What is Marist Spirituality?

We often speak of Marist spirituality: but what is it?

First, let us be clear that a spirituality is not simply a theology, nor is it just a vision, a charism or one or more inspiring ideas, or even a spirit (cf. Craig Larkin, 'Mary in the Church: The Basis of Marist Spirituality', Rome, 1979, pp. 10-15, who distinguishes charism, spirit and spirituality). I think that sometimes we Marists tend to call 'Marist spirituality' what is really something else. In particular, the great Colinian themes – Mary in the earliest Church and at the end of time, etc. – do not, in my view, constitute a spirituality, at least not by themselves, even if they are part of our identity.

1. What is a Spirituality?

What then is a spirituality? How to define this over-worked word, which – to judge from the section labelled 'spirituality' in bookshops and public libraries – refers to such things as self-improvement and psychic wellbeing, and borders on the occult.

Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote in an influential article ('The Gospel as Norm and Test of All Spirituality in the Church', *Concilium*, 1965), that every authentic spirituality – including non-Christian – comprises three elements: there is first the *movement* of the human spirit towards the absolute Spirit; the second element consists in selfless *service*; finally there is a certain *passivity*, which is really a higher *activity*, in which the human spirit allows itself to be moved by the divine Spirit. These three elements, he continues, were proclaimed in the Bible and fulfilled in the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ. In the last analysis, they 'are interiorized in the loving attitude of Jesus towards his Father in the Holy Spirit'. Next these three components are realized in the Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the prototype. The various spiritualit*ies*, which appear in the history of the Church, are only particular applications of the one spirituality of the Gospel. The individuals or communities that are identified with a particular spirituality will emphasize one aspect of Gospel spirituality – like Poverty for St Francis of Assisi – and make it the dynamic centre of life and action; but, if the spirituality is authentic, this privileged centre will be only a reference point for living the whole of the Gospel.

So we are asking how Jean-Claude Colin – for we are speaking here in particular of the spirituality of one branch of the Society of Mary – proposes to his followers to live the Gospel in self-transcendence, in selfless service and in surrender to God's Spirit, that is to say, to make our own the loving attitude of Jesus towards his Father in the Holy Spirit? Where is the dynamic centre of life and action in reference to which Marists are called to live the whole Gospel?

2. Is there a Marist Spirituality?

But is there really a distinctly Marist spirituality? The question needs to be asked. For not every founder or foundress gave their followers a proper spirituality, as Ignatius gave his (see Larkin, p. 9). Many new foundations are placed squarely within an existing spiritual tradition, Benedictine, Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan, or what have you. In other cases, the founder simply assumes what you might call the current spirituality, without seeking to add anything except may be a particular emphasis or devotional practice.

The question also needs to be asked because, in a survey of Marists conducted in association with the Fourth International Colloquium on Marist History and Spirituality, few seem to have regarded Fr Colin as a 'spiritual teacher', even though elements of his spiritual teaching emerged as enormously significant for many participants (Kevin Duffy and others, 'The Spiritual Teaching of Father Colin: A Survey of Attitudes in the Society of Mary', *FN* 4,3, 1999, pp. 313-325). This might at least suggest that Marists do not clearly recognise their Founder as having bequeathed a coherent spirituality to the Society. Instead they tend to look to St Ignatius, St Francis de Sales, St John of the Cross, or St Therese of Lisieux as their principal guides in the spiritual life.

On the other hand, Jean-Claude Colin's vision of the Society of Mary was in many ways original. Craig Larkin (pp. 53-74) has shown that his distinctive insight was to see Mary, and so the Marist, in relationship to the Church, the world and to contemporary people – a relationship that is aptly summed up in the 'hidden and unknown'. This idea was new and distinctive, and was not simply the current way of looking at Mary or the Church. It implies a new and distinctive spirituality to give it life.

We want to know what are the spiritual resources that underwrite this vision, what are the spiritual forces that enable the beautiful ideal to become a reality. How can we Marists share in Mary's relationship to the Church? Or again, how do we – frail and self-centred as we are – become 'instruments of divine mercy'? Can we look to Jean-Claude Colin, or must we find another guide?

