Ignatius of Loyola and the Mother of Jesus

A homily by Walter Burghardt, S.J., for the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Society of Jesus (April 22, 1991)

Today’s feast confronts us with a problem. If you can credit the liturgical books of the Society of Jesus, the mother of Jesus is the mother of Jesuits. Is this anything more than piosity, devotion run hog-wild? To make Christian sense of this in the Ignatian Year, I want to talk about (1) Our Lady and Ignatius Loyola, (2) a significant shift in devotion to our Lady, and (3) our devotion in the decades that lie ahead.

I

First, our Lady in the life of Ignatius. No, he never said our Lady was “mother of the Society of Jesus.” He did not race around Rome waving Marian banners to arouse devotion to her. And yet, the mother of Jesus was central to his spirituality—quietly, very naturally, without ostentation.

It began at Loyola, when he was convalescing from the cannon ball that shattered his right leg and damaged the left. Our Lady appeared to him with the Child Jesus—an appearance that proved a profound conversion experience, gave him a loathing for the life he had so far misspent. At Loyola, too, he copied in blue Mary’s words in the Gospels. Especially significant were Mary’s shrines. The place-names fashion a mosaic of Ignatian devotion: Aranzazu, where the pilgrim kept a prayer vigil, placed his plans and problematic future in Mary’s hands; Navarrete, where he spent money to repair and decorate a neglected image of Mary; Montserrat, where he kept his vigil of arms at the feet of the Black Virgin, spent the whole night in prayer; Manresa, while reciting the Hour of our Lady, when he had the illumination of the Trinity that so profoundly affected his whole life—and saw our Lady too; Barcelona, where he prayed before the image of Our Lady of the Way; Jerusalem, where he visited the Church of the Dormition (falling asleep) of Our Lady; Rome, where he prayed at the long-sacred shrine of Loreto; Montmartre, where, in the little chapel dedicated to Mary, on the feast of the Assumption in 1534, Ignatius and six companions pronounced the vow that would orient their life to come; La Storta, where the Father answered his prayer to our Lady, “Place me with your Son.”

There is so much more. Do you remember how in his bravado days Ignatius was tempted to slip a few dagger digs to a Moor who questioned Mary’s virginity after Bethlehem? Do you remember how he would have loved a Jewish ancestry, so as to be related in flesh to Jesus and his mother? Do you remember that on this very day 450 years ago, in Rome’s Basilica of St. Paul-outside-the-Walls, Ignatius and five companions pronounced their profession in the Society of Jesus “in the presence of God’s virgin mother Continued on next page
and the whole heavenly court”? Do you remember how, while composing the Constitutions, he saw “now the Father, now all three persons of the Trinity, now our Lady who was interceding for him or sometimes confirming what he had written”? Do you remember the votive Masses he said in honor of our Lady? How he slept with the rosary on him?

And if you have ever experienced the Spiritual Exercises, you could not escape our Lady: on sin, on the kingdom, on Jesus—embryo and infant and adolescent, on his passion. So insightfully, when Ignatius asks all who meditate on the Two Standards to converse with our Lady, to ask her “to obtain from her Son and Lord the grace to be received under his standard...” For in his mind Mary was “the very embodiment of the victory over Satan and the world.” So touchingly, at the appearance of the risen Jesus to his mother—not indeed recorded in Scripture, but “Scripture supposes that we have understanding,” that a risen Jesus bypassing his mother, Jesus without his mother, makes no sense.

Is it fanciful to suggest that, in the mind of Ignatius, the sheerly human person most responsible for his decision to found a Company of Jesus was the mother of Jesus?

II

This triggers my second point: Four centuries later, in our rough-and-tumble 1960s, what happened to our Lady? Put bluntly, we lost her. Not only American Catholics at large, but unnumbered religious as well. Point the finger where you will—at the Second Vatican Council, at Protestant pressure to put Mary “in her place,” at Catholic emphasis on essentials—word and worship, sacraments and sacrifice. The reasons are complex; the result was patent: Mary faded into the background of Catholic devotion. Rosaries disappeared not only from pious fingers but also from religious habits. Evening novenas played second fiddle to primetime TV. Statues of Mary were retired to the sacristy. “Lovely lady dressed in blue” became a fun line for sophisticates.

Some losses we need not regret. We did bury some long-lived superstitions: Jesus administers justice, Mary ministers mercy; if you really want to get a friend out of hell, ask Mary. We are less facile in calling our Lady “our life, our sweetness, and our hope.” We may well have succeeded in subordinating rosary to liturgy, Mary to Mass, mother to Son.

But in the process, all too many rushed all too hastily to an un-Catholic extreme, they forgot, if they ever knew, that Catholicism, for all its stress on intelligence, is not a cult of cold reason; that knowledge, even grace-full, is not identical with holiness; that a saving spirituality, oneness with God, must link heart to mind, emotion to understanding, passion to purpose. In the process of purification, too many unwittingly betrayed God’s Word, the Church’s theology, and a Catholic art.

