On June 28, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI promoted the decree recognizing the “heroic virtue” of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, which is a significant step on the road to being a saint of the Catholic Church. At this stage, Archbishop Sheen’s title is “Venerable Servant of God.” The cause for canonization was first opened in New York by Cardinal John O’Connor. In 2002, Bishop David R. Jenky, CSC, of Peoria, Illinois, the birthplace and home diocese of Bishop Sheen, began the official diocesan inquiry. Examination of testimony from acquaintances and his writings produced 10,000 pages that were then summarized in two volumes called Positio stating the reasons that Fulton Sheen should be recognized by the Church as a saint. These volumes were studied by theologians, bishops, and scholars from the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. The process continues, and the reported miraculous healing of a stillborn baby through the Venerable Bishop Sheen’s intercession is now being studied.

Fulton Sheen (1895-1979) was among the most well-known churchmen of the twentieth century. He was born in El Paso, Illinois; he attended St. Mary’s School, Spalding Institute, Peoria, Illinois (at the time staffed by the Brothers of Mary), St. Viator’s College and Seminary in Bourbonnais, Illinois, St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, Catholic University of America and the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. He was ordained to the priesthood in St. Mary’s Cathedral for the diocese of Peoria, in 1919. Shortly thereafter, he became a teacher of philosophy at Catholic University in Washington, DC. In 1950, he became the national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (which he described as “the greatest philanthropic and charitable organization in the world”), then Auxiliary Bishop of New York, and finally Archbishop of Rochester (1966-1969). He died in New York in 1979.

An extraordinary communicator, he began in 1932 the “Catholic Hour” radio programs (broadcast on Sunday afternoon and continuing for twenty-two years). From 1951 to 1957, he hosted the highly acclaimed television series “Life is Worth Living,” winning an Emmy Award in 1953, the only time an Emmy award was given to a religious program in prime-time television. He wrote ninety-six books, with Peace of Soul (1949), and Life is Worth Living (1953) as the most popular. Among the notable converts to Catholicism whom he influenced were Heywood Broun, Louis Budenz, Clare Boothe Luce. The televangelist Robert Schuler of the Crystal Cathedral had a bronze stature of Bishop Sheen included among his great American preachers.

Bishop Sheen’s programs, always concluding with “Good-bye now, and God loves you,” attracted people of all faiths.

The Marian Library of the University of Dayton was happy to honor him as the first recipient of the Marian Library Medal. On June 10, 1953, Fr. Lawrence Monheim, S.M., at the time director of the Marian Library, presented the award to him in New York City for his book The World’s First Love, a work which revealed the bishop’s love of and devotion to the Blessed Mother, as well as his positive approach to religious questions.

“Everyone,” he wrote, “wants something to live for; everyone is seeking God through the pursuit of life, knowledge, and love.” Similarly, when speaking about Our Blessed Mother, he began by saying “Everyone carries within his heart a blueprint of the one he loves.” Mary is “what God wanted us all to be... she speaks of herself as the ‘eternal blueprint in the...
Mind of God,’ the one whom God loved before she was a creature.”

The first part of *The World’s First Love* is devoted to the two pivotal doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The opening chapter speaks of God’s love for Mary: “Everyone is in love with an ideal love. That ideal love is . . . the same ideal that God had in his heart from all eternity – the Lady whom he called ‘Mother.’” The Assumption corresponds to the two fundamental human desires – love and life. God’s love for Mary lifted her; it exerted a gravitational pull. The Assumption affirms the beauty of all life, including the life that continues after death. The second part of *The World’s First Love* deals with humanity’s love of Mary: “The Woman the World Loves.” The seven recorded words of Mary are related to the “Seven Laws of Love.” The final chapter, “The Madonna of the World,” describes how the peoples of the world – including the ancient civilizations, Muslims, the Chinese – have sought the Eternal Feminine, most clearly exemplified in the Virgin Mary.

When his television competitors asked him who his writers were, he replied “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.” Along with Scripture, his “intellectual larder” included classical philosophy and literature, poetry, while he always searched for some opening to the human heart. At the bishop’s death, the Jesuit periodical *America* stated that the secret of his power was the joining of “an educated and thinking head with a generous and feeling heart,” calling him “the greatest evangelizer in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.”

