

## **THE INFANCY NARRATIVES**

*And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.*

*(Luke 1:38)*

## **THE INFANCY NARRATIVES**

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Fr. Stephano M. Manelli is one of the founders, and the first minister general of the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, a Franciscan reform devoted to the total Marian ideal of St. Maximilian Kolbe, and approved by the Holy Father in 1990. In 1989 Father Manelli published a wonderful book on Our Lady entitled *Mariologia Biblica*, which happily has been translated into English by Fr. Peter M. Fehlner, F.F.I., a member of the new reform, under the title *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed*. It was published in 1994 by the Academy of the Immaculate in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

### **1. Philological and Theological Exegesis**

Father Manelli sets out his, what can only be called, revolutionary approach to biblical exegesis in the Introduction:

“In these pages we seek to define Mary's active presence in God's saving plan as it is disclosed in His written word. It is the person, the mission, and the mystery of Mary that interests us as we ‘search the Scriptures’ (Jn. 5:39) in accord with Our Lord's command.

“But to discern the ineffable reality of Mary all holy in the Sacred Page, working within the parameters of personal research and a merely literal evaluation of the inspired Word is quite insufficient. Rather, one must seek to portray her in accord with the mind and thought of God as expressed in the written Word and authenticated by the Church. In short, such a portrait must be drawn in terms of the full view afforded by a biblical-theological exegesis, and not merely that attainable from the analytic canons of a purely biblical-philological exegesis.

“In fact, the methodology of those engaged in the work of semantic research and textual criticism cannot go beyond the letter, and so stops, as it were, at the grammar of the revealed message. By contrast, biblical-theological exegesis is directed to the study

God's mind as discovered in His words so as to grasp the full sense of revelation. One might call it, then, an exegesis dealing not with the grammar, but with the structure and syntax of God's plan of salvation.

“In this study, therefore, we limit considerations drawn from biblical-philological exegesis to the minimum, and concentrate instead primarily on the cultivation of biblical-theological exegesis. For it is in this way, and only in this way, that we come to understand the truth contained in holy Scripture, authenticated and infallibly guaranteed by the Church. This, precisely, is the approach recommended by Vatican II, which teaches that biblical texts are to be read ‘as they are read by the Church.’”<sup>1</sup>

I would like in this paper to contrast Father Manelli's theological exegesis with two examples of philological exegesis. Although Father Manelli's book deals with Our Lady in the Old Testament in prophecy and type, and examines every episode in which she appears in the New Testament, I would like to limit myself to a study of the Infancy Narratives, the birth of Our Lord, as told in chapters 1 and 2 of St. Matthew and chapters 1 and 2 of St. Luke. For contrast I would like to use Fr. Raymond Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah, A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke*, which to my mind is an example of a heretical use of the philological method, and Fr. René Laurentin's *The Truth of Christmas, Beyond the Myths*, which is an orthodox use of this same method. Let us then compare our three authors in just a few episodes from the Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke, beginning with the beautiful prophecy of Isaiah (7:14) as recorded by St. Matthew:

## 2. Prophecy (Isaiah 7:14)

*Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt.,1:22,23)*

Let us begin with the Sulpician, Fr. Raymond Brown, a typical Modernist, who denies the historicity of the Infancy Narratives, as did his forerunner in Modernism, Abbé Alfred Loisy, at the turn of the century. Here is Abbé Loisy writing in his *L'Evangile et L'Eglise* on the historicity of the Infancy Gospels: "The very nature of their subject, the critical examination of the two versions...and an analysis of evangelical tradition, make it impossible to regard them as a definitive expression of historical memories."<sup>2</sup>

These opinions were condemned almost immediately by the Biblical Commission in 1911 and 1912:

*“On the Author, Date of Composition, and Historical Truth of the Gospel*

*According to St. Matthew.*

7. *Integrity* - Whether in particular the opinion of those ought to be considered devoid of solid foundation, who call in question the historical authenticity of the first two chapters, in which the genealogy and the infancy of Christ are narrated...

*Answer:* In the affirmative.

*On the Author, Time of Composition and Historical Truth of the Gospels According to St. Mark and St. Luke.*

3. *Integrity of the Third Gospel* - Whether likewise it is lawful to doubt of the inspiration and canonicity of the narrations of Luke on the infancy of Christ (Chapters 1-2)...

*Answer:* In the negative.”<sup>3</sup>

And here is Father Brown setting forth again the same old ideas of Loisy, despite their condemnation by the Magisterium:

“Most scholars today maintain that the Gospel was written in Syria by an unknown Greek-speaking Jewish Christian, living in the 80s in a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile descent...

“There would be nearly unanimous agreement in scientific circles today that the evangelist is unknown, although we will continue the custom of referring to him as "Matthew." His dependence upon Mark (and upon Q, a body of Jesus sayings in Greek, known also to Luke) indicates that he was not an eyewitness of the ministry of Jesus; for presumably an eyewitness with his own memories would not draw so totally upon ‘secondhand’ collections.”<sup>4</sup>

This is a perfect example of Father Brown's Modernism. All of these ideas, that St. Matthew is not the author of the Gospel which bears his name, that his is not the first Gospel, that the Gospel of Mark is the first Gospel, the existence of the mythical Q, the late dating of the synoptics, etc., all of these ideas were condemned by the Pontifical Biblical Commission at the turn of the century. These Modernist ideas were derived from German rationalists like Hegel and Strauss, who denied the very nature of prophecy, and the possibility of miracles. Abbé Loisy died outside the Church, apparently unrepentant; let us hope that the same fate does not overtake Father Brown. Here he is on Isaiah 7:14:

“...Before the advent of the modern critical method it was generally accepted by religious Jews and Christians that the Hebrew prophets foresaw the distant future. In particular, Christians thought that the prophets had foreseen the life and circumstances of Jesus the Messiah. A prime example of this was Isa 7:14 where the reading ‘virgin’ seemed to imply that, 700 years before Jesus, the prophet had predicted a virginal conception, something unparalleled in history that would have had to involve foreknowledge of Jesus' conception.”<sup>38</sup> [n.38 Justin,

*Dialogue (with Trypho the Jew)* lxvi 3, states: ‘Now it is plain that in the race of Abraham according to the flesh, no one has ever been born from a virgin, nor has been said to be so born, save this our Christ.’] The OT [Old Testament] prophecy and the NT [New testament] event gave each other support. The NT fulfillment verified the conception of prophecy as prediction and proved that God had planned the whole history of salvation; the OT prophecy helped to establish the facticity of the NT event]...

“However, this conception of prophecy as prediction of the distant future has disappeared from most serious scholarship today, and it is widely recognized that the NT ‘fulfillment’ of the OT involved much that the OT writers did not foresee at all. The OT prophets were primarily concerned with addressing God's challenge to their own times...

“It was to the wicked King Ahaz (ca. 735-715 B.C.) that Isaiah spoke the oracle involved in 7:14. It was intended as a sign to this disbelieving monarch during the Syro-Ephramite war of 734 and must refer to something that took place during that year or shortly thereafter...

“The child to be born was not the Messiah, for messianism had not yet developed to the point of expecting a single future king. 42 [n.42 When expectations of the Messiah did develop and many OT passages were reinterpreted as references to him, Isa. 7:14 was not applied messianically in Jewish usage...Knowing this Justin, already in the second century, was accusing (correctly or incorrectly) Jewish scholars of tampering with OT evidence pertinent to the Messiah (*Dialogue* lxxi-lxxiii)]...

“In summary, the MT [Massoretic Text, the Hebrew version of the Old Testament] of Isa 7:14 does not refer to a virginal conception in the distant future. The sign offered by the prophet was the imminent birth of a child, probably Davidic, but naturally conceived, who would illustrate God's providential care for his people. The child would help to preserve the House of David and would thus signify that God was still ‘with us.’”<sup>5</sup>

Father Brown speaks continually of "serious" or "reputable" scholars.

“In my outlook reputable scholars are those who have produced a body of articles that meet the publishing standards of the professional biblical journals, or whose books have been favorably received in such journals. Thus I am not speaking simply about those who teach Bible. I find it necessary to be precise here, because on the American Catholic scene in the last two years, fundamentalist newspapers and journals have had a habit of trotting out a polemicist, dubbing him a scholar, and then playing a game of ‘scholars are divided’ in order to propose views that have no serious following in the world of biblical scholarship.”<sup>6</sup>

Of course by "serious scholar" Father Brown means "Modernist scholar," and an orthodox scholar could not get an article into his "professional" journals. In his commentary on Isaiah 7:14 above, he ignores the fact that the birth of a child by a young woman in the normal way is hardly

a sign. But that a virgin should miraculously give birth to a child is a great sign.