Although he never wrote a spiritual treatise, not even the *Doctrine spirituelle* that bears his name, Fr Colin has left us a fairly substantial *corpus* of spiritual teachings, to be found in the various redactions of the Rule, in letters, including his circular letters to the Society and letters of spiritual direction, and in his conversations and informal talks recorded by Fr Mayet. As we read this material, it would be misleading to think that we should look only for elements that are unique to Colin. Any attempt to construct a synthesis of those alone would in fact give a quite distorted view of his spirituality. For the personal thought of even an original thinker consists not only of those ideas that are unique to him, but also – and even more – of those that he shares with others. In the case of Jean-Claude Colin, his spirituality is largely that of a certain religious and spiritual culture, which he shares. Nevertheless, he has left a version of this common spirituality that is sufficiently personal to deserve to be called Colinian and so Marist.

3. The Sources of Colinian Spirituality

How did Jean-Claude Colin learn to share in 'the loving attitude of Jesus Christ towards his Father in the Holy Spirit'?

Yves Krumenacker is a contemporary specialist in the history of French spirituality, who teaches at the University of Lyons. In the 17th and 18th centuries in France there were two main spiritual currents: the Jesuit spirituality and that of the so-called 'French school' handed on by the Oratorians and by the Sulpicians in the seminaries they ran. (There was also, of course, the school of Port Royal, but that is not our concern here.) Writing about France in the aftermath of the Revolution, Krumenacker finds that there was no longer a spirituality that is properly Ignatian, and even less one that could be called Oratorian or Sulpician. Instead, the ex-Jesuit networks and the seminaries handed on a spirituality in which the main currents of the pre-revolutionary

period met and mingled (*L'école française de spiritualité. Des mystiques, des fondateurs, des courants et leurs interprètes*, Paris, Cerf, pp. 558-567). In this mix, the Sulpician current, which remained the dominant one in the seminaries, contributed the key concepts and characteristic vocabulary of what has been called the 'French School' of spirituality; memories of the Jesuit tradition opened up the perspective of a universal mission and centred around models of missionary zeal, both for the renewal of Christian life within the country and for the missions abroad.

a) Jesuit

Jean-Claude Colin and his companions in the seminary of Saint-Irénée at Lyons certainly underwent these influences. Jesuit memories provided the figures of Francis Regis and Francis Xavier as the great models of missionary zeal in France and overseas. The 'promise of Fourvière' may well have been inspired by the vows that Ignatius and six of his followers took at Montmartre in August 1556 (I owe this suggestion to Fr. Thomas Ellerman). The young Colin would have come across quotations from Jesuit sources, some of which entered the Rule he was to compose at Cerdon; thus the phrase *in quavis mundi plaga*, reflecting the spirit of universal mission, which occurs already in the letter sent to Pope Pius VII in 1822 (' … *in quavis mundi plaga ad quam nos mittere volet Sedes Apostolica*'.) It is in fact a quotation from the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Pars III, c. II, litt. G, et *Regulae eorum qui in missionibus versantur* §2). Coste notes that the quotation does not imply that the signatories of the letter to the Holy Father were directly acquainted with the Ignatian Constitutions (*OM*, t. I, p. 264 and footnotes). From the same early period, perhaps, Colin also got the idea of the Jesuits as, in some respects, counter-models, of how not to go about certain things.

The most substantial Jesuit influence on his early formation was *The Practice of Christian Perfection*, by Alonso Rodríguez, which he rated so highly that he could tell his novice-scholastics at Belley in 1844: 'By the end of your theology, know Rodríguez as it were by heart' (*FS* 79,7). There he learned an ascetical discipline drawn from the great tradition, beginning with the Desert Fathers. We will see that Colin's spiritual formation contained influences, including Jesuit, that opened up other avenues than those laid out

by Rodríguez; nevertheless, this writer was central to the pedagogy that our Founder prescribed for Marists.

Similarly, Fr Colin could tell the young student priests in 1848:

'I want you to know inside out St Ignatius' method of mental prayer, with all its acts. I should like to test you on it myself. This should be the one taught in all our novitiates and houses. It must be the same everywhere. It will be in the Rule.' He added: 'I prefer St Ignatius' method of meditation because it is the one most suited to our understanding. I believe God himself revealed it to him' (*FS* 165,2-3).

