).

The debate over the title *Mater unitatis* did not remain an academic dispute. While many theologians abandoned the designation as excessively Mariocentric,

others sought to overcome the isolation of Mariology from theology, discovering a renewed way to present the Mother of the Lord from the perspective of unity. Creative inspiration arose especially when the person of the *Theotokos* was reinterpreted in the light of the theological image of God—particularly as the Trinitarian and communal God, actively present in the life of the Church and the world.

The aim of this article is to present three of the most original theological concepts illustrating the presence of the *Theotokos* within the perspective of unity, each shaped by a particular theological image of God. The term “theological image of God” refers to the way God is understood and represented in theological reflection—as the Absolute, Creator, Mystery, etc. This image is neither uniform nor static; it has developed historically and influenced the understanding of all aspects of faith, including the role of Mary. The article investigates how various conceptions of God have provided the context and point of reference for the development of Marian titles relating to unity.

The method adopted in this study consists in identifying representative theological concepts and analyzing their original assumptions, with particular attention to how the person of the *Theotokos* is understood in the perspective of unity. Therefore, this work does not primarily address authors who merely repeated or disseminated established theological schemas. Representativeness was determined by the originality of the ideas and their reception in the scholarly literature.

Although the hypothesis presumes the dependence of the image of Mary on the theological image of God, it must be noted that its realization is not unequivocal. In many historical periods, the image of God itself was incomplete, simplified, or subject to reinterpretations—e.g., as a monolithic God of power, ignoring the communal structure of the Trinity. In such cases, Mariology did not simply “adapt” to the image of God, but rather revealed tensions that required rethinking the theology of God itself. Hence, the difficulty of verifying the hypothesis increases as the researcher is confronted not only with the image of Mary but also with the evolving understanding of God. This article attempts to interpret that relationship in a dynamic theological key, accounting for the influence of Mariology on correcting, deepening, or challenging a reduced image of God.

1. *Mater Unitatis* and *Deus Unus*: *Theotokos* and the Mystery of Absolute Divine Unity

In 1962, the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council commenced. Carlo Balić, a Mariologist of significant scholarly standing and ecclesial authority (S. C. Napiórkowski 1992, 19–24), presented a proposed text on Mary: *De Maria matre Iesu et matre Ecclesiae*, in which one chapter was devoted to “Fautrix et Mater unitatis christianae” (Aračić 1980, 275–76). The author expressed the conviction that:

[Mary—K.P.] is the bond of unity (*vinculum unionis*) among Christians and the most powerful mediatrix in the matter of uniting humanity with Christ.... This Mother of the Church, through her most powerful intercession, will promptly obtain the gift of unity within the Christian family, which is the most excellent fruit of her intercession. (S. C. Napiórkowski 1992, 150)

Balić's proposal was not accepted by the Council Fathers and did not form the basis for the final drafting of the conciliar text. The inclusion of the title *Mater unitatis* in conciliar documents was likewise abandoned. Nonetheless, the question of Christian unity became the subject of ongoing theological reflection. In 1965, Pope Paul VI explicitly employed the title *Mater unitatis*, encouraging efforts toward Christian unity.

The citation from the Croatian Mariologist, albeit without extensive context, is comprehensible to those familiar with the prevalent theological discourse on God in the mid-20th century. Many theologians at the time noted—often critically—that a pre-Trinitarian image of God had become widespread. Christ was predominantly perceived as God in the glory of the Father, while pneumatology remained marginal.

The roots of this reductive image of God reach back to the era of conflict with Arianism. At the turn of the first millennium, the idea of mediation to Christ arose, and with it developed a theology of Mary's and the saints' intercession (Jungmann 1968). In Balić's brief formulation, it is evident that the expression *vinculum unionis*—traditionally referring to the Holy Spirit in Patristic thought—is attributed to Mary. The efficacy of the action of Christ and the Spirit is thereby shifted to the background. Such a formulation of the intercessory role of the *Theotokos* implies a vision of God who must be persuaded to heed the Christian desire for unity—an implication that risks distorting the Trinitarian structure of salvific action (Pek 2024).