His life gives witness to many practices which were part of the Catholic life. On his blackboard on television he began by writing JMJ (Jesus, Mary, Joseph), a practice he he learned from a Sister in grade school. The “daily three Hail Mary’s” he remembered from the Brothers of Mary in high school. At his ordination, he resolved to spend one hour every day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and to celebrate Mass every Saturday in honor of the Blessed Mother. He made over thirty pilgrimages to Lourdes and ten to Fatima. He frequently concluded his Marian programs reciting the poem “Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue.”

His autobiography *Treasure in Clay* is an honest account acknowledging his successes along with his weaknesses. He speaks of sufferings coming from others and also of tensions between members of the Church. Although, he said, the media would love a chapter on the Church people with whom he had difficulties, “better,” he said, “to leave judgment to God.”

With this broad spirit, he recalled some of his experiences from his high-school years at Spalding Institute, Peoria. He recalled that in his senior year he was the class valedictorian, “although the Brothers were never very well pleased with me as a valedictorian.” He also remembered how he lost the trigonometry award because he did not listen to the instructions to the very end:

A trigonometry medal was given at the end of the year for the highest mark in that subject. Ralph Buechel and I were tied, each with 100 percent for the year. To work off the tie, three problems in trigonometry were given to us in a special examination. The third problem I recalled from the trigonometry book; as soon as the Brother started reading it, I worked it out from memory. When the papers were examined, I received 66 and 2/3 percent; Ralph received 100 percent and the medal. I said to the Brother afterward: I think that third problem of mine was right because I remember it from the manual.”

“Oh,” he said, “yes, it was right according to the book, but you were not listening to me; so I changed the angle of the flagpole and that is the reason you lost the medal.”

 Nevertheless, he had graciously stated that the Brothers of Mary were “excellent teachers, given to discipline, yet much beloved.”
HOLY CARDS:
An Enduring and Endearing Catholic Tradition

Catholics are familiar with holy cards: small, religious images on paper that have long been distributed to children in Catholic school, during catechisms and given as remembrances of baptisms, First Communions, or bereavements. They are often carried privately in the pocket or wallet, or slipped into the pages of a Bible or prayerbook; serving as simple and personal reminders of a significant religious event or devotion.

The earliest known holy cards were handmade in European monasteries using xylography, a woodcut printing technique. These early images were often printed onto parchment (a material made from animal skin), dating back to the 15th century. With the invention of the printing press as well as the spread of paper production in Europe around 1500, cards began to be produced more abundantly. As production broadened outside of the monastic communities, religious cards were now supplied by engravers and print-sellers, particularly in Germany, Belgium, France, and Italy. By the middle of the 19th century Paris was the center of religious image printing, with many publishing houses concentrated around the Rue Saint-Sulpice.

Today, holy cards endure as Catholic sacramentals, but they have evolved to merit additional dimensions of both collectability and historical significance.

HOLY CARDS IN THE MARIAN LIBRARY

The Virgin Mary has long been a popular subject of holy cards. One can find a range of Marian devotions, symbols, and art depicted on religious cards. In the Marian Library, one can find cards with images relating to Marian apparitions, the life of Mary, Mary in doctrine, Marian titles, and countless other aspects. The Marian Library houses tens of thousands of holy cards with collections that represent a comprehensive range of Marian topics, artistic styles, techniques (including delicate paper lace and cards handpainted with exquisite detail), as well as historical, rare, and unique cards, in addition to current printings.

A well-represented era in the Library’s collections is the late 19th century, particularly cards of French origin. Parisian publishers like Bouasse Lebel, Charles Letaille, and others began printing holy cards on paper “lace.” This quite popular and exquisite feature, surprisingly, was not originally intended to create a pattern of lacelike designs, yet was a happy accident of the embossing process. The accidental lace was quickly adopted as a technique and is quite representative of holy cards of this provenance.