Notwithstanding his extreme reverence for the Ignatian method as a pedagogy for meditation, the same talk to the student priests reveals that the Founder was well aware that it was not necessarily going to be the one 'most suited' to everyone at all times:

'He added with a laugh: If later on God wants you to break away from the rules, we shall leave you in his hands; he will guide you far better than men. It must be quite certain, however, that it is he who is inspiring you, and God lets that be known by quite other means' (*FS* 165,4). This last remark could well be an allusion to the teaching of St John of the Cross, on the passage from discursive meditation to a prayer that is simpler and more contemplative.

In any case, Colin was far from being a thoroughgoing Ignatian. Even though he wanted every Marist to have a copy of Jean-Joseph Petitdidier's edition of the *Spiritual Exercises* and use it as a manual of meditation (cf. *FS* 9,5), he did not ever, as far as I know, make the *Exercises*, even in the way they would have been given in the first half of the 19th century. Decisive also is the way he views the Particular Examen, which is the cornerstone of the *Exercises* and of any properly Ignatian spirituality. On the one hand, Marists are to be faithful to it (*FS* 182,3.22.25); on the other hand, it is meant to be 'a quarter hour of prayer, of union with God, to get your breath back in the middle of the day' (*FS* 39,38). Thus it is not for Colin what it is for Ignatius, the moment when we check in precise detail the progress we have made in overcoming a sinful habit or tendency or in acquiring a virtue, noting every victory and every fall. Colin's understanding of the Particular Examen points in a quite different direction.

b) The 'French School'

The influence of the 'French School' on Colin, no doubt from his seminary formation, is also clearly discernible. Thus in *FS* 33, from 1838-39, we read that 'He often said that people do not pay sufficient *honour* to the blessed Virgin in the services she rendered her son during his childhood. He recommended this practice to the Marists and to the boys in the college.' The same note adds: 'Father Colin was also very devoted to *honouring* Mary in the prayers she offered for the spreading of the Gospel, and he used to join his prayers to hers. He often urged us to follow this salutary practice.' (Italics mine.)

Jean Coste's introduction to this number is highly instructive. He writes:

'To honour Jesus or Mary in a mystery, in the terms of the French School of spirituality upon which Father Colin depends here, means to recognise the greatness of the actions they performed and the attitudes which prompted them, to fix one's attention upon them, and to let one's own [attitudes and – added JT] conduct be impregnated by this meditation.' Coste adds a remark that is highly significant for us: 'It is in this perspective of a spiritual identification that Father Colin insists on two moments of the life of Mary: her exercise of a twofold motherhood towards the infant Christ as he grew to manhood, and towards the infant Church expanding among the nations.' As the Founder himself put it on another occasion: 'When Jesus Christ was born, he was the object of all (Mary's) thoughts and affections. After his death, her sole thought was the extension and development of the mystery of the Incarnation' (*FS* 60,1). In other words, we have here important elements of an answer to our question, How are we able to share in Mary's relationship to the Church? Our Founder recommends us to unite our minds and hearts with Mary praying for the spread of the Gospel and to join our prayers with hers. This exercise provides a pattern for other 'mysteries' of Mary at Nazareth and in the early Church which we could 'honour', thus opening ourselves to receive the imprint of the interior attitudes of the blessed Mother. We also have an answer to another question we saw: How can we make our own the 'Christian experience of Mary'?

A second example cannot be properly appreciated in the English translation of *A Founder Speaks*, n. 61, 5. In the course of conversation at La Capucinière in 1842, Fr Colin commented on an experience he had had while celebrating Mass: 'That Mass made

me feel something I cannot express. I sensed how all the wisdom of the world was folly.' Then he declared (translating literally): 'Oh! How the *state* of our Lord, dragged like a fool through the streets of Jerusalem, seemed fine to me! I could see nothing more elevated than that *state*.' (Italics mine.) The twice-repeated word 'state' – in French *état* – is a key-word in the vocabulary of the 'French School'. It refers here to the interior attitude of Jesus as he was dragged like a fool through the streets of Jerusalem: the event took place 2000 years ago, but the 'state' or 'mystery' – the terms are practically synonymous – abides; it is, as it were, permanently available to us to enter into and contains a particular grace that is imparted to us. By uniting himself with this state, Fr Colin made his own the interior disposition of Jesus as he was being treated as a fool and so was able to sense 'how all the wisdom of the world was folly'.