Fr. René Laurentin unlike Father Brown, accepts the historicity of the Infancy Narratives, but like him uses the philological method of exegesis exclusively. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has written a laudatory Preface to Father Laurentin's *The Truth of Christmas, Beyond the Myths*, indicating that Rome is very much interested in upholding the historicity of the Christmas story. But, as we shall see, the exclusive use of the philological method is not the best way to defend the historicity of the Infancy Narratives. Here is Laurentin on Isaiah 7:14:

“...But Jewish tradition never interpreted this as a virginal conception. Isaiah 7:14 does not use the word ‘virgin,’ but ‘young girl.’ the LXX [Septuagint; the Greek version of the Old Testament] (two centuries before Christ) had, in the meantime translated it by *parthenos* [“virgin” in Greek]; but this does not imply a development in the direction of the virginal conception. If this were the case, the Greek text would have retained the most significant factor of the Hebrew text, where it is the young girl who receives the mission of giving the name to the child. In the LXX this mission is given to Ahaz. This version then does not explain, but rather eliminates the more promising suggestion of a virginal conception. The version of the LXX represents a regression with respect to the Hebrew text, and it is followed therein by Matthew, for whom it is Joseph who gives the name and not the mother, as in the original text of Isaiah 7:14 and in Luke 1:31. Furthermore, the Greek word *parthenos* (virgin) is not all that significant: Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, was called ‘virgin’ even after having been violated. The narrator remarks regarding Shechem, ‘His soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the maiden (*parthenos*) and spoke tenderly to her’ (Gn 34:3). At the level of Jewish tradition, the mention of a virgin (in Is 7:14 and elsewhere) pointed less to the virginity of the mother than to the birth of the first born son, who ‘opened the womb.’”<sup>7</sup>

We have seen that St. Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, said that the Jews had tampered with the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. Certainly in the time of Our Lord most of the Jews did not believe that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, but it is clear from Matthew and Luke that Our Lady and St. Joseph believed, as did Zachary and Elizabeth, and also Simeon and Anna, as well as a faithful remnant. "Now she, at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord; and spoke of him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel" (Lk. 2:38).

And here is Fr. Stephano Manelli, F.F.I. in his *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed*, who relies on theological exegesis which depends on the Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church:

“Biblical theological exegesis correctly insists on the one literal, messianic, and Marian interpretation of this well-known prophecy: the Emmanuel of whom the prophet speaks is exclusively the future Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the child-bearing virgin is exclusively Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus. Apart from the great number of Catholic scholars who, on strictly exegetical grounds, support such an interpretation of the oracle of Isaiah, one must also consider

the well-nigh unanimous agreement with this interpretation on the part of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, both in the East and in the West, from St. Justin on. So, too, the uninterrupted teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, the witness of the liturgy and of sacred art (as early as that of the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome) have favored this interpretation. All this unquestionably lends weight to the Church's belief that the announcement made by the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz is an unequivocal proclamation heralding the Messiah, Jesus, and Mary, His Mother.

“Notwithstanding the impressive Faith of the Church, however, there are some scholars, Catholics included, especially in recent years, who propose interpretations of Isaiah's prophecy denying that in the literal sense its content is to be understood as exclusively messianic and Marian. They allow such content only in an indirect, oblique, and typical sense and deny in particular that the prophecy has any relations to the virginal conception and parturition of Mary most holy as affirmed in the Gospels. For them, the so-called virgin in Isaiah would, in fact, be an already married woman - either the wife of Ahaz and mother of Hezechiah; the wife of the prophet himself; or an unidentified spouse.<sup>3</sup> As Mattioli states, these are the interpretations favored by ‘a modern rationalistic exegesis’, and they run counter to the practically unanimous view of exegetical tradition and the Faith of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Yet modern, rationalistic exegetes cannot avoid facing the fact that if there are any prophecies of the Old Testament expressly cited in the New as fully verified, one is this precise passage from Isaiah, cited verbatim by St. Matthew and clearly referred to by St. Luke.”<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Sources and Historicity

*Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us; according as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus that thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4)*

Let us begin with Fr. Raymond Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah*:

“Most scholars today would maintain that Luke's Gospel was written in a church of the Gentile mission in the 70s or 80s...[indicated by Luke's dependence on Mark and Q] By the end of the second century a tradition is recorded (Muratorian Canon, Ireneus) identifying the evangelist, who never identifies himself, as Luke, a companion of Paul...This identification is now widely questioned...We shall continue to speak of the evangelist as ‘Luke’ without prejudice to the question whether or not he really was Luke.”<sup>9</sup>

Father Brown goes on to deny the likelihood of a Marian source for the Infancy

Narratives:

“...How do we know what happened at Jesus' birth? Certainly none of the apostolic preachers of the Jerusalem community who accompanied Jesus during his ministry and whose tradition is at the basis of the Gospel stories of the ministry (from the baptism to the resurrection) was present at his birth. (This difference is reflected in the situation discussed above wherein the birth of Jesus is not the subject of early apostolic preaching.) Indeed, the body of the Gospel shows that the people among whom Jesus had been reared knew nothing about an extraordinary infancy (Matt 13:53-58; Luke 4:31-32, 36-37). A common guess has been that the tradition about Jesus' infancy came from Joseph or Mary. Yet Joseph never appears during the ministry of Jesus and seems almost certainly to have been dead by that time, so that it is really pure speculation to posit him as a source. Mary does not seem to have been close to the disciples of Jesus during the ministry (Mark 3:31-35; Matt 12:46-50; John 2:4), although there is NT evidence that she was part of the post-resurrectional community (Acts 1:14). While there is no *a priori* impossibility that she was the source of the Lucan infancy narrative which describes experiences for which she would be the most plausible witness, there is an *a priori* unlikelihood that she was the source for the material in the Matthean infancy narrative which centers upon Joseph and in which she figures only on a secondary level. In the second century, James the ‘brother of the Lord’ who lived into the 60s, was thought to be the plausible source for information about Jesus' infancy, but the resultant *Protoevangelium of James* is highly legendary, makes elementary mistakes about Temple procedure, and is more obviously folkloric than the canonical infancy narratives. All of this means that, in fact, we have no real knowledge that any of the infancy material came from a tradition for which there was a corroborating witness.”<sup>10</sup>

Let us continue with Brown's thoughts on the historicity of the Infancy Narratives:

“...I wish to mention two deductions from the Gospel at large that have been used to support the historicity of the infancy narrative. The first involves the interrelationships of the Third and Fourth Gospels...attempts to appeal to Lucan Johannine parallelism as support for the infancy narrative are very dubious. For instance, it is true that JBap is mentioned both in John's Prologue (1:6-8,15) and in Luke 1; but the presence of these references (which have no real similarity to each other) can be explained by the common Christian memory that JBap preceded Jesus and, therefore, JBap should be mentioned before the narrated opening of Jesus' career. In particular, there is little merit in the thesis that links together Luke and John by a number of unsubstantiated guesses in order to explain the origins of the infancy narrative: the Beloved Disciple was John son of Zebedee (dubious); the highly symbolic scene in John 19:27 [‘Woman, behold thy son, etc.’] was historical and Mary lived at John's home for a number of years (very dubious); Mary told John of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus (pure guess); and Luke got that information from his contacts with the Johannine tradition, contacts justified by the parallels just mentioned. This theory makes the tradition behind the Fourth Gospel responsible for the material in Luke 1-2, even though John shows no awareness of the birth story and in 1:31 seemingly contradicts the relationship between JBap and Jesus postulated by

Luke 1:36!

“The second deduction regarding the infancy narrative is drawn from the Lucan Preface (1:1-4) which is interpreted to mean that Luke used historical sources with extreme care and therefore the infancy narrative is historical, based on reliable sources. However, that most perceptive commentator H.J. Cadbury has quite correctly warned us against interpreting the Preface to mean that Luke conducted research in the modern sense. If Luke mentions traditions from ‘those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word’ (1:2), primarily he means the companions of Jesus’ ministry and the apostolic preachers, as indicated in Acts 1:21-22. It is unjustified to claim that this statement would substantiate his dependence upon family eyewitness tradition about Jesus’ birth. Luke’s intention ‘to write an orderly account’ (1:3) does not imply that he gives us exact history or chronology. A study of Luke/Acts shows that Luke had shortcomings as a historian, e.g. in Acts 5:36 he has Gamaliel in the mid-30s refer in the past to a revolt by Theudas which did not occur till the 40s - and then Luke compounds the confusion by having Gamaliel refer to the revolt led by Judas the Galilean (A.D. 6) as if it came after the revolt of Theudas! There is every reason to believe that Luke himself composed many or all of the speeches he has placed on the lips of Peter and Paul in Acts. To be sure he may be reusing older material in these speeches, but Luke weaves it together in a dramatic setting. And Luke’s sense of ‘order’ is often logical rather than chronological. For instance in 4:31-5:11 he reverses the order he found in Mark 1:16-31: the Marcan Jesus called four disciples and then healed Peter’s mother-in-law; but Luke seems to have thought it more logical to have the miracle precede the call, so that the disciples would have a reason to follow Jesus. Thus, if one wishes to use the statements in the Lucan Prologue to make prejudgments about the amount of historical precision one can expect in the infancy narrative, one must first interpret the Prologue in the light of Luke’s procedure of Luke/Acts - a procedure that gives evidence of considerable freedom of composition, occasional historical inexactitudes, and a primary interest in the logical rather than the chronological.”<sup>11</sup>

Let us go on to René Laurentin’s *The Truth of Christmas*. Father Laurentin seems strangely reluctant to make Our Lady a source of the Infancy Narratives. He appears to be somewhat intimidated by Father Brown’s phony dates for the Gospels, (late dates to give the dogma of the divinity of Jesus time to develop) that are dogma in the Modernist biblical Establishment, which unfortunately controls the teaching of Scripture in our seminaries and Catholic colleges:

“According to the three passages of the Acts of the Apostles where Luke speaks as a witness of the events recounted by using the expression ‘we’, one can date the visits to Jerusalem of this pagan convert of the Antioch community.