The card to the right, published by Bouasse Lebel circa 1880, shows the Child Jesus sleeping soundly in Mary’s arms. The lace design encourages a sense of movement and depth while depicting a rich and distinctive scene. Looking closely at the lace design, one may notice familiar Marian motifs such as the lilies in the upper left corner, symbolizing purity and heavenly bliss (sometimes called Mary’s symbol). The trees, seen towards the bottom of the card, are a symbol of faith.

Jillian Slater
Marian Library Archivist
THE CUNNEEN COLLECTION

The Marian Library recently acquired the papers of the late Marian scholar and author Sally Cunneen, who died October 30, 2009. Mrs. Cunneen was the author of a number of books including *In Search of Mary: The Woman and the Symbol* and *Mother Church: What the Experience of Women is Teaching Her*. With her husband Joseph, she founded the ecumenical quarterly *Cross Currents* in 1950, and they both edited the journal until they retired in 1998. (*Cross Currents*, an international ecumenical quarterly, introduced American readers to such European Catholic thinkers as Emmanuel Mounier and Teilhard de Chardin, and provided a forum for authors such as Edward Schillebeeckx, Raimundo Panikkar, and Thomas Berry on contemporary religious issues such as feminism, environmentalism, and interfaith dialogue.) The collection contains manuscripts, course materials, articles, correspondence, journals, and research materials, including Mrs. Cunneen’s original research for *In Search of Mary* as well as material on Catholic and Marian topics. This collection is available for research at the Marian Library. Her husband, Joseph E. Cunneen, a noted film critic, died in 2012.

Sally and Joseph Cunneen, 1992
(CNS/University of Dayton)

Marian Update

DOCUMENT OF APPARITIONS

On December 14, 2011, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document, originally formulated in 1978 and sent in Latin as a confidential document to the bishops of the world, concerning the norms for verifying apparitions. This document had received the approval of Paul VI in 1978, but it was never officially published nor translated. In 2012, the document was made public and translated into several languages.

In the prefatory remarks to the document, Cardinal Levada, prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, noted that the recent document from the Synod of Bishops, “The Word of God in the Church,” had referred to apparitions within the whole framework of the economy of salvation. The definitive and final word of revelation has been given in Jesus Christ, and no new public revelation is awaited. The role of private revelation is “not to complete Christ’s definitive revelation but to help [us] live more fully by it in a certain period of history ... A private revelation can introduce new emphases, give rise to new forms of piety or deepen older ones. It can have a certain prophetic character (cf. I Thess. 5:19-21) and can be a valuable aid for better understanding and living the Gospel at a certain times; consequently it should not be treated lightly. It is a help which is proffered, but its use is not obligatory. In any event, it must be a matter of nourishing faith, hope and love, which are for everyone the permanent path of salvation.”

The 1978 document provided criteria, positive and negative, to help bishops in determining the veracity of apparitions. Among the positive criteria were a message free from doctrinal errors, and the positive personal qualities of the seer, such as an exemplary life, practice of the faith, and psychological stability; negative criteria include the absence of any supernatural sign confirming the revelation, and indications of a search for notoriety, profit or gain. If the initial examination results in a favorable conclusion, the bishop could, with a prudent provisional judgment, permit public worship. After a sufficient period, and if the signs of a supernatural occurrence continue, the bishop could issue a judgment that there is evidence of a supernatural occurrence and it is worthy of belief.
COLLECTION OF MASSES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The newsletter from the NCCB’s Committee on Divine Worship notes that “a complete revision of the translations found in the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary is not currently foreseen, so the Congregation for Divine Worship gave permission to reprint Volume I of the Collection with the necessary updates so that it conforms to the text of the Roman Missal, Third Edition.”

Both the Catholic Book Publishing Company and Liturgical Press, who published the Collection previously, will also publish this reprint. The text should be ready for purchase by September, 2012.