The title *Mater unitatis* again became the subject of theological reflection in 2018. The German Mariological Society organized a congress on this topic, and the proceedings were edited by Manfred Hauke (2020). In his opening lecture, Hauke referred at the outset to the transcendental dimension of the concept of unity. He emphasized the oneness and unity that exists in God (Hauke 2020, 17). The novelty of his interpretation of unity, as expressed in the title "Mother of Unity," lay in the fact that he understood it not only in light of the mystery of absolute divine unity, but as the mystery of the One God in Three Persons. It is worth pausing at the broader context of the statement under discussion in order to grasp the structure of the theological argument being made. The transcendental unity also includes properties of being such as truth, goodness, and beauty. From the perspective of the relation between unity and truth, one must refer to the High Priestly Prayer of Christ recorded in the Gospel of John (John 17:20–21, 26). In this prayer, the close bond between unity and faith is clearly shown, a bond which finds its orientation in Christ and at the same

time constitutes a confirmation of the claim of truth, as emphasized by the words (John 17:17). Such unity in truth leads to communion with God, and at the same time separates from those who reject the truth. This becomes especially evident in the concluding passages of the Eucharistic Discourse in the fourth Gospel, where many disciples—scandalized by Jesus’ demanding teaching—withdraw (John 6:66). In this context Peter appears as the representative of those who remain with the Master, professing their trust in Him (John 6:68). Unity cannot be considered apart from truth, but also not apart from transcendental goodness, which appears as the goal of striving and the expression of love. The category of beauty also has its place here, since the motif of “glory” appears in the prayer, interpreted as the radiance of God’s presence (John 17:22) (Hauke 2020, 18).

Hauke’s theological reconstruction of the Christian image of God makes it clear that unity must be understood as revealed, not as derived from human notions. Thus, the Mother of the Lord can be presented as a participant in the divine work of unity. The Three Divine Persons emerge as the model and cause of unity. Hauke, however, retains the title *Mater unitatis* without directly addressing its historical interpretive burdens. He acknowledges them but does not engage them explicitly.

A similar approach is adopted by Adam Wojtczak (a distinguished Polish scholar of Marian titles) in his interpretation of the title *Mater unitatis*. Familiar with the materials from the German academic session (Wojtczak 2021), he prepared his own study in which his interpretation is clearly conditioned by the theological image of God and situated within the broad context of revelation and faith experience:

To grasp the theological significance of the title “Mother of Unity,” one must contemplate Mary’s life and mission in the light of the Trinitarian mystery of God, whose providential plan is the central reality of Revelation and faith.... Mary was eternally inscribed in the salvific design of the Triune God, the source and exemplar of unity. (Wojtczak 2024, 121)

Wojtczak’s theological presentation ensures that the image of Mary as Mother of Unity does not arise from autonomous reflection on her person, but from contemplation of the revealed God, who in His inner life is a communion of Persons and the source of all unity. The *Theotokos* thus appears as a living sign of that which originates “from the will of the Father”:

In the divine economy of salvation there are no coincidences. Everything has its “source in the will of the Father.” He is also—as the collect for the Mass “Mary, Mother of Unity” proclaims—“the source of unity and concord.” (Wojtczak 2024, 122)

In this perspective, Mary does not so much “bring about” unity as she allows herself to be encompassed by it—first by the Father’s love, and then by the mercy that transforms her and makes her “the first witness of the Father’s saving love”:

She became the “first witness of the Father’s saving love,” the one who, in a unique way, more than anyone else, experienced God’s mercy.... The Father “willed that there be no barrier between the Mother and the Son. No shadow should obscure their bond.” (Wojtczak 2024, 122–23)

It is this direct and unbreakable relationship with the Son, through the action of the Holy Spirit, that grounds her exceptional place in the work of unity. Christ—as “the author and lover of unity”—chose her precisely because in her He could manifest the fullness of communion that ought to exist between God and humanity:

He, ... the author and lover of unity, chose for Himself a Mother of virginal body and heart.... She conceived Him not only in faith but also in her body.... She proved to be the link between the Redeemer and the human race. The bond broken by sin was graciously restored. (Wojtczak 2024, 124–25)

Wojtczak also emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit, who acts through Mary as the Spirit of unity, peace, and reconciliation. Thus, the “Marian title” *Mater unitatis* (as he calls it in the title of his article) is situated within the full Trinitarian dynamism:

She was the living instrument of the “Spirit of concord and unity, peace and reconciliation....” Mary gave her response of love on behalf of the entire human nature. Consequently, her cooperation with the Spirit in the Incarnation—their shared fruitfulness—brought forth the incarnate Son of God into the world. (Wojtczak 2024, 128–29)