A final example is provided by the devotion recommended in n. 34 of the 1872 Constitutions 'to spend a quarter of an hour on Fridays, with head bowed at least part of the time, praying in union with Christ in the garden of Olives.' This practice is included among 'Mortifications and Penances'. It did not feature in the 1842 Constitutions. On the other hand, it evidently belonged to the Rule and is typical of the 'early ideas' to which the Founder returned in the period after 1868. The way Colin writes about this devotion in some early texts shows clearly the inspiration of the 'French School'. So, in the local Rule for the Mother House, as revised after September 1843 (*AR*, 8, 19), we read: 'On Fridays, spend the last quarter hour of the meditation on one's knees (if possible) in a sort of self-annihilation, in the presence of the divine Majesty, in honour of the agony of the Saviour in the garden of Olives and of the anguishes of his Sacred Heart.' Here the expression 'in honour of' bears the special sense of 'honouring' that we have just seen; as for 'self-annihilation' – in French *anéantissement* – it is another key-term of the 'French School': we realise our nothingness before God. The draft Constitutions of 1868 have: 'On Fridays, during the last quarter hour of the evening meditation, pray with head bowed and, during this time, offer to God the Father the prayer of Jesus Christ in the garden of Olives.' Once again, offering to the Father the prayer of Jesus is typical of the 'French School'; it is also now clear that this is what is implied in the 1872 text by 'in union with Christ'. Far from being simply an act of penance, the Friday devotion to Jesus in the agony in the garden, appears as a particular way of sharing interiorly in the

dispositions of our Lord. It entered deeply into Fr Colin's own spiritual life: on one occasion he could recommend to Marists: 'In times of difficulty, let us say with our Lord in the Garden of Olives: "Let this chalice pass from me; but not my will but thine be done"' (*FS* 182,59). This shows that he had learnt to unite himself with the 'state' of Jesus praying in Gethsemane.

c) Favourite Authors

Besides the spiritual formation that he would have received in the seminary and which was common to all, Jean-Claude Colin received through his personal reading a spiritual culture that was eclectic but, in the last analysis, profound and coherent. He was already a serious reader as a boy: while he was a student at the minor seminary of Alix his sisters gave him two volumes by Henri-Marie Boudon, one of the foremost writers of the 'French School'; one of these works bore the significant title, *Dieu seul* (*God Alone*), and for 10 years it was Jean-Claude's inseparable companion (cf. *OM* 574 and 499, additional note *l*; D. Kerr, *Jean-Claude Colin, Marist: A founder in an era of revolution and restoration : the early years 1790-1836*, Dublin, 2000, pp. 89-90). Colin also tells us that, from the age of 13, in 1803, he was familiar with a work by Giuseppe Ignazio Franchi called *Treatise on the Love of Self-Contempt* (cf. *FS* 62). Charles Girard has shown the influence of Boudon and Franchi on Colin's ideas about humility ('On the Sources of Colin's Teaching on Humility', *FN* 4,2, 1998, pp. 257-293). Another book which he constantly read and 'knew by heart' was a compilation of letters of spiritual direction by St Francis de Sales (*OM* 574,1).

Around the years 1838-39, he spoke more than once with Fr Mayet of the spiritual authors whom he had read 'in the past' – so before 1836 and perhaps already in the seminary – and whom he recommended to Mayet personally or more generally to Marists (cf. *FS* 35). These authors are (in the order in which Colin mentions them): Francis de Sales (several times), Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Henri-Marie Boudon, Jean-Joseph Surin and in particular his *Catéchisme spirituel* (several times), Louis Lallemand (*sic*), François Guilloré, Lorenzo Scupoli author of the *Spiritual Combat* highly recommended also by Francis de Sales, and Alonso Rodríguez. Our Founder also read and recommended the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* by Thomas à Kempis and the *Imitation of*

the Blessed Virgin by Abbé d'Hérouville; he also assumed that Marists were constantly reading the New Testament (cf. *FS* 79,7; 182,13).