“1. If we look closely at the ‘we’ passage (Acts 11:27-28), attested only in the Western tradition (*Codex Bezae*), it would seem that Luke went to Jerusalem before 50 A.D. (around the year 48). Mary would then have been a little less than seventy years old - a likely hypothesis. This theory would receive further support if one were to accept the revolutionary

thesis of Robinson, according to which Luke's Gospel may have been composed in the early 50s.

“2. According to Acts 21:15, Luke accompanied Paul to Jerusalem on the occasion of his meeting with James, the ‘brother of the Lord’ and first bishop of Jerusalem (who also could have been a family source). Would Mary still have been alive? It seems unlikely.

“3. If one holds to the commonly accepted dating which places the Gospel of Luke around 80 (a consensus whose bases have turned out to be rather weak), and if one imagines that Luke began to compose his Gospel during those years and not at the time of earlier journeys to Jerusalem, any contact with Mary, who would then have been a centenarian, would seem to be excluded.

*Jerusalem, Community of Mary (Acts 1:14)*

“It seems more likely that Luke gathered together what Mary ‘pondered in her heart,’ not directly, but through the agency of the community with which he gives her a fitting place.”<sup>12</sup>

Father Laurentin defends the historicity of the Infancy Narratives, which is doubtless why Cardinal Ratzinger wrote the Preface to his book:

“From a historical perspective, the major datum in Luke lies in his prologue, in which he clearly states that he wishes to recount with accuracy (*akribos*) the real and recent events as reported by eyewitnesses...

“This prologue expresses both a concern for and an assurance of (*parrhesia*) the truth. The commentaries unilaterally and systematically emphasize that what is meant here is religious truth. Luke speaks of a “tradition” (cf. *paredosan*), drawn from the ministers of the Word, a Word set down (1:1) in an ordered fashion (1:3), which has the apologetic concern of confirming the certitude of a catechesis (*katechetes*), verse 4; the term ‘ministers of the Word’ appears twice, (verses 2 and 4). These terms and this apologetic dimension must be taken into consideration. Luke was writing in and for a community of faith, with concern for the meaning which vivified the community. The ‘account’ which he proposes (verse 1) is not purely factual or anecdotal. It is a holy history, and would have been perceived as such.

“However, this does not exclude Luke's fundamental concern to conform to actual events. Actually, he intended to present ‘things which have been accomplished among us’ (*ton peplerophoremnon en hemin pragmaton*). He began there and referred to those contemporaries who were still able to verify or contest the materials. He remained the historian of a living reality and not of a dead past.

“He was anxious to base his work on ‘eyewitnesses’ (verse 2); those who were such ‘from the beginning.’ Many exegetes have been bent on restricting this word ‘beginning’ to the baptism of Jesus. Is it not there, in fact, that the primitive kerygma began, according to both

Acts 1:22 and 10:36-40, and as Mark's Gospel attests? Certainly. But Luke wanted to make the starting point of the kerygma clear. So he stressed the true point of departure of the Gospel - not the public baptism of Jesus, but his very origins, his conception and birth. Luke took this innovation to heart. This clearly explains his pleonastic insistence, 'from the beginning' (verse 2), starting at the beginning (verse 3: isotopy). Usually these expressions refer to the very opening of a narrative, and indeed that is the case here: the beginning, as Luke expresses it, is the infancy Gospel which this prologue introduces.

"Numerous attempts have been made to account for these two chapters as an interpolation or insertion. Luke 1:1-4 would then be affixed to the opening of chapter 3, and would only refer to the Gospel of the public life. These unfounded hypotheses are generally discounted and abandoned today. Indeed, the infancy Gospel is an organic part of Luke's Gospel. It bears the mark of his style, his vocabulary, and his theology. It links perfectly with the rest."<sup>13</sup>

And here is Father Manelli on the sources and historicity of the Infancy Narratives using the theological method of exegesis:

"...On what sources did the Evangelists draw to write their 'gospels of the infancy', that whole series of narratives, some of which are so rich in detail?

"...Laurentin in his recent, weighty study of the subject, forcefully reaffirms the unity and identity of authorship: "Literary analysis has established the unity of authorship: Matthew 1-2 certainly belongs to Matthew and Luke 1-2 to Luke. There has been little success in any attempt to reduce these narratives to fabricated models or to legendary or mythical processes. The never-ending attempts to do so have yielded only inconsistencies and contradictions."<sup>1</sup>

"Yet the answer to our question can only be this: the unique source of information for the gospels of the infancy was Mary most holy. No one else could have knowledge of those episodes so well known to her. 'In the final analysis, Mary is the only possible source of an episode like the annunciation, and the most appropriate source for several others' writes Laurentin; 'otherwise the gospels of the infancy would be fiction and in contradiction with Luke himself (prologue 1:1-4).'

<sup>2</sup> Giudetti also writes that 'Mary was the only and authoritative witness of this almost entirely unknown period.'<sup>3</sup><sup>14</sup>

And here is Father Manelli on the historicity of the Infancy Narratives:

"A second question must now be posed, to be answered with the help of philological and theological exegesis: Are the gospels of the infancy narratives historical in character, even in respect to their minor details, or were they reworked by the Evangelists, who embellished them with symbolic elements (the angels, the star, the Magi, etc.) useful in elaborating or dramatizing the event narrated? The question is important, because if everything in the narratives of Jesus' infancy is not historical, it obviously would be necessary to free the basic historical facts from

accretions in any way legendary or mythical in character.

“On this subject, non-Catholic scholars support the most radical thesis possible according to which the infancy narratives, as a whole, are to relegated to the category of myth and fables void of any historical worth.

“The greater number of Catholic exegetes, instead, have supported the historicity of the gospels of the infancy, as a whole and in their details as well. <sup>8</sup> This is a thesis of classical exegesis ‘for two thousand years’, writes A. Ory in a recent essay. <sup>9</sup> Now

“if classical exegesis admits the historicity of the narratives of the infancy, that means that the angel Gabriel, in fact, really is an angel who brought a message from heaven to Mary, a virgin in body, who is to remain a virgin while becoming a mother, and that Joseph is the putative father of Jesus. A host of angels sang on the night of the Nativity, and the Magi came from the East with their gifts. The children of Bethlehem were slaughtered while the Holy Family fled to Egypt and later settled in Nazareth where they led a hidden life.” <sup>10</sup>

“Some modern Catholic exegetes, however, dissent from the classical position, claiming that the gospels of the infancy belong to the literary genre known as *haggadic midrash*, a genre halfway between history and historic fiction, between history and theology, a combination of real facts and of fictionalized accretions or idealized models. Now against this thesis, whose supporters do not agree among themselves on many issues, very serious difficulties arise, showing it to be without foundation or even without minimal plausibility.” <sup>15</sup>

#### 4. The Annunciation and Visitation

*And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (1:26-28)*

*And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because these things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. (1:40-45)*

The Archangel Gabriel greeted Our Lady, "Hail, full of Grace." The Greek word is *kecharitomene*, which St. Jerome translates *gratia plena*, "full of grace." Father Brown

comments:

“ ...it is more plausible to interpret *kecharitomene* to refer to her as one who has been favored or graced by God. It is this interpretation of *kecharitomene* that explains why Mary ‘wondered what such a greeting might mean’ (1:29). And Gabriel responded by insisting: ‘You have found favor [*charis*] with God’ (1:30). As the reader will be told, this *charis* which makes her *kecharitomene* is the grace of conceiving the Son of the Most High.

“Such a theological meaning of *kecharitomene* which seems entirely justified by the context is to be kept distinct from another interpretation which has come about by way of the Latin rendering *gratia plena*, “full of grace.” It is true that a denominative verb sometimes has the sense of plenitude, and certainly Luke would not be opposed to regarding the grace bestowed upon Mary as a fulness of God's favor. Some modern translations catch this by rendering *kecharitomene* as ‘highly favored one.’ [King James] But ‘full of grace’ is too strong. Luke knew that expression since it appears literally in Acts 6:8; yet he chose not to use it here. It is open to the interpretation that Mary already possesses the grace or perfection involved in the conception of Jesus. Later theology stressed the fullness of grace and made it a cardinal principle of mariology, so that Mary was thought to possess every perfection possible for a creature. Indeed, it lies at the root of the axiom *numquam satis* (i.e., one cannot claim too much for Mary). No matter what one might think of this theological reasoning (and some within Roman Catholicism today would want to reconsider it), it certainly goes beyond what Luke meant by *kecharitomene*. On this point, as on the others, it is wise to be conservative about how much Marian symbolism Luke intended in the relatively stereotyped salutation of 1:28.”<sup>16</sup>

It is hard to know how to respond to such statements. It is as if Brown never heard of the Immaculate Conception, so determined is he to keep theology out of his philological exegesis. This is a classic example of what happens if one interprets the Bible *sola Scriptura*, by Scripture alone, and not according to the mind of the Church.