While retaining the title *Mater unitatis*, Wojtczak introduces additional theological images—such as icon, servant, instrument of the Spirit—intended not merely for semantic enrichment but for expressing the multidimensional nature of Mary’s participation in the mystery of unity, rooted in God as the Holy Trinity:

Mary serves Christian unity in two ways: she is both its icon and intercessor.... Her maternal influence upon Jesus’ disciples ... continues to be active in the work of Christian unity. (Wojtczak 2024, 130–131)

The use of diverse terms allows Wojtczak to demonstrate that the *Theotokos* does not function as an external symbol of unity, but as a person truly united with the divine work of unity and salvation. Her action as the icon of unity flows from her profound communion with Christ and the Holy Spirit, revealing her as the locus of divine harmony.

The title *Mater unitatis*, as presented in Wojtczak’s extended interpretation, is complemented by theological images that transcend a merely literal understanding of *mater*. The most radical step in this direction is taken by Polish theologian

Andrzej Napiórkowski (2018), who explicitly presents the *Theotokos* as the *Servant of Unity*. Though in other writings he uses the title “Mother of Unity,” he also employs terms that present the *Theotokos* in the mystery of unity not only as Mother, but also as Sister. What unites these expanded interpretive perspectives—Wojtczak’s and A. Napiórkowski’s—is the central role of the theological image of God.

In conclusion, the ontological understanding of divine oneness and unity—though revealed through the Incarnation and Redemption—initially placed the *Theotokos* as the agent of unity, particularly through her intercession. Yet the salvific work revealed a deeper truth: it is the Triune God who is the true author of unity, while Mary participates in this work as Servant. Her mission is not confined to motherhood—she also appears as Sister and model of communion, united with the will of the Father through the Word and the Spirit.

2. *Mater Unionis* and *Deus Mediator*: *Theotokos* as the Icon of Divine Reconciliation

In available theological literature, there is a lack of comprehensive studies devoted specifically to the title *Mater unionis*. Nevertheless, this designation can be observed functioning both in the context of popular devotion and in academic reflection, particularly within the Czech theological tradition. The title, applied to the *Theotokos*, is closely linked to the venerated image of Mary as the “Mother of Union” (*Matka jednoty*) in Velehrad, and is deeply embedded in the spirituality of this region of Central Europe (Pavlik 2006).

In the second half of the 19th century, on the occasion of the millennial anniversary of the mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius—the apostles to the Slavs—Velehrad became a center of spiritual renewal, inspired by their legacy. As a result, numerous congresses were organized there (1907–1936) focusing on the idea of Christian unity between East and West (Górka 2006–2007). During this time, a Cyrillo-Methodian apostolate developed, and the Byzantine rite liturgy was celebrated in Church Slavonic. Within this spiritual and cultural context, the title *Mater unionis* became firmly established—expressing not only faith in reconciliation but also openness to the diversity of Christian traditions (Budniak 2009, 41–42).

The legacy of Cyril and Methodius is characterized by the message of unity in diversity. These apostles, originating from Byzantium, founded a Church that remained in communion with Rome while remaining open to local languages and cultures. Their mission became a symbol of Christianity rooted in tradition yet open to inculturation. The desire to live in united faith while respecting differences inspired reflection on a Christian culture built in dialogue and diversity. However, it must be emphasized that the primary focus was the mystery of unity in Christ.

In this context, the invocation of Mary as *Mater unionis* points to her profound relationship with the work of Jesus Christ—*Unus Mediator*—who reconciled humanity with God and imparted to the Church the Spirit of reconciliation. The application of this title to the *Theotokos* thus signifies not only her spiritual maternity toward the Church, but also her mission of uniting Christians through prayer and the witness of life.

The title *Mater unionis* therefore deserves deeper theological reflection. Its originality lies in expressing the idea of unity in diversity—rooted not in human compromise, but in God Himself, revealed in Jesus Christ. Mary, as the Mother of Reconciliation, appears not merely as a symbol of spiritual unity but as a living icon of the one Church that abides in the mystery of the Three Divine Persons.

Liturgical and ecumenical sources (Jelly 1978; Triacca 2001; Pałęski 2012) may offer fruitful assistance in reflecting on the presence of the *Theotokos* in the mystery of reconciled unity. These sources often emphasize an original image of the Triune God and provide important contributions to the theological understanding of unity-in-diversity.

