

## **Catholic Cults - Part III - 12/15/08**

**by Jim Smyrl, as posted on the official FBC Jax Blog**

Not every cult meets every mark of a cult by exact definition. Unlike the clear mark of adding authoritative sources to Scripture, the second mark of a cult is not as easily detected within Catholicism. The second mark of a cult is subtraction. One may question whether or not Catholics truly take away from either Christ's perfect deity or His perfect humanity. Catholics affirm Jesus as the second Person of the holy Trinity, as well as His full deity and full humanity (CCC, no. 464). That affirmation stands as the current official dogma of Catholics. However, in practice, Catholics are moving towards subtracting from Christ's deity by subtracting His sole sufficiency as Savior.

Granted, the issue is not so much regarding deity, in the purest sense of the term, but rather the sufficiency of Christ. In the same manner that many Southern Baptists exalted the doctrine of inerrancy while negating the foundation of Scripture's sufficiency for all of life, the Catholics have upheld the deity of Christ but minimized His sufficiency by elevating Mary. The Catholic Encyclopedia states, "We should find a continually developing veneration for the sanctity and exalted privileges of Mary." This veneration of Mary is on the slippery slope of sin moving towards a title for Mary as "Mediatrice" or "Co-Redemptrix." The definitions of these titles include Mary as co-author of salvation along with Christ. In the Vatican News on the Mediatrice Petition to the Pope, we read that in the 1990's more than six million signatures, including Mother Teresa and Cardinal John O'Connor, were gathered in support of Pope John Paul II declaring Mary, "Co-Redemptrix." A lay movement called Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici ("The Voice of the People for Mary Mediatrice") provides petitions that can be signed by Roman Catholics at large and sent to the Pope in support of officially declaring Mary, "Co-Redemptrix."

There is little doubt that this movement will migrate like all other sinful movements (James 1:14-15) towards the denigration of Christ and the elevation of man or, in this specific case, Mary. Catholics may claim in their writings and liturgy the perfect deity and humanity of Christ, but a proper view of Christ involves far more. If Mary is included in a complementary or necessary sense for our salvation, then reason compels one to conclude that Christ alone is not sufficient for salvation. If Christ is not sufficient for salvation, then He cannot be perfect deity and perfect humanity. Something in Him must have been lacking if Mary was needed in such a role. We would have no problem assigning the nomenclature of "cult" to any new group today that sought to make any person in history a necessary complement to Christ's work on the cross. Our struggle with assigning such a title to Catholics is not due to a lack of evidence, but rather to a lack of theological conviction as well as relativistic infection within the body of Christ. Translated: we are no longer passionate about the integrity of Jesus and are so afraid of offending a friend that we allow the nature and character of God to be demeaned in the name of peaceful relationships.