FR. STEFANO DE FIORES, S.M.M., 1933-2012

Fr. Stefano De Flores, a devoted scholar who contributed much to post-conciliar Mariology, died in Rome, April 21, 2012. A member of the Missionaries of the Company of Mary (Montfort Missionaries), his early works dealt with the spiritual “itinerary” of St. Louis Grignon and Montfortian spirituality. He taught at the Marianum and the Gregorianum in Rome. He collaborated with other scholars producing “handbooks” particularly helpful to students: the handbook of spirituality (1979), and of Mariology (1985-2009). More recently he published a three volume Maria: Nuovissimo Dizionario (2006-2008). He was one of the founders of the Italian Interdisciplinary Mariological Association, which publishes Theotokos. His last work was Educare alla vita buona del Vangelo con Maria (“To Teach the Good Life of the Gospel in Company with Mary”).

He was the recipient of the Marian Library Medal (1983) and the Premio Laurentin – Pro Ancilla Domini (1990). In the judgment of Fr. René Laurentin, he possessed “a theological and pastoral intelligence” which allowed him to artfully explain the contribution that Vatican II had accomplished by reinterpreting classical Mariology in existentialist terms.”

The death of these three devoted followers of St. Louis Grignon de Montfort recalls a line from True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin where Mary speaks of her servants: “They are happy in their death, that I may conduct them to the joys of eternity; for never has any one of my good servants been lost who imitated my virtues during life.”

FR. ROGER CHAREST, S.M.M., 1917-2012

Fr. Roger Charest died on February 28, 2012. He professed first vows in the Company of Mary seventy-five years ago (1937) and was ordained in the priesthood seventy years ago (1942). He founded Queen of All Hearts (Bayside, New York), a Marian journal, which he edited from 1951 until its final issue in 2006. Throughout his life, he promoted St. Louis de Montfort’s classic True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and he was most devoted to the Legion of Mary, working to support its foundation and growth in the United States. He was a charter member (that is, instrumental in the founding) of Mariological Society of America in 1949 and regularly attended and contributed to its meetings.

FR. PATRICK GAFFNEY, S.M.M., 1928-2012

Fr. J. Patrick Gaffney died on July 1, 2012, at the age of eighty-four. He was a member of the Mariological Society of America and professor and chairman of the Theology Department at St. Louis University for many years. He too was an ardent promoter of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, most recently writing an introduction for a new edition. A recent achievement of Fr. Gaffney and his sister, Sr. Rosemary Gaffney, D.W., was the translation into English of the abundant hymn texts which St. Louis Grignon de Montfort had composed for parish missions.
LOURDES

On June 8-9, 2012, the Lourdes Medical Bureau sponsored a program entitled “Lourdes, Health and Science: What Does ‘To Be Healed’ Mean Today?” Forty doctors internationally known for their interest in the topic studied this topic together with in the presence of Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski and Dr. Luc Montagnier (recipient of the Nobel Prize for Medicine).

International Medical Committee of Lourdes certified that two new cures occurred, that is, cures which cannot be explained by medical science. Recipients of the cures were Sister Luigina Traverso and Damnila Castelli. The bishop of the diocese in which the cured individuals lived is to decide whether the cures are miracles.

FATIMA

On June 11, 2012, the Congregation for Divine Worship granted the title of Minor Basilica to the new church at the sanctuary of Fatima. Located on the gigantic esplanade directly opposite the Church of the Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, the new basilica was consecrated for worship in 2007.

Outside the basilica is tall cross (34 meters high); at its foot is an ailing Pope John Paul II, reverently inclined forward. The sanctuary of the basilica develops motifs from the Apocalypse. At the center of sanctuary is a large sculpture of the crucified Christ, extended outwards from an image of the Lamb with the scroll (Apoc. 5). On both sides of the crucified Christ are the representatives of the Heavenly Jerusalem: on the right side, the Virgin Mary directs the gaze of Jacinta and Francisca toward the cross, and on the left, John the Baptist points to the cross. The inclusion of Sts. Vladimir and Olga, the first Christian rulers of Russia, recalls the relation between Fatima and Russia.

MARIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The next meeting of the Mariological Society of America will be held at The Athenaeum, Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary, Cincinnati, OH, May 21-24, 2012. The theme for the meeting: “Mary and the New Evangelization” (www.mariologicaorganization.com).

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