**God’s Word.** Like it or not, I learn from the New Testament that Mary is not only mother of Jesus. Contemplate Jesus, Mary, and John on Calvary: “When Jesus saw his mother there with the disciple whom he loved, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ In turn he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother’” (Jn 19:26-27). It is not wishful thinking but solid scholarship that declares: The “beloved disciple” is not simply the apostle John; the “beloved disciple” is the Christian, all Christians. Those who believe in Jesus are reborn in his image. As sisters and brothers of Jesus, you and I, as well as John, have Mary for mother.

**The Church’s theology.** Unless I have stopped growing, I learn from Vatican II that God’s Mother “is a model of the Church in the area of faith, of love, and of perfect union with Christ.” It goes back to a precious tradition theologians have recovered from the early and medieval Church: Mary is a type and figure of the Church. What Mary was and is, that the Church and Continued on page 6
Mariological Society of America

Mary in the Mysteries of Christ: Lent and Easter Time

In the present liturgical calendar of the Western Church, there is no commemoration of Mary during the Lent and Eastertide. (Until the 1961 reform of the calendar, there was a feast on Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent commemorating the compassion of Mary and another on September 15 in memory of all her sorrows. The latter has been retained.) Just as the solemnities dealing with the Incarnation (Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation) all have a Marian dimension, so do the seasons devoted to commemorating the Redemption (Lent, the Paschal Triduum, and the Easter time). Mary suffered with her Son and associated herself with his sacrifice (Lumen gentium 65).

One way of commemorating Mary's presence in Lent and the Easter season is found in the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1986). The use of these Masses is optional; they are available for those who wish to portray the Virgin Mary in a way appropriate to the spirit of the liturgical season. (The prayers could also be used in the Liturgy of the Hours and in prayer services.) During Lent, "the Blessed Virgin is the model of the disciple who faithfully listens to the word of God and follows the footsteps of Christ to Calvary, there to die with him (see 2 Tim. 2:11). At the Paschal Triduum, the Blessed Virgin is the new Eve or the "new woman" who stands by the tree of life (see Jn. 19:25), as the companion of Christ the "new man" and as the spiritual mother into whose maternal care the Lord entrusts all his followers (see Jn.19:26).

The Collection presents five Masses for use during the Lenten season (Holy Mary, Disciple of the Lord; The Virgin Mary at the Foot of the Cross I & II; The Commendation of Mary; and The Virgin Mary, Mother of Reconciliation). During the Easter Season, the Collection has four Masses to commemorate Mary's participation in the Paschal Mystery (The Virgin Mary at the Resurrection; Mary as the Fountain of Life and Light; Our Lady of the Cenacle; Mary, Queen of the Apostles).

These three annual meetings—1990, 1991, 1992—of the Mariological Society of American were intended not as a campaign for the introduction of Marian feasts but as a way of bringing homilists and catechists to an awareness of the inseparable bond uniting Mary to the mysteries of Christ celebrated throughout the liturgical

The Mariological Society of America's 42nd annual meeting took place in Chicago at the Cenacle Retreat House, May 29-30, 1991. This was the second of three annual meetings devoted to studying the presence of Mary throughout the entire liturgical year. These three meetings are an exploration of the full meaning of Vatican II's statement in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, the Church honors with a special love the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of Christ" (103).

When we think of Mary's association with Christ in the liturgical year, the solemnities of the Advent and Christmas season come to mind—the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), the Nativity of the Lord (Dec. 25), the Solemnity of the Mother of God (Jan. 1), the Epiphany of the Lord (Jan. 6), the Presentation of the Lord (Feb. 2). The Gospels record Mary's presence and participation in events concerning Jesus' annunciation, birth, and childhood, and, so, the first Marian commemorations in the liturgy developed in the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons.

But Mary's association with Christ was not limited to his birth and childhood. She was the first to believe in Christ (Lk.1:42), called blessed for hearing and keeping the word of God (Mk. 3:35; Lk. 11:27-28). She advanced in her pilgrimage of faith and shared the sentiments of her Son as he suffered on the cross where, by divine intention, she stood (Jn. 19:25). After the Resurrection, there is a tradition affirmed by Ambrose of Milan, Ignatius of Loyola, and, most recently, by Hans urs von Balthasar that Mary encountered the Risen Christ. Mary's motherhood of love continues until all come to know and respond to God's grace.
year. The first speaker to deal with the theme of the 1991 convention was Fr. Bertrand Buby, S.M., of the International Marian Research Institute of the University of Dayton, who spoke of the Scriptural references to Mary in the Lenten and Easter cycles. Although there are only two references to Mary in the Scriptures read during this period—Mary at the foot of the Cross (Jn.19:25-27) and Mary in the midst of the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14)—both of them present the “encouraging and empowering presence of Mary.” Fr. Buby stated that Mary is present, “silent, steadfast, at the heart of the total Paschal Mystery. By the memory of the Mother of Jesus, we are enabled likewise to be courageous, prayerful, and faithful as we come to the end of our Lenten journey and bring to a close the Easter Season.”