Let us go on to Father Brown's comments on the Visitation:

“ ...For the canticles four different theories have been offered to explain their composition: (a) The canticles were composed by those to whom they are attributed in the narrative, namely the Magnificat by Mary, the Benedictus by Zechariah, and the Nunc Dimittis by Simeon. This theory dominated in pre-critical times when the infancy narrative was treated as history stemming from family circles. It is obviously unlikely that such finished poetry could have been composed on the spot by ordinary people, and today there would be no serious scholarly support for such a naive hypothesis.

Again, “serious scholar,” one of Father Brown's favorite expressions, should of course read “Modernist scholar.” He adds a footnote:

“It is this scene, and not merely the supposed family relationship between Elizabeth and

Mary (1:36), which offers difficulty in reconciling the Lucan infancy narrative with what we know of JBap and Jesus during the ministry. The critical reconstruction of that relationship given above in | 10D becomes nonsense if JBap and Elizabeth knew from the beginning that Jesus was the Messiah, indeed the Lord.”<sup>18</sup>

Exactly right Father Brown! The "critical reconstruction" of the Visitation is "nonsense," at least as practiced by exegetes like Father Brown. St. Elizabeth says: "whence is this that the mother of my Lord should come to me." Father Brown claims that this does not mean what it says. Neither Elizabeth, John the Baptist, or even Mary knew that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah. Mary did not realize this until after the resurrection, the "Christological moment." This is another example, claims Brown, of Luke moving the Christological moment backwards, in this case back to the birth of Our Lord.

Let us go on now to Father Laurentin's commentary on the Annunciation, particularly the greeting of Gabriel, "Hail, full of grace":

*Kecharitomene*: The Name given Mary:  
Object-of-the-Favor-of-God (Lk 1:28)

“...One finds this word in the Apocryphal writings: *Acts of Philip* (4th-5th centuries, 48: ‘Philip said to him: “You are *kecharitomenos* in the peace of Christ, because there is no duplicity in your soul.”’ (*Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. M. Bonnet Darmstadt, 1959, II-II, p.21).

“The Martyrdom of Matthew, a gnostic work of the 3rd-4th century, ‘Grace (*charis*) to you and peace, o *kecharitomenon* child’ (1, id. II-I, p.218, where there is without doubt influence of the vocabulary of Luke).

“*Charis* means favor, disinterested benevolence, coming from God. *Kecharitomene* does not therefore mean ‘full of grace’ as it is translated in the Vulgate. That would be, in Greek, *pleres charitos* (used for Christ in Jn 1:14, but also for Stephen in Acts 6:8; cf. 7:55).”<sup>19</sup>

I think this is another case of Father Laurentin being intimidated by Brown and the Modernist biblical Establishment. Father Laurentin, and Brown more so, go continually to the Apocrypha, rather than to the Magisterium of the Church for an authoritative interpretation of a passage in Scripture. Pope Benedict XV writes about St. Jerome: "When again Vigilantius quoted an Apocryphal book, Jerome was content to reply: ‘A book I have never so much as read! For what is the good of soiling one's hands with a book the Church does not receive?’”<sup>20</sup> *Lex orandi est lex credendi*, "the law of praying is the law of believing." There is no possible way that the Church could be wrong on the "Hail Mary." "Full of grace," (*gratia plena*) is the best possible translation of *kecharitomene*:

And here is Laurentin on the Visitation, and St. Elizabeth's cry: "Whence is this that the mother of my Lord should come to me." Despite the semiotic jargon, Laurentin comes down solidly for St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist knowing that the Child in Mary's womb was the Son of God and the Messiah:

"In the framework of the unity of persons which characterizes pregnancy in Luke 1, Mary is presented as the subject operative of the transformation in Elizabeth and her child (a double subject of a state of being). It is clear, however, that beyond this sign, the radiance can be attributed to the Son of the Lord God, who is in her (1:43), and to the Holy Spirit, who "fills" John the Baptist (1:15) and his mother (1:41) conjointly. Mary and her son are recognized in the Spirit. Elizabeth and her son are changed by the Spirit (1:15 and 41).

"How is the change signified?"

" - For John the Baptist, by the "dance" within the womb (1:41 and 44) which his mother characterizes as expressing joy (1:44) and which the announcement of 1:15 characterizes as a pouring in of the Holy Spirit.

" - For Elizabeth, by a transition from silence, by which she marks the end of her shame (1:25), with the twofold effect: she is filled with the Holy Spirit (1:41) and expresses her joy with a great cry (1:42). She too expresses herself charismatically in 1:42-45. This analogy accents the identification between mother and son. The formula "filled with the Holy Spirit," apparently applied to John the Baptist alone in 1:15 and to the mother alone in 1:42, applies conjointly to one and the other, according to the isotopy of the two verses.

"Elizabeth, qualified as a prophet by the gift of the Spirit, recognizes the glory of Mary and of her son as Lord (1:43), as well as the radiance that proceeds from this glory, in short, the eschatological gift of God, analogous to that which Luke expresses at Pentecost (Acts 2). 21

Father Manelli's theological exegesis of the Annunciation is quite different from the philological exegesis of Brown and Laurentin:

"The exceptional character of the angel's greeting to Mary consists not so much in the single phrases, also found elsewhere in the Old Testament, as in the linking of the two expressions, 'Rejoice' and 'full of grace', as a form of address. No similar instance of this in relation to any other creature can be verified in the Old or New Testament. Hence, Origen could write: "Because the angel greeted Mary with new expressions, which I have never encountered elsewhere in the Scriptures, it is necessary to comment on this. I do not, in fact, recall having read in any other place in Sacred Scriptures these words: Rejoice, O Full of Grace. Neither of these expressions is ever addressed to a man: such a special greeting was reserved only for Mary." <sup>25</sup>

"St. Luke, moreover, also makes it clear, even if not expressly, that Mary had had the

‘fullness of grace’ from the first moment of her conception. In fact the use of the past perfect participle (*kecharitomene*) is to indicate something already true of the subject in the past, and hence possibly extending even to the very first moment of her existence.<sup>26</sup> Here can be recognized one of the implicit foundations of the truth of the Immaculate Conception, which excludes from the very beginning of her existence any presence of sin, and which alone with perfect exactitude is ‘fullness of grace.’”<sup>22</sup>

Father Manelli's concluding paragraphs on the Visitation are very beautiful:

*And blessed is she who has believed in the fulfillment of the words of the Lord (v.45)...*

“...this affirmation of the fundamental content of the faith of Mary is not a reason for denying that she continued to grow in faith through each of the events in the life and mission of her Son. Rather, one cannot but admit that if Mary knew the redemptive plan of God over-all, she did not, however, know all the ‘steps’ and ‘details’ of the plan, upon which, precisely as the Evangelist says on more than one occasion, she continued to ‘meditate in her heart’ via what transpired (Lk 2:19,51), experiencing even the darkness of faith that causes one ‘to live intimately with the mystery’, as Pope John Paul II says in *Redemptoris Mater* (no. 17).

“Finally it is to be remarked that however sublime and profound Mary's faith, it surely was not given expression in an academic or scientific mode, as is ours normally, but in an essential and sapiential one, at the level of the most pure and ineffable contemplation.

“In this brief verse, then, we find expressed the initial realization of the prophecy Mary herself would utter immediately after: ‘All generations will call me blessed.’ St. Elizabeth was the first to know and to proclaim the divine maternity of Mary. St. Elizabeth was also the first to proclaim the Virgin Mary ‘blessed’, thereby inaugurating the choral chant of blessing and praise for the Mother of the Lord to be continued from generation to generation until the end of time. Lastly, St. Elizabeth, moved by the Holy Spirit, has also offered us the first example of ‘veneration’ of the Blessed Mother of God: ‘veneration’ uninterrupted thereafter throughout the entire two thousand-year history of the liturgy and devotion of the whole Church.”<sup>23</sup>

## 5. The Nativity

*And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring to you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: For this day, is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,*

*in the city of David. (Luke 1:6-11)*

Father Brown prefers "virgin conception," to "virgin birth":

“In my book on the virginal conception written before I did this commentary, I came to the conclusion that the scientifically controllable biblical evidence leaves the question of the historicity of the virginal conception unresolved.”<sup>24</sup>

The reason why Brown prefers "conception" to "birth," is because he doubts the virginity of Our Lady *in partu*, during birth. The "Catholic" radical feminists are violently opposed to this aspect of Mary "ever virgin," and Brown is trying to ingratiate himself with them:

“ This is the *virginitas in partu*, the middle term in the fourth-century triad about Mary's virginity: *ante partum, in partu, et post partum* ('before, in, and after birth') - a triad that shifts the focus of the virginal conception from christology to mariology. Roman Catholics have traditionally considered all three stages of the virginity of Mary to be revealed doctrine, but a more nuanced position is now being taken by Catholic theologians on the *in partu*.”<sup>25</sup>

Rather than openly deny the doctrine of Our Lady's perpetual virginity, Father Brown prefers to cast doubt on it.

