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The Marianist Award

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THE MARIANIST AWARD

1963

CITATION: *Very Rev. Raymond A. Roesch, S.M.*

The annual MARIANIST AWARD was inaugurated in 1950 to commemorate the triple centenary of that year and to create a fitting memorial of the death of Father William Joseph Chaminade, the coming of the Society of Mary to America, and the founding of the University of Dayton.

The purpose of the Award is to honor with public recognition one who has rendered outstanding service in America to the Immaculate Mother of God, the Patroness of this country and of this University.

Within a relatively short time the Award has become an international institution. The roster of the distinguished recipients has included priests and lay people, regardless of nationality, who have left an imprint of Marian character upon the American people, and peoples of other lands as well, after the pattern of those characteristics of the Marian apostolate so dear to the heart of our saintly Founder.

The recipient of the present Award was unable to be here in December, the usual date for the official presentation, because of his position as theological consultant at the Vatican Council. He received notice of our invitation in the midst of the deliberations regarding Mary's proper role in the Church. While taking an active part in that historic decision, he graciously accepted our invitation, but had to defer his visit to our campus until today.

The University of Dayton is privileged to honor M. l'Abbé René Laurentin not only for his contributions to the work of the Council, but more so for the high scholarship of his writings on Mary over the past years. They have earned him the accolade of his peers as the outstanding internationally known Mariologist in the Church today.

He is a native of France and has spent most of his priestly life in academic circles. He is a doctor of letters, doctor of theology, professor of the University of Angers, member of the International Marian Academy, and consultor to the theological commission of the Vatican Council. He modestly asserts that whatever claim he may have achieved as a professor, theologian, preacher, retreat master or writer is due to the dominant theme of his life's work — Mary, the Mother of God.

He has written many articles on Mariology for scholarly journals. It seems that he has purposely ranged these articles over the whole field of Marian studies, investigating the development of doctrine, Scriptural sources, national shrines and devotions, particular schools of thought, and the magisterium of the Church, all in an effort to evaluate and clarify Mary's role in the plans of God.

His short treatise on the theology of Mary has been translated into several languages, with two editions in English, under the title Queen of Heaven, published by Macmillan Company in 1956 and 1961.

In 1953, he published in French two volumes of a monumental historical study, a doctoral thesis for the Sorbonne, on the delicate subject of "Mary, the Church, and the Priesthood." A condensed form of this impressive study was published in English by Macmillan in 1959, under the title: Our Lady and the Mass.

In 1957, he published his study on the literary form and theology of the first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel.

In the same year, he began publishing in French, in collaboration with Dom Bernard Billet, a six volume "Dossier of the Authentic History of the Apparitions at Lourdes." Four of these volumes are now in print. This will be the most complete work of critical history and interpretation of Lourdes that has yet appeared. Because of this he is popularly styled the theologian of Lourdes. A few weeks ago, he requested to preach at Lourdes on the feast marking the anniversary of the apparitions.

In the light of these achievements we can readily understand why he has had an impressive impact upon Marian studies in America. He is a recognized authority at all Marian conventions, congresses, and institutes.

Not only is he frequently quoted by Mariologists, but his influence with the people is evident in the demand for his books in English translation, notably his Queen of Heaven, Our Land and the Mass, and The Meaning of Lourdes. And here we may include our own sincere appreciation for his several contributions to the series of Marian Library Studies, published by the Marian Library of the University of Dayton.

In all his works on Mary, what is of particular interest to us in America, is the attention he gives to the resurgent spirit of Catholic thought in our times and the role he assigns to Mary in this renaissance — a role which is in close harmony with the doctrine of Father Chaminade, that great nineteenth century Apostle of Mary.

For all these reasons the University of Dayton is pleased and honored to confer upon M. l'Abbé René Laurentin, the MARIANIST AWARD for 1963.

RESPONSE: *Rev. René Laurentin*

I am very happy to have been chosen as the recipient of the Marianist Award for 1963. With all my heart, I thank the Provincial, Father James Darby, and Father Raymond Roesch for having placed me among the men who have received this award, men whom I love and admire such as Father Emil Neubert, who has just written to me for this occasion, Father Juniper Carol, and Frank Duff. I am cognizant of and appreciate the affection that your choice manifests. I am all the more profoundly happy at this testimony inasmuch as it shows me that "I have not," as St. Paul says, "run in vain," but that, even as far away as America, my effort has helped to make the Blessed Virgin better known as she wants to be known and as she wants to be honored.

I sensed this harmony of thought which is ours during the lectures that were delivered two days ago.