It is interesting to note that the spiritual authors recommended to Mayet are the same, by and large, as the identifiable sources of the spiritual teaching of Jean-Pierre de Caussade, a Jesuit writer of the 18th century in whom more than one Marist has found affinities with Marist spirituality, although Colin did not know him – the most notable difference is St Catherine of Siena, who is an important influence on Caussade but whom Fr Colin does not appear to have read (cf. *Traité sur l'oraison du cœur ; Instructions spirituelles*, Texte établi et présenté par Michel Olphe-Galliard s.j., Desclée de Brouwer, 1979, Introduction, pp. 24-25). Of these authors, Boudon we have just met, and we also know Rodríguez and Scupoli; Francis de Sales, Teresa and John of the Cross need no introduction. On the other hand, three names will almost certainly be unfamiliar, those of Lallemant (the usual spelling), Surin and Guilloré. These I call the 'mystical Jesuits'; they had a decisive influence on Fr Colin, and I will discuss them in the next talks. But first, I need to speak about someone who is never mentioned by Colin and whose works he seems not to have read, but who is crucial for understanding much that we have seen and will see about Colinian spirituality, Pierre de Bérulle.

4. Pierre de Bérulle

Bérulle (1575-1629) is in fact the founder of the 'French School' of spirituality, not only as a writer but also as the founder of a religious order, the Congregation of the Oratory of France, which existed to live out this spirituality. From the Oratory came the Society of Saint-Sulpice, dedicated to the formation of priests, through which the influence of Bérulle reached a seminarian called Jean-Claude Colin. For Bérulle's mission was the sanctification of the French clergy. This is especially interesting for us, as it means that Bérulle is a spiritual teacher who addresses himself to priests and, by extension, to apostolic religious, whereas so often the great spiritual classics are addressed to monks and enclosed nuns. The influence of Bérulle went far beyond those who acknowledged themselves to be his disciples. It was all-pervasive in the spiritual circles of France of the 17th and 18th centuries and reached every sphere, including

Jesuits, despite the unfortunate quarrel that broke out between the Oratory and the Society of Jesus. Bérulle knew Francis de Sales – who greatly admired him – and all those who were bringing about the renewal of Catholic life in France after the Wars of Religion; he was instrumental in bringing the Teresian Carmelites to France. But if I draw your attention to Pierre de Bérulle, it is not just because of his historical importance, and in particular for his indirect influence upon Jean-Claude Colin. It is also, and perhaps especially, for the inherent value of his spirituality, which is both beautiful, even sublime, and also practical. We shall follow the synthesis given by Henri Bremond in vol. III of his *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, pp. 22-154. For him, the doctrine of Bérulle rests on two principles: theocentrism and devotion to the incarnate Word, and is expressed in two practices: in the way of prayer called 'elevation' and in 'adherence' to Christ.

a) Theocentrism

'A genius of our times (Copernicus) maintains that the sun, and not the earth, is the centre of the universe; that it is motionless, and that the earth … moves around the sun… This new opinion, little followed in the science of the stars (Bérulle is writing before Galileo), is useful and is to be followed in the science of salvation. For Jesus is the sun, motionless in his greatness, and moving all things… Jesus is the true centre of the universe, and the universe is in continual movement with respect to him. Jesus is the sun of our souls, from whom they receive all graces, lights and influences. And the earth of our hearts should be in continual movement towards him, to receive in all its powers and parts the favourable aspects and kindly influences of this great star. Let us therefore exercise the movements and affections of our soul towards Jesus, and lift ourselves up in the praises of God, on the subject of his only Son and of the mystery of his incarnation, by the following thoughts and words…'

Thus Pierre de Bérulle in his *Discourse on the State and Greatness of Jesus*. And there you have it all, really: the sublimity, the theocentrism, the devotion to Christ, 'adherence' to him, the prayer of 'elevation'. From this passage, it is clear that he sees himself as bringing about nothing less than a 'Copernican revolution' in spirituality by introducing a Christocentric theory of the spiritual universe, as Copernicus had

introduced a heliocentric theory of the physical universe. Christocentric, but we have to say immediately that, since Jesus is entirely turned towards God his Father, Bérulle's outlook is really theocentric. In the last analysis, every heart, beginning with that of Jesus, is or should be in continual movement towards God.

A Copernican revolution? Few believers will disagree that God is the true centre and prime mover of the moral and spiritual universe. But for how many is this truth the real foundation of their spiritual life? Bérulle, at any rate, saw that the victorious humanism of his age put human beings at the centre of the moral universe, and that even spirituality tended to be in fact if not in principle anthropocentric. A notable exception to this tendency are the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, and in particular their Principle and Foundation, which begins: 'Man is created to praise and reverence the Lord his God, and in serving him to find at last his salvation.' Here human salvation is not forgotten; but the accent is not there, but rather on the worship and service of God: human beings exist for God and not the other way round. However, when Pierre de Bérulle looked at contemporary Christianity, even at its best, he found that we human beings were at centre-stage, ourselves and our salvation, our sins and our needs, the development of our virtues; even morality and asceticism often resembled a more-or-less Christianized stoicism.