“Theories of inspiration and inerrancy have been invoked to the effect that, if Matthew and Luke thought that Jesus had been virginally conceived, their affirmation must be historically true. Leaving aside over-simplifications in such theories which cut across ecclesiastical divisions, many Christians would give the religious affirmations of the evangelists a privileged rank.<sup>28</sup> In evaluating their testimony on the virginal conception, it is important to realize that in and through this concept the evangelists are making a christological affirmation about Jesus as Son of God and son of David. They presuppose a biological virginity, but that is not the main point of their affirmation. Thus a Christian who wishes to give proper respect to the evangelists' teaching is still faced with the delicate decision as to whether a questioning of the biological supposition brings into question the main christological affirmation.

“Consistent church teaching has been invoked to support the historicity of virginal conception, and certainly one can cite a virtual unanimity from A.D. 200 to 1800. For many of us this is an extremely important, even deciding factor. But the point made in discussing the previous factor needs to be repeated here. The virginal conception under the creedal title of 'virgin birth' is not primarily a biological statement, and therefore one must make a judgment about the extent to which the creedal affirmation is inextricably attached to the biological presupposition.”<sup>26</sup>

Father Brown adds a footnote to this section:

“28 In the Roman Catholic tradition, the acceptance of biblical criticism has caused a reinterpretation but not a rejection of the concepts of inspiration and inerrancy. Notice the qualified description of inerrancy in the Vatican II document *Dei Verbum* (iii1): ‘The Books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching firmly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into the Sacred Writings for the sake of our salvation.’ A faithful Catholic would have to ask: Should one rank the biological manner of Jesus' conception as a truth God wanted put into the Sacred Writings for the sake of our salvation?”<sup>27</sup>

Many of the Fathers of Vatican Council II objected to the ambiguous wording of this decree, because they foresaw what heretics like Father Brown would do with it. But this limiting of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture is an old trick which has been used for over a hundred years. Pope Leo XIII pointed this out way back in 1893 in his marvelous encyclical on the study of the Bible, *Providentissimus Deus*:

“INERRANCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. It may also happen that the sense of a passage remains ambiguous, and in this case good hermeneutical methods will greatly assist in clearing up the obscurity. But it is absolutely wrong and forbidden to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture or to admit that the sacred writer has erred. As to the system of those who, in order to rid themselves of these difficulties, do not hesitate to concede that divine inspiration regards the things of faith and morals, and nothing beyond, because (as they wrongly think) in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it - this system cannot be tolerated.”<sup>28</sup>

Father Laurentin, of course, has no such doubts about the Virgin Birth, but his defense of the historicity of the Nativity seems quite weak in many details. The angel in the Gospel of St. Luke said to the shepherds: "For this day there is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." According to Brown, the disciples did not know that Jesus was the Christ and Lord until after the Resurrection, the "christological Moment." This was moved back by Mark to the Baptism, and by Matthew and Luke to the Nativity, the supposition, of course being, that these later "Christological moments" are not historical. Father Laurentin seems to want to have his cake and eat it too. He wants to come out for historicity, but he wants to keep his membership in Brown's "serious scholars" club, where historicity is a no-no.

“Is this a *theologoumenon*? [A theological truth presented in the guise of history]

“This conclusion poses a problem. Is not the attribution of the title *Christ Lord* to Jesus from his infancy a *theologoumenon*? Has not Luke simply projected retrospectively ("retrojected" as Fitzmeyer says in Luke 1-9, 1981, p.410) the post-resurrectional profession of faith onto the infancy of Christ in the framework of a fictitious narrative? This is the current explanation. It is a necessary conclusion of the methodological postulates received in a school which attempts to explain all texts by the surrounding environment and to try to reduce them to it. Prior to Pentecost, the expression ‘Jesus is Lord’ would have been unthinkable, they say.

This current methodology is so strongly rooted that J. Danielou, who has elsewhere shown great courage in defending other aspects of historicity, holds to this explanation (1967, pp.67-73).

“At the risk of being labeled as a fundamentalist, the exegete is invited by objectivity itself to entertain another hypothesis. At Lourdes, Bernadette heard the strange formula, ‘I am the Immaculate Conception,’ which she did not understand, and which at first was denounced as a theological error (R. Laurentin, Lourdes, *Histoire authentique*, 6, 1964, pp.95-106). Is it not possible that at Christmas there was a similar revelation of Christ to a group of poor shepherds, and that the title ‘Christ the Lord’ stems from this revelation? Such a phenomenon would be well within the tradition of the prophets. This revelation presents no anachronistic elements; the words are not new. ‘Christ Lord’ is attested by certain ancient translations of the OT (cf. Lam 4:20). The framework of faith makes this hypothesis at least as objective as the idea of ‘the creative community’ reflecting back and inventing a *theologoumenon* to explain this concept and title.”<sup>29</sup>

Father Manelli, because his certitude concerning the historicity of the Nativity as guaranteed by the Church in her Tradition and Magisterium, can be prayerful, even sentimental, as he speaks lovingly of Mary and baby Jesus:

“What were Mary's sentiments at the time of Jesus' birth? And her maternal feelings while beholding her Divine Son? What were the outpourings of her heart? And what ecstasy in kissing the tiny face of God become man? ‘In those moments,’ says Garofalo, ‘Mary, too, spoke the delightful irrelevancies of every mother, with her eyes fixed upon those of her son, lost in a sea of love. And she sang a sweet lullaby in order to quiet the grieved infant or in order to lull him to sleep. With a lullaby of the premier mother begins the history of poetry and music on the threshold of the lost paradise, full of nostalgia for a lost innocence.’”<sup>28</sup>

“Pietrafesa writes:

“Under the dim light of a lamp Mary most holy contemplated the newborn Infant. In Him she noticed her own features, and with trembling tenderness and love she placed on that face the first kiss. Over that Infant who was the Son of God, but also her son, she rejoiced as no other mother in the world ever has for the birth of her child. Enraptured, she must have adored and contemplated, unable to express her sentiments.”<sup>29</sup>

## 6. The Finding in the Temple

*...And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have*

*sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men. (Luke 2:46-51).*

Let us concentrate on just one phrase of this beautiful story: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" St. Pius X called Modernism "the synthesis of all heresies."<sup>31</sup> While the early Modernists like Abbé Loisy were Arians (they did not believe in the divinity of Our Lord), the current crop, such as Raymond Brown, are Nestorians. Here is Father Brown in an earlier book (1967) *Jesus God and Man*:

“If we turn to the title ‘Son Of God,’ the question of Jesus' consciousness of a special relationship to God is not solved negatively if we cannot prove in a fully scientific manner that he claimed to be the unique Son of God. In the judgment of the later Church, ‘Son’ was accepted as a reasonably adequate image through which to describe Jesus' relationship to Yahweh, but it is possible that in his lifetime Jesus never came to full use of this image. Still this does not necessarily mean that he was not conscious of the reality behind the relationship we call Sonship. In scholastic terminology concepts like ‘Son’ and ‘Messiah’ are the products of the intellect, and man is said to come into the world with an intellect that is a *tabula rasa*. Against Apollinarism the Church maintained that Jesus had a human soul and thus a human intellect (DBS 146). Can theology admit that this intellect was also a *tabula rasa*, activated not by infused knowledge but by human experiences, as are other men's intellects? In this case it would have taken Jesus time to formulate concepts, and he might have found some of the concepts of his day inadequate to express what he wanted to say. One would then be able to say that his knowledge was limited, but such limitation would not at all exclude an intuitive consciousness of a unique relationship to God and of a unique mission to men. The struggle of his life could have been one of finding the concepts and words to express that relationship and that mission.”<sup>33</sup>

Father Brown wants to take away from us the historicity of our Infancy Narratives, and give us in their place his Nestorian myth of Jesus' life-long search for His identity. Nestorius taught that there were two persons in Our Lord, one human and one divine, and that in the human person there was ignorance. Today's Nestorians, like Raymond Brown, say that indeed, there is only one Divine Person in Our Lord, but also a human "personality," and in that human personality there was ignorance. Here is Fr. Louis Bouyer in his *Dictionary of Theology* from the entry for "Personality":

“Modern usage tends to distinguish between personality and person, reserving for the first word what corresponds to the psychological principles that characterize person, which in turn is defined as a metaphysical reality. This distinction is certainly well grounded up to a point, in the sense that the definition of person cannot be reduced merely to psychological considerations. But we cannot conclude from this that there is a radical contradistinction to the

extent that person and personality could be opposed without emptying person of its concrete reality. This is why the Church has shown herself more than reticent with regard to the attempts of certain modern theologians to attribute to Christ a human personality while maintaining the unicity of his incarnate divine Person. This is one of the points aimed at by the brief of Pius IX *Eximiam tuam*, addressed on June 15th, 1857 to the Archbishop of Cologne regarding the books of Anton Gunther, in the paragraph referring to his doctrine of the Incarnation (cf. *D.B.* 1655).”<sup>33</sup>