Marian theology and Marian devotion are going through a very important but

difficult phase. There used to be a tendency to develop them as though sealed off, separated from the rest of doctrine, in an ardent but narrow spirit, one characteristic of the Counter-Reformation. Marian doctrine and devotion must be open to the influence of Scripture and to all of Tradition in order to give to the essential its true place. The essential, that is to say, the example of Mary in the Gospels: poverty, faith, humility, the service of the Lord; the essential, that is to say, the significance of the Virgin's words at Cana, the first of which she does not cease to address to Christ in presenting to Him the needs of men: "They have no wine;" and the second by which she ceaselessly points out Christ to us: "Do all that he will tell you."

In such a devotion, one that is more Biblical, more Christological, more insistent upon action and adapted to the men of today, you have preceded me; and it was Father Chaminade, who loved these words of St. John, who was a precursor of such a devotion.

We do not have need of many words in order to understand one another. We understand one another already, far beyond the weakness of human speech and beyond my own command of the English language. I propose that we would be more profoundly united by a minute of silence during which we shall, with one mind, think of the presence of the Virgin Mary, who brings us together and prepares us all for the same work.

ADDRESS: "Silent upon a Peak in Darien"

by Very Rev. James M. Darby, S.M.

Whether we first look into Chapman's Homer or Balboa's Pacific or John Glenn's emperean or, for that matter, I suppose, milady's or Mr. Khrushchev's eyes — there is every reason to expect — a moment or two of pure silence.

For silence envelopes the soul's most intimate and immediate response to reality. It is the awakened man's creative sleep, meant by God to be a blessing, a privilege, and a pleasure. Within it we are lifted up, as it were, out of this world of particular pressures, and poised to receive the allusive grace of personal growth.

In much this same way and for just such like ennobling experience, it is good for us to be here in your midst today — quietly wrapt before the realities, the excellences, the perfections that have been so properly singled out for recognition by all of us. We are uplifted and inspired; quickened by the grace of the moment.

Excellence during our college years signifies a fullness of promise; excellence in later years, a fulfillment of promise. In combining the Marianist Award and Honors Day, we may experience these levels of excellence and their interrelation one with the other.

It all sounds so positive and contemporary to be honoring superior quality, whether in seed or full flower, in these days of almost limitless horizons. Alive in our times, even a 'Doctor Faustus' might have saved himself a fatal selling job. For us, to put it too glibly, consuming ambition does not command the stage, as it did for the

Doctor; by which we mean, of course, it is not cast in quite the same heavy role. For us, opportunity in its abundance borders on importunity.

Educationally, every man and woman of talent and virtue throughout the land is being sought out and pleaded with; we need them everywhere and at once. Marvelously, the development and maturation of our human potentialities to their highest pitch of excellence currently tops the nation's (and, indeed, the world's) priority list of recognized, primary needs. Respectable Universities and colleges everywhere are surcharged with seriousness and high intent. From their lecture halls, libraries, and laboratories, we anticipate always the best — the new men and new women for the new age.

In these circumstances, we are clearly called to excellence, to the fullness of life, both within and without. And as we respond to that call in the pursuit of our goals certain strengths should begin to characterize us. We must recognize them and nurture them.

First of all, we need as soon as possible the skill to say well what we have on our minds. If the new experiences and hopes and aspirations of the new age are not set forth in language that is logical and forceful, we should not be offended that no one listens.

Secondly, we are truly blessed if we are learning to grasp reality, finding a way beneath the surface to the actual nature of things and people and situations. Let us call it the objective sense, the range of knowing. By it we face limitations for what they really are and discern the similarities and the differences that make for life's paradoxes as well as its poetry. To be sharpening insight is to be growing strong. It's the tuning of the fiddle —

Thirdly, we need the knack of focussing reality. It does not help our human situation to be ignorant of the worth of things, not to discriminate between light and heat, or to equate virtue with affluence. On the other hand, good focus and a sound sense of values prepares us for forthright and fearless judgments, that might well open the way to new perspectives for a fuller living in the new age.

Finally, if we cannot speak and write clearly, if we cannot see beneath the surface, if we simply avoid judgments or rarely make any good ones, then the power of life — the human potential for an easy, graceful, and spontaneous participation in the affairs of men — is not ours. Putting it plainly, we lack style, and that is like saying we are not human nor ripe for human fellowship.

In effect, we have simply never entered upon the way of perfection, of excellence, and thus have denied ourselves the human possibility of moving toward, while glimpsing from afar, what Dante terms the ultimate resolution of the human paradox — where flesh and spirit find a creative rhythm of life; where we see into the heart of mystery and touch the infinite; where total action is total rest; where, in emptying ourselves, we discern fulfillment; where the joy of our purest insights is engulfed in a sense of union.

With a certainty, we are all born to greatness and committed to the achievement