3. *Mater Communionis* and *Unus Deus in Tribus Personis: Theotokos* in the Heart of Trinitarian Love

In 1994, the University of Navarra in Pamplona (Spain) published a doctoral dissertation by Anthony Anderson, who employed the title *Mater communionis* to explain the theological meaning of the Marian title “Mother of the Church.” Like *Mater unitatis*, this title had been widely discussed in the mid-20th century but was ultimately not included in the official documents of the Second Vatican Council. Nevertheless, both titles found a place in the teaching of Pope Paul VI, who explicitly encouraged theologians to reflect on them, and preserved them in liturgy and devotional practice.

Anderson’s work did not attract much attention from scholars practicing so-called communal Mariology (e.g., Marek Jagodziński). Such neglect seems unjustified, given that the author used the title *Mater communionis* to illuminate the theological significance of *Mater Ecclesiae*—on the assumption that it must be interpreted within the mystery of God:

One great teaching confirmed by the title [*Mater Ecclesiae*—K.P.] is that the Church is an intimate, mystical communion united to the Trinity through Christ. A cornerstone of Vatican II’s pedagogy is the ecclesiology of *communio*. Mary seals that communion as *Mater Ecclesiae*. (Anderson 1994, 220)

The originality of Anderson's approach lies in his desire to explain the title "Mother of the Church" in the context of the mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ. He drew upon conciliar methodology, which placed the theological image of God at the starting point of ecclesiology.

Of course, if the ecclesial maternity fosters and teaches true *koinonia*, then horizontal, human communion is neither the only nor the first communion promoted. Horizontal communion in the Church depends on the vertical communion by the Father with the Word in the Spirit. In other words, if Mary effects fraternity in the Church, it is because (through God's grace) she helps effect the unity of all Christians with God. The mystical brotherhood of the saints springs from our brotherhood with Christ, our filiation under the Father, and our bearing of the Holy Spirit. (Anderson 1994, 282)

The interpretation of the title *Mater communionis*, rooted in the theological image of God, also reveals the specificity of the mystery of unity within the Holy Trinity. In this perspective, unity has a personal and relational character. The *Theotokos*, present in the midst of the Church—*communio*—appears not only as a Mother involved in the lives of her children (where relationships are key), but also as a Sister. Anderson, in a highly condensed manner, expresses the multidimensional nature of the truth about the *Theotokos* in the unity of God and humanity.

The phrase "Mary seals that communion," as used by Anderson, is theologically ambiguous and may raise concerns, as it suggests a constitutive role for Mary in building the Church's communion with the Holy Trinity. The term "seal" can be interpreted as confirmation or completion, but also as closure or conclusion, which risks misattributing to Mary a function reserved for Christ and the Holy Spirit. In theological tradition, it is precisely the Holy Spirit who is considered the "seal" of God and the agent of unity. According to Revelation, Christ alone is the Mediator, and *communio* finds its source in the inner life of the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless, if understood symbolically and analogically, one may affirm that Mary "seals" communion in the sense that she fully embodies it, confirms it by her life, and supports it as *Mater Ecclesiae*. Her *fiat* and enduring presence in the mystery of the Church make her a model and icon of perfect relationship with God. This phrase should, therefore, be interpreted with theological caution—to avoid assigning Mary a role proper to the Holy Spirit—while presenting her as a privileged participant and sign of the Church's communion with God.

Without directly referencing Anderson's research or the title *Mater communionis* promoted by him, Jagodziński produced a study titled *An Outline of Communional Mariology*. The author explores the person of the *Theotokos* from the theological perspective embedded in the Greek word *koinonia*. He demonstrates familiarity with the title *Mater unitatis* (Jagodziński 2019, 181), but it does not play a central role in his formulation of a unique concept of "communional Mariology," which goes beyond

the concept of unity itself. In fact, almost all titles referring to the *Theotokos* are connected by the author to the category of *koinonia*:

... the titles of Mary, which express the communal specificity of her position and role in the faith and life of the Church, form, when arranged together, a kind of “Marian litany of communion”: Gate of the Communion of Salvation, Immaculate Seal of Communion, Mother of the Communion of the Incarnation (divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ), Virgin Sign of the Communion of the New Creation, Bride of the Communion (of the Holy Trinity), Mother of the Communion of Joy, Mother of the Communion of Light, Mother of the Communion of Suffering, Mother of the Communion of Pain ..., Mother of Familial Communion, Mother of the Communion of Nations, Mother of Ecumenical Communion. (Jagodziński 2019, 186)