According to the constant tradition of the Church Our Lord had a three-fold human knowledge, infused, beatific and acquired. Brown is forced to deny that Our Lord had infused knowledge and the beatific vision, and to claim that He only had acquired knowledge. It is only in Our Lord's acquired knowledge that one can speak of ignorance, but lest this be misunderstood, the Dominican Garrigou-Lagrange prefers the term "nescience":

“There could not have been either error or ignorance in Him who said: ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’ Ignorance is a privation of that which a person ought to have, and so is opposed to simple nescience, or simple negation or absence of knowledge, as in a child who is not yet capable of knowing. Thus in Christ there was a certain nescience as regards His acquired knowledge, in which He made progress, as stated above.”<sup>33</sup>

So we have in this one little line, "know you not, that I must be about my Father's business?" a crystal clear affirmation, that Jesus when He was a boy of twelve, knew even by His acquired knowledge, that He was the Son of God and the Messiah. But just to show that Father Brown is going against the constant Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church, let me give just two citations. Here is St. Thomas Aquinas speaking of Our Lord's three-fold knowledge:

“...Both the infused knowledge and the beatific knowledge of Christ's soul were the objects of an infinite power, which could produce the whole at once; and thus in neither knowledge did Christ advance; since from the beginning He had them perfectly. But the acquired knowledge of Christ is caused by the active intellect which does not produce the whole at once, but successively; and hence by this knowledge Christ did not know everything from the beginning but step by step, and after a time, i.e. in His perfect age; and this is plain from what the Evangelist says, viz. that He increased in ‘knowledge and age’ together.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1966 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith clearly stated:

“There is afoot a certain christological humanism that would reduce Christ to the condition of a mere man, who only gradually became aware of His divine Sonship.”<sup>36</sup>

The words might be slightly new, but it is the same old heresy. The devil has no new tricks. With that little background, let us go on to Father Brown on the Finding in the Temple:

“In this pattern of boyhood stories of great figures, there is stress by anticipation on both the subject's wisdom and life work. Both aspects are present in the Lucan story, although the wisdom is less important. In vs. 46 Jesus is simply listening and asking questions, a sign of his interest in the Law and his piety. Only in vs. 47, which Van Iersel characterizes as a novelistic addition to a pre-Lucan story, is there stress on Jesus' brilliance. The center of the story is not the boy's intelligence but his reference to God as his Father in vs. 49. This is highly christological, for we have Jesus saying of himself what the heavenly voice will say at the baptism. Accordingly, Van Iersel would correct Bultmann and Dibelius who classified the present narrative as a legend. More properly it is to be classified as an apophthegm or paradigm, i.e. a short story centered around a saying. However, one must not jump to the conclusion, as does Laurentin, that if we are not dealing with legend, we are dealing with history. To be precise, we are dealing with a biographical apophthegm: the illustration of a saying (in this case, a christological saying) shaped out of a life setting. The present setting and saying are no less and no more historical than are the divine voice and its setting at the baptism of Jesus. Jesus was baptized; Jesus had a boyhood - those are historical facts. But in Luke those historical reminiscences serve as the occasion for the articulation of a revelation apprehended by a post-resurrectional faith, namely, the divine sonship.

“And so, whether one is liberal or conservative, one must desist from using the present scene to establish a historical development (or lack of development) in Jesus' self-awareness. It is not possible to argue from vs. 49 that Jesus as a boy knew he was the Son of God. It is equally impossible to argue from vs. 52 (which is a standard description of growth) that Jesus grew in human knowledge. At most one can argue that Luke's appreciation of Jesus did not cause him to see any difficulty in stating that Jesus grew in wisdom and God's favor, and that Luke's christology did not cause him to see any difficulty in affirming that, already as a boy, Jesus was God's Son. Nor finally can we determine anything historical about Mary's understanding of Jesus from the statement in vs. 50 that she and Joseph did not understand when Jesus spoke of his Father. As already indicated, this story or a form of it may well have circulated in circles ignorant of the annunciation story and ignorant of the virginal conception. But the fact that Luke, who is aware of such traditions, sees no difficulty in reporting Mary's lack of understanding means for him vs. 50 is only an instance of the standard misunderstanding that greets a parabolic revelation or a prophetic statement. It is a stylized reaction in Gospel literature and tells us nothing historical of Mary's psychology.”<sup>37</sup>

Predictably, Father Brown ducks the challenge to his Nestorian claim of ignorance in Our Lord, by denying the historicity, of "know you not, that I must be about my Father's business?" Let us go on now to Father Laurentin on the Finding in the Temple. Again, despite the semiotic jargon, Father Laurentin comes out solidly for Our Lord's self awareness of His divine Sonship and His mission:

“The episode of the finding is likewise programmed by the prophecy of Simeon in 2:35. The piercing of Mary, indicated for a distant future, finds a first realization in this sorrowful loss of the child...

“Jesus manifests his consciousness of his divine filiation, declared in the message of the annunciation (1:32 and 35). This constitutes, in the infancy Gospel, a final theophany, for which Christ, having become subject, is himself the single and distinct actant. It involves the first words of Christ and his first self-confession on earth. It is no longer the angel nor the Spirit who pronounces the oracle, but Jesus himself.

“The basic purpose of the episode lies especially in its openness to the future, not only in the final reference to his growth toward adulthood (2:52), but also in the announcement of the passion and the Resurrection. The infancy Gospel appears as a Gospel in miniature. It concludes on the themes which complete the entire Gospel.”<sup>38</sup>

I was also happy to see Father Laurentin in another context, come out strongly for Our Lord's infused and beatific knowledge:

“...It is no longer thought seemly to accord special privileges to Christ and to Mary. Formerly, theological Mariology and popular preaching alike never tired of adding to these privileges and of petitioning the Pope to promote them. Today, the tendency is to rule them out, for Christ as also for Mary - reserve in this area being regarded as a sign of authenticity. Christ appears more authentic if he is deemed to have only human knowledge. Even the best theologians, like Hans Urs von Baltasar, begin to challenge the theory of infused knowledges in Christ (which had been ever more generously conferred on him), as well as his possession of the beatific vision, which had been acknowledged unanimously throughout the centuries.”<sup>39</sup>

And here is Fr. Stephano Manelli:

*And he said to them: "How is it that you have sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"*

“...The response of the Son, however, is a response laden with ‘mystery’. A response engaging the faith of Mary and of Joseph in a prophetic perspective. Jesus, in effect, gives a ‘theophanic’ response, knowingly revealing Himself to be the Son of God the Father, ‘manifesting his own awareness of his divine sonship.’”<sup>24</sup>

“Almost in opposition to the legal father, called by Mary ‘your father’, the twelve-year-old Jesus speaks instead of another Father - the ‘my Father’ - of whom He considers Himself to be the Son, thus revealing an exact reference to what the angel Gabriel had said of Him to Mary at the Annunciation, calling Him ‘Son of the Most High’, ‘Son of God.. Leal's insight on this point is basic: "With these words, Jesus shows that He possessed from the beginning, an awareness of His divine Sonship and His Divine mission. With these words He also proclaims for the first time His divine sonship will be an occasion of clear division between fathers and sons (cf. Mk 3:31-35)."”<sup>24 40</sup>

Hopefully this is the beginning of the end of Raymond Brown's self-styled "scientific" exegesis. We just have to keep asserting the truth, and Brown's unscientific "nonsense" will eventually blow away.

Father Brown also claimed that Our Lady did not know that Jesus was God until after His resurrection, "the christological moment." Father Manelli continues:

*But they did not understand his words (v 50).*

“What did Mary and Joseph not understand of the words of Jesus?

“Certainly they understood the theophanic value of Jesus' words, because they already knew of His divinity revealed by the angel Gabriel in the announcement to Mary. It could not be a question, therefore, of failure to comprehend the ‘divine sonship of Jesus, already grasped at the annunciation’, writes Leonardi.<sup>31</sup> "Mary's incomprehension cannot contradict the angelic announcement regarding the divinity of the Son", adds Pietrafesa.<sup>32</sup> Of the divine sonship of Jesus, Mary already ‘had received an explicit revelation concerning this, according to Lk 1:32 and 35’, confirms Laurentin.<sup>33</sup> And Garofalo states that Mary was already ‘perfectly aware of the divine origin of her Son.’”<sup>34</sup>

One of the extra benefits of Father Manelli's wonderful book, which could be used for *lectio divina*, prayerful reading (can you imagine saying the same about Brown's deadly book), is that it is a compendium of the best Marian writers in the Church today. Let me close then with a quote from one of these, Father Garofalo, whom we have met before:

“For Mary and Joseph, it is clear, such ‘incomprehension’ was an experience of faith suffered, whose best explanation, as Garofalo affirms with regard to Mary in particular, is grounded objectively in the co-redemptive mission to be accomplished for the salvation of mankind:

"In the loss of Jesus in the Temple, the Virgin tasted the first sorrow that collaboration in the salvation of the world would cost her. Sorrow over the poverty of Bethlehem and the ferocious persecution of Herod was primarily the sorrow of a mother who cannot offer every comfort to her child in need of all, who makes of her body a shield in danger. The sorrow over the loss in the Temple, this too exquisitely maternal, becomes, after the response of Jesus, the first sorrow of the Coredeptrix; it is the first wound that the ‘sword’, about which twelve years earlier, in the same Temple, the inspired Simeon had spoken, opens in her soul: the beginning of her career as the Sorrowful Mother to culminate beneath the cross. The Virgin did not reply to the answer of Jesus. The test of obscurity would increase her faith, her love, her merits.”<sup>45 42</sup>

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### *References*

- 1 Fr. Stephano M. Manelli, F.F.I., *All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed*, translated from the Italian by Fr. Peter M. Fehlner, F.F.I., Academy of the Immaculate, New Bedford, MA, 1994, pp.15,16. n. 1 *Lumen Gentium*, no. 55. Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Humani Generis* had already taught that exegetes must not explain Holy Scripture "solely on the basis of human reason," but "in accord with the mind of the Church, which has been appointed by Christ the Lord guardian and interpreter of the entire deposit of divinely revealed truth." *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 42:469.
- 2 Cited in Fr. John McKee, *The Enemy Within the Gate, the Catholic Church and Renascent Modernism*, Lumen Christi Press, Houston, TX, 1974, p.272. This book is an excellent popular presentation of the history of Modernism from the beginning to the present day.
- 3 A.A.S., 3 (1911) 294-296; A.A.S. , 4 (1912) 463-465. Cf. *Rome and the Study of Scripture*, Abbey Press, St. Meinrad, IN, 1964, pp.126-131.
- 4 Fr. Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah, A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*, Doubleday and Co., NY, 1977, pp.45,46.
- 5 Brown, *Op. cit.*, pp.145-148.
- 5 Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church*, Paulist Press, New York,, 1975, p.21.
- 6 Fr. René Laurentin, *The Truth of Christmas, Beyond the Myths*, translated from the French by Michael J. Wrenn and associates, St. Bede's Publications, Petersham, MA, 1986, pp.411,412.
- 7 Manelli, *Op. cit.*, pp.35,36; The odd interpretation according to which Emmanuel is to be identified with Hezechiah (son of King Ahaz: see Is 36-39) was defended in early times by Jews against Christians. It was quickly subjected to sharp criticism by St. Justin (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* nos. 66,68,71,77) and was refuted and ridiculed by St. Jerome (*Commentary on Isaiah, PL*, 24, 111ff). Recently, however, this strange view has been adopted by a number of Catholic scholars...; n.4 A. Matioli, *Dio e l' uomo nella Bibbia d' Israel* (Turin, 1980), p.393.
- 8 Brown, pp.235,236.

Father Brown won't admit any detail of the Infancy Narratives as historical, unless it is corroborated by secular history, for example, the census mentioned by St. Luke. But this rule does not apply to Modernist teachings, for example, that Mark is the first Gospel. As a matter of fact the extra-biblical evidence contradicts this claim. For example the very early Muratorian Canon and St. Irenaeus just cited by Brown, both say that Matthew was the first Gospel and Mark second. But the Modernists want to make Mark first because he has no Infancy Gospel, but begins with the Baptism of Our Lord. Pope St. Pius X said in *Pascendi*, that the

basic doctrine of the Modernists is the false philosophical theory of evolutionism, derived from Kant, applied to history by Hegel and to the Gospels by Strauss. The disciples of Jesus only realized that He was the Son of God and the Christ, after the Resurrection. This doctrine gradually evolved and Mark was able to move the "Christological moment" back to the Baptism of Our Lord, and later Matthew and Luke moved it back to the Birth, and still later John speaks of the pre-existent Son of God. Implicit in this claim is that these later "Christological moments" were not historical. The late dates for the Gospels are necessary to give the doctrine that Jesus was the Son of God, sufficient time to have evolved. Brown claims that this theory is "scientific," but it is rather a perfect example of "scientism," a false philosophic theory such as evolutionism, masquerading as science. The traditional teaching of the Church holds that the Synoptics, Matthew, Mark and Luke, were written well before the destruction of the Temple which occurred in the year 70 A.D., and the Gospel of John at the end of the first century.

Here is St. Pius X in a brief summary of the Modernist methodology in *Pascendi Dominici gregis*:

“We believe, then, that we have set forth with sufficient clearness the historical method of the Modernists. The philosopher leads the way, the historian follows, and in due order come internal and textual criticism. And since it is characteristic of the first cause to communicate its virtue to the secondary cause, it is quite clear that the criticism we are concerned with is an agnostic, immanentist and evolutionist criticism. Hence anybody who embraces it, and employs it makes profession thereby of the errors contained in it, and places himself in opposition to the Catholic faith.”

St. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, September 8, 1907, 138; in Amanda Watlington, *Christ Our Lord*, McGrath Publishing Co., Wilmington, NC. 1978, pp.97,98.

9 Brown, p.38.

10 Brown, pp.238,239.

11 Laurentin, pp.315,316.

12 Manelli, pp.93,94; n.1 R. Laurentin, *The Truth of Christmas, Beyond the Myths*, p.450...

“See also R. Brown's long introduction to his book *The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York 1977): pp.25-41. The author's positions here and elsewhere in this work, are often not acceptable. Cf. A Bottino's long and critical reviews in *Marianum* 55 (1982): 645-657, and those of F. Spadafora in *Lateranum* 48 (1982): 138-154. See particularly Testa, *Maria terra vergine*, vol. 1, who criticizes not only

this volume of Brown (pp.105-54), but also the volume *Mary in the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 1978), written by him in collaboration with an ecumenical group of Catholics and Lutherans, and the issue of *Consilium*, no. 19 (1983), with an article by McKenzie (pp.155-98). The accurate criticism of Fr. Testa (pp.209-21) of the positions and unacceptable conclusions of such authors, victims of a typical, long outdated Kantian-Hegelian idealism, is important; a.3A. Giudetti, S.J., *Conoscenza storica de Ges— di Nazareth* (Milan 1981), p.159. Immediately before, the author writes: "It is unthinkable that Mary, during her long sojourn among the Apostles, from the Resurrection to the Ascension of her Son, (Acts 1:4), while living in the house of John in Jerusalem (Jn. 19:26), would not have been questioned and would not have responded to the questions regarding the life of Christ, preceding His public manifestation at His baptism by John" (*ibid.*). Leonardi reporting the views of B. Solages, also says that "both traditions, Matthew's as well as Luke's, would have their common source, above all for the virginal conception, in the confidences given by Mary to the disciples in the first years of the Church" (Leonardi, *L'Infanzia di Gesù*, p. 12, n.21."

- 13 Manelli, pp.97-99; n. 8. Such as the great Catholic biblicalists Lagrange, Durant, Buzy, Garofalo, Spadafora, McHugh, Schmid, Benoit, Spicq, Sabourin, Laurentin, and Danieli. Cf. Pietrafesa *La Madonna nella Rivelazione*, p.108. And in this regard it is to be noted expressly, that the Pontifical Biblical Commission had already asserted the historical authenticity of Matthew 1-2 (June 19, 1911) and Luke 1-2 (June 26, 1912). Further Vatican II, in *Dei Verbum*, confirms in precise terms both the apostolic origin (no. 18) and the historicity (no. 19) of the four Gospels (and therefore also of Mt and Lk 1-2). Cf. F. Spadafora, "*Origine apostolica e storicità degli Evangelii nella Dei Verbum*", *Renovatio* 2 (1967): 578-81.

I was especially happy to see Father Manelli citing the decisions of the Biblical Commission. I thought I had them all to myself. Father Brown writes of these decisions:

"Roman Catholics were among the last to give up defending officially the view that the Gospel was written by Matthew, one of the Twelve - a change illustrated in 1955 when the secretary of the Roman Pontifical Biblical Commission gave Catholics 'full liberty' in reference to earlier Biblical Commission decrees." (Brown, p.45; n.2)

This is a fraud that Father Brown and his cronies have been perpetrating on the Church for years. There is no official magisterial document giving scholars "full liberty" with regard to the early decrees of the Biblical Commission. There is an article in a German magazine by the secretary of the Commission expressing his personal opinions about the decrees, but this is hardly a magisterial

Roman document. Msgr. John E. Steinmueller who was a consultant of the Biblical Commission at the time writes:

“I was a consultor of the first Pontifical Biblical Commission from 1947... to 1971, and I never heard any intimation that any decrees of the Commission were ever revoked. At most they were clarified (cf. *Letter to Cardinal Suhard* of Paris, 1948). Recently some Catholic scholars have asserted that the decrees were implicitly revoked by *Divino afflante Spiritu* (1943) and that this is confirmed by two articles written in 1955 by A. Miller and A. Kleinhaus, who seem to restrict the scope of the decrees to matters of faith and morals...The articles referred to were unauthorized and were condemned by the voting Cardinal members of the Commission. A. Miller and A. Kleinhaus were to be brought before the Holy Office because of the articles, but were saved from this ordeal through the personal intervention of Cardinal Tisserant before the Holy Father. It was my friend Father Miller, O.S.B., who told me the whole story before his return to Germany.”