In contrast to this anthropocentric Christianity, Bérulle put God in the centre; specifically, he asserted the virtue of religion, which seeks to give God what is due to God, and in the first place worship and praise (he was known in his own day as the one who restored the virtue of religion). From this springs the great care given in the Oratorian and Sulpician traditions to the worship of God, especially in the liturgy. From it also springs a new attention to God that spreads everywhere in French spirituality, among others to a Boudon with his *Dieu seul*. In Bérulle it expresses itself in the lyrical outpouring of praise that he calls 'elevation'.

b) The Incarnate Word

Bérulle and his followers look at Jesus primarily in relation to God. Before being our Teacher and our Saviour, Jesus is the true Adorer. Because he is God as well as man, Jesus can at last give God a worship that is adequate: his first mission on coming into the

world is to offer a perfect adoration (cf. Heb 10:5-7, quoting Ps 40). ‘The man for others’? to quote Bonhoeffer. Yes, but first ‘the man for God’.

Yet Jesus is also close to us. We can unite ourselves to him and in particular to the interior ‘states’ that encapsulate, so to speak, the different moments of his life, death and resurrection: we can make our own – for our salvation and sanctification – the essence of the mysteries of Jesus in the womb of the Virgin, born at Bethlehem, hidden at Nazareth, preaching and healing in Galilee and Judea, suffering and dying in Jerusalem, risen and ascended into heaven. Bérulle, just as much as Ignatius, encourages us to meditate on the details of the Gospel narratives; but we are to penetrate beyond the event itself to the attitude of Jesus towards his Father and towards his fellow human-beings.

Union with Christ thus becomes the dynamic principle of spiritual growth. Bérulle exploits systematically the implications of Johannine and Pauline texts such as ‘May they all be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, that they also may be in us’ (John 17:21) or ‘Anyone who attaches himself to the Lord is one spirit with him’ (1 Cor 6:17). This union with Christ is not something reserved for the chosen few, but is established in us by baptism, which already identifies us with Christ. By contemplating the image of God’s glory, we are, to quote Paul, ‘being transformed into the same image from glory to glory’ (cf. 2 Cor 3:18).

Our project then is to ‘adhere’ to Christ, to use a characteristic expression. We thus open ourselves to receiving a deeper imprint of Christ’s own features – a sort of spiritual photography. It does not spare us from effort in overcoming our faults and growing in virtue; but the accent is not on our efforts. So, to grow in the virtue of patience, I could engage in regular self-examination and renewed resolution: that is the method of St Ignatius’ Particular Examen; or I could seek to become more closely united with Christ, asking that he might impart to me the patience he showed with his disciples, with the crowds, in suffering: that is the practice – the word ‘method’ is probably not appropriate – of Bérulle and, I suspect, of Colin.

c) Mary

Theocentric and Christocentric as is Bérulle, he and, with him, all of French spirituality at this time associates Mary closely with Christ: *Jesus and Mary* is the motto

of the French Oratory. This approach leads to extending to Mary many features of devotion to Jesus: thus Fr Colin can ‘honour’ the ‘mysteries’ of Mary; he recommends devotion to the Infancy of Mary (Const. 200), an extension of the devotion to the Infancy of Jesus that – even more than devotion to the Sacred Heart – is characteristic of the ‘French School’. We will see that he is able to make a ‘Marian transposition’ of language originally used of Jesus. Bérulle can even say: ‘Speaking of you, Mary, we speak of Jesus.’ This is in no way, however, a confusion of Jesus and Mary, let alone a substitution of Mary for Jesus. The relation between the two is fundamentally that of creature to Creator, even if Mary is the mother of the Creator incarnate. Bérulle puts it this way in a remarkably beautiful formula that reaches the level of poetry: ‘Mary is pure capacity for Jesus, filled with Jesus’ – as Jesus, we might say, is pure capacity for God, filled with God (cf. Col 1:19). It follows that the better we resemble Mary, the better we resemble Jesus, and the better we resemble Jesus, the better we resemble God.