Jagodziński distances himself from the Latin term “*communio*,” which, in his view, unduly restricts the meaning of *koinonia* to a purely social or institutional dimension. He argues that such a reduction overlooks the theological depth and spiritual dynamism of the Greek notion, which embraces not only external forms of community but also the inner mystery of participation in divine life. For Jagodziński, *communio* does not adequately convey this richness, since it tends to emphasize institutional aspects of ecclesial organization and external unity, whereas *koinonia* highlights the interpersonal and relational character of existence itself. Consequently, he insists that both categories must be understood in their deepest sense—as expressions of an intensified personal relationality in which love, reciprocity, and the lived experience of communion are central and find their ultimate foundation in the life of the Triune God. The essence of this relation is the full co-existence of persons, their deep union, and mutual indwelling, which express the dynamic character of life as both given and shared. In this light, *koinonia* is not confined to a mere external bond but encompasses the entire reality of interpersonal relations rooted in participation in divine unity, which, in Christian theology, finds its ultimate foundation in God himself (Jagodziński 2019, 8).

In the context of this present study—devoted to the presence of the *Theotokos* in the mystery of unity as conditioned by the image of God—Jagodziński’s proposal enriches theological reflection through the postulate of discovering God as *Mysterium communionale*. This theological view also leads to a renewed anthropological vision, which the author describes as communal anthropology. From this vantage point, both the titles *Mater communionis* and *Mater unitatis* not only refer to the mystery of God but also reveal a renewed image of the human being. Unity here appears as an anthropological value: personal and relational. The starting point of the reflection remains the reality of divine *koinonia*. Consequently, it is impossible to undertake Mariological questions without reference to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, understood as the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The biblical texts

that deal with themes related to the person of Mary focus above all on her relation to God the Father, on her unique role as the Mother of Jesus Christ, and on the special action of the Holy Spirit in her life. In theological terms, Mary thus appears as a person deeply inscribed in the Trinitarian dynamic of love, becoming thereby not only the recipient but also the participant of the divine communion. It is precisely this perspective that allows a better understanding of her place in the history of salvation and her unrepeatable participation in the economy of salvation (Jagodziński 2019, 8).

Given these sources and reflections, one may conclude that the title *Mater communionis* allows for a deeper grasp of the relational character of unity, rooted in the Holy Trinity. Mary as *Theotokos* participates in the mystery of salvation history not only as Mother (Lekan 2019), but also as Sister and icon of *koinonia*. True unity flows from the *koinonia* of God and finds its human reflection in Mary's communal participation.

Conclusion

This article has presented selected theological concepts that illustrate the presence of the *Theotokos* within the mystery of unity, as shaped by the evolving image of God. Based on a selective analysis, a systematic framework was proposed through three Marian titles: *Mater unitatis*, *Mater unionis*, and *Mater communionis*.

The research conducted confirms the hypothesis regarding the dependence of the image of Mary on the theological image of God. At the same time, it was shown that in some instances, it is precisely the development of Mariology—especially the emergence of new devotional titles—through its sensitivity to the categories of relationality, mediation, and communion, that inspired theologians to deepen their understanding of the image of God, particularly in a Trinitarian perspective. The relationship, therefore, is not only one of dependence but also dialogical in nature, and at times corrective with respect to reduced conceptions of God.

The most frequently used title—*Mater unitatis*—underwent significant reinterpretation: from being grounded in the image of God as absolute unity, toward an understanding of Trinitarian unity. This was accompanied by an effort to expand the understanding of Mary's divine motherhood to include other dimensions of her identity—among them, as Sister in unity. The unity of which Mary is a sign is not limited merely to an ecclesial or ecumenical dimension.

The title *Mater unionis* emphasizes unity-in-diversity—rooted in the relational reality of the Divine Persons—and presents unity as a dynamic reality, one that is missionary rather than merely integrative.

In contrast, *Mater communionis* does not arise from the concept of unity *per se*, but from the revelation of God as *koinonia*. This allows unity to be perceived as

a personal and relational reality, with profound anthropological and ecclesiological potential.

The three concepts presented are not the result of linear stages in the development of theological thought but correspond to distinct ways of understanding God. They complement one another and confirm the legitimacy of using a variety of Marian titles to express the presence of the *Theotokos* in the divine work of unity offered to all creation by the Triune God.

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