Msgr. John E. Steinmueller, *The Sword and the Spirit*, Stella Maris Books, Ft. Worth, TX, 1977, pp.7,8. This excellent little booklet is a collection of articles which Msgr. Steinmueller wrote for *The Wanderer* attacking Father Brown. As an Appendix he has Cardinal Paul Taguchi's marvelous position paper, *The Study of Holy Scripture*.

It is hard to believe, but Father Brown was also named as a consultor to the Biblical Commission, indicating that the Modernists had gained control of that august body. But he was suddenly removed without explanation, in the middle of his second five year term, and Pope Paul VI took away the magisterial status of the Commission, reducing it to a mere consultative committee of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This is a tragic end for a body which had done such glorious work under St. Pius X, but it is better than having it fall into the hands of the Modernists.

- 14 Brown, pp.326,327. Fathers Laurentin and Manelli cite mostly French and Italian Catholic biblicists, and Father Manelli also indicates if they are priests and their religious orders. Brown cites mostly German and English Protestant biblical scholars. He writes: "I acknowledge my scholarly debt to many writers both Jewish and Christian. In particular, as the reader will see, the infancy narratives have been an area in which Roman Catholic writers have shown considerable interest because of their devotion to Mary; and from such detailed research this commentary has profited. However, historical criticism of the New Testament is relatively new on the Catholic scene, and many of these studies were written at a time or with a mentality that I shall have to reject as uncritical. As a Roman Catholic myself, I share their faith and their devotion; but it is my firm contention that one should not attempt to read later Marian sensibilities

and issues back into the New Testament. (I do not mean that there is no need to relate the NT to later theology, but one must respect historical development.) I see no reason why a Catholic's understanding of what Matthew and Luke meant in their infancy narratives should be any different from a Protestant's." (p.9) Brown teaches at a Protestant divinity school, Union Theological Seminary, which to my mind is just where he belongs.

15 Brown, p.346.

16 Brown, p.347, n.7. Father Brown has a footnote attacking Laurentin for saying in an earlier book, that Our Lady knew that Jesus was the Son of God from the time of the Annunciation:

“Laurentin, *Jésus*, 164, quite correctly makes this point, but his overall treatment is confused by crossing the line from Luke's presentation to Mary's psychological history - a confusion that stems from his unproved assumption that we have in the Lucan story a genuine reminiscence stemming from Mary. His whole book on Luke 2:41-52 is written in relation to the thesis that Mary knew Jesus' divinity from the annunciation on. He recalls (p.180) worries in Rome that if one were to deny this, one would not be ‘sufficiently generous to the Madonna’! At times it seems as if the discussion would attribute to Mary a Nicaean understanding of the divinity; at least it would attribute to her a post-resurrectional understanding of divine sonship, an understanding which Luke might have had, but scarcely Mary during Jesus' lifetime. While I am a Roman Catholic and share with Laurentin an acceptance of Church dogma on Mary, I reject resolutely his using in an exegetical and historical study the principle: ‘One cannot suppose that Mary lacked knowledge that would benefit the Mother of God.’ (p.184) From the Christian acceptance of Mary as the Mother of God one may learn of her sanctity, but not the history of her growth in knowledge. “(Brown, p.484, n.19)

"I am a Roman Catholic" - you are not a Roman Catholic just by saying you are, but by humbly accepting the teachings of the Church.

17 Laurentin, p.18.

18 Pope Benedict XV, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, 1920, 186, The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939, Claudia Carlen, IHM, McGrath Publishing Co., Raleigh, NC, 1981, p.185.

19 Laurentin, pp.158,159. Father Laurentin claims that by the application of semiotics or structuralism to the Infancy Narratives, he has scientifically established their historicity.

“The attempt has often been made to discard the Infancy Gospels arbitrarily as an anomalous block of material not integral to the Gospel message. The science of semiotics, however, reveals the dynamic and profound unity of the texts, their fundamental consistency over-riding the apparent medley of diverse episodes

and literary genres. The depth of the text requires us to go beyond the analytic models erected for stories and tales. The infancy Gospels challenge the semiotic method with new dimensions which we are invited to take into account. The 'model' is verified here with extraordinary density. The subject is identified with the object (the Saviour with salvation) but also the addresser, since he is designated as God (Great, Holy, Lord) and with the addressees with whom he is united in bodily and spiritual solidarity, from Mary (1:28-38) to Simeon (2:28-32). Working from entirely different perspectives the semiotic squares reveal a new and unfathomable message. Their convergences are rooted in an identical tradition and in an identical source of information which is, at one and the same time, historical evidence and spiritual experience." (Laurentin, p.451).

Even if what Father Laurentin claims is completely true, and I personally think he is exaggerating the usefulness of this science, semiotics remains locked into the philological method. You have to go outside the text to establish its authenticity. Father Laurentin never cites the Magisterium and seldom quotes the Fathers and Doctors, and frequently only to criticize their opinions. The Church remains the official interpreter of the Bible, and only she can guarantee its historicity.

- 20 Manelli, pp.132,133; n.25 Origin, *PG* 13, 1815-16. "The felicitous penetrating observation of the great Origin effectively rebuts the sophisticated opinions of those who speak instead of "stereotyped" expressions adopted by the angel in his greeting to Mary. Cf. E.M. Peretto, O.S.M., "Contenuti e limiti dell Anunciazione" in *Identità dei Servi di Maria* (Rome 1975), pp.34-45; n.26 Cf. Varón Varón, *Sagrada Escritura*, p.43; Leonardi, *L'Infancia di Gesù*, p.40. One should also ponder the fact that the angel in a certain sense gives a new name to Mary, calling her "full of grace": It is, as it were, the proper name of the Virgin, which the angel pronounces" (Ceuppens, *De Mariologia Biblica*, p.64). Mary is she who is 'full of grace' par excellence, in the most perfect and most unique sense, by which she is always such, from the beginning of her existence: 'For the fulness of grace is neither perfect, nor uniquely Mary's privilege, unless coinciding with the very first moment of Mary's personal existence' (*ibid*, p.64)."
- 21 Manelli, 162,164,165.
- 22 Brown, p.527.
- 23 Brown, p.518; n.2. Here is a typical radical feminist (one priest I know calls them "harpies") writing of the Virginité of Our Lady *in partu*, during birth:

"This doctrine of 'virginité in childbirth,' which cannot be abandoned without having the whole artificial structure of Mary's 'perpetual virginité' collapsing on itself, is an especially crass example of the lengths people will go in order to make Mary over into a virgin...Mary is supposed to have borne Jesus as if he were a ray of light or transfigured, as he was after

his resurrection, or like the burning bush, which was not consumed, or ‘the way spirits pass through bodies without resistance’ ...Putting aside the question of whether Christ, if he was born like sort of ray, nevertheless became man, the dignity of the woman cannot be manifested by making her into the mother of a beam of light. By separating Mary so radically from other women who have borne children, one may have given her, from the Marilogical standpoint, something crucially important. But from the human standpoint one has taken something just as crucial away. Anyone who claims that Mary maintained her biological virginity in childbirth - like the birth of an idea or of a pure spirit – has to realize that he is robbing her of her motherhood.

Uta Ranke-Heineman, *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*, translated from the German by Peter Heinegg, Doubleday, New York, 1990, p.30.

- 24 Brown, pp.528,529.
- 25 Brown, p.525; n.28.
- 26 Pope Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, 1893, 3; Cf. *Rome and the Study of Scripture*, *Op. cit.*, pp.23,24.
- 27 Laurentin, pp.186,187.
- 28 Manelli, p.222; n.28, Garofalo, *Le Parole di Maria*, p.152; n.29, Pietrafesa, *La Madonna nella Rivelazione*, p.218.
- 29 St. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici gregis*, September 8, 1907, 145, *Op. cit.*, p.103.
- 30 Raymond Brown, S.S., *Jesus, God and Man*, Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1967, pp.94,95.
- 31 Louis Bouyer, *Dictionary of Theology*, translated by Rev. Charles Underhill Quinn, Desclee and Co., Tournai, Belgium, 1965, p.347.
- 32 Reginald Garrigou-Lagrangé, O.P., *Christ the Saviour*, B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1950, pp.342,343.
- 33 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, Q.15, a.3.
- 34 A.A.S., 58 (1966) 660, point 5.
- 35 Brown, pp.483,484.
- 36 Laurentin, pp.214,215.
- 37 Laurentin, pp.421,422.
- 38 Manelli, pp.283,284; n.24 Testa, *Maria terra vergine*, vol. 1, p.18...;n.25 Leal, *Vangelo secondo Luca*, p.157.
- 39 Manelli, p.285; n.31 Leonardi, *L'Infanzia di Gesù*, p.244; n.32 Pietrafesa, *La Madonna nella Rivelazione*, p.264; n.33 Laurentin, *The Truth of Christmas*, p.81; n.34 Garofalo, *Le Parole di Maria*, p.127.
- 40 Manelli, pp.288,289; n.45 Garofalo, *Le Parole di Maria*, P.128.

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