Fr. Lawrence Choate, O.S.M., from the Servite Provincialate in Chicago, examined the liturgical texts of two of the Masses from the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary: “Mary at the Foot of the Cross” and “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles.” In the first Mass, Mary is described as the “New Eve...the woman who was to share in the restoration of life.” Similar to the gathering of all peoples in Zion, so Mary “embraces God’s scattered children, reunited through the death of Christ, and becomes the true Zion, mother-city of all peoples.” The Church’s Marian character becomes evident at the Easter Vigil service, when, through the sacraments of initiation, the newly baptized come to share in the mysteries of the life of Christ.

Fr. Johann Roten, S.M., of the International Marian Research Institute, spoke of the Marian characteristics of the Paschal Mystery. “The Church on its eschatological journey refers to Mary not only as model and ideal of faith, but also as mediative presence. This maternal mediation of Mary belongs to the heart of the Marian characteristics of the Paschal Mystery. At the very center of the Paschal Mystery, the foot of the Cross, Mary is given as mother to all humanity; her motherhood receives a new dimension, the consequence of her unwavering love coming to perfection.” Through her participation in the Paschal Mystery, Mary becomes an image for what Christ’s redeeming grace can accomplish. Understanding the fullness of Christ’s redemption or of the mission of the Church requires some reference to Mary, who exemplifies for the Church the spiritual attitudes necessary for worship—listening, praising, praying, and offering.

Fr. James Davis, O.P. (Providence College), presented an analysis and commentary on Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, *Redemptoris custos*. This letter was written to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Leo XIII’s encyclical on St. Joseph, *Quamquam pluries*—a letter proposing Joseph as patron both of Mary and the Church. By considering the role of Mary and Joseph in the divine mystery, “the Church will be enabled to discover ever anew her own identity within this redemptive plan, which is founded on the mystery of the Incarnation.”

In his presidential address, Fr. James McCurry, O.F.M.Conv., recalled the work and accomplishments of Fr. Juniper Carol, O.F.M., founder of the Mariological Society in 1949, who died on April 1, 1990. Fr. Carol’s “life, he said, was characterized by his dedication to the ideals proposed by St. Francis, his steadfast adherence to the teachings of Dun Scotus, and, above all, his consistent and unwavering fidelity to the magisterium of the Church.

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, Auxiliary for the Archdiocese of Chicago, extended the welcome of the Archdiocese to the participants at the convention and was principal celebrant for the Eucharist. In his homily at the Eucharist, Bishop Gregory spoke on Mary’s growth in wisdom. Through pondering and reflecting on God’s presence in her life, Mary advanced in her pilgrimage of faith. “Mary is not the static, cardboard, docile individual who was perfectly formed in obedience in her youth and never deepened in her love for God and in her acceptance of God’s will. She grew, as we all must grow, in the love of God. Her title as Seat of Wisdom is, thus, one which fits her as the mature Woman of Faith.”

Copies of the proceedings of previous years’ meetings are available from the MSA Secretariat, The Marian Library, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH 45469-1390. Next year’s meeting, to be held in Houston, Texas, will conclude this three-year series of studies on Mary in the liturgical year.

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Marian Studies
Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the
Mariological Society of America

Among back issues currently available—$12.00 (prepaid):

Vol. 40 (1989) Burlingame *Marialis cultus—Fifteen Years Later*
Vol. 41 (1990) Providence *Mary in the Mysteries of Christ – Advent and Christmas*
Vol. 42 (1991) Chicago *Mary in the Mysteries of Christ – Lent and Easter*

John Macquarrie (an Anglican Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church at the University of Oxford until his retirement in 1986) offers a clear theological presentation of Mary in the context of the ecumenical discussion. Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Anglicans will appreciate the solid mariological presentation. The book is appropriate for ecumenical dialogue. Mary for All Christians consists of six chapters which are in tune with ecclesial and ecumenical developments since Vatican II. Chapter one, “God and the Feminine,” is not so advanced as are some of the moderate discussions from American feminist theologians like Elizabeth A. Johnson and Anne Carr. This may be due to the slower pace of feminism in England and on the continent. Macquarrie’s use of language demonstrates some unfamiliarity with current feminist thought. From a male perspective, I found this chapter least appealing. On the other hand, when read in connection with the final chapter, “Mary and Modernity,” a better synthesis appears and some challenging ideas about individual and political morality are presented. Macquarrie has great skill as a systematic theologian, always clear and comprehensible. Particularly insightful is the contrast and comparison of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity with the virtues of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment—liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Chapter two, “Mary in the New Testament,” is a fine essay on the passages of the New Testament in which Mary is mentioned either directly or indirectly. The skill of Macquarrie consists in a creative and positive presentation—neither minimalist nor maximalist. This chapter would be excellent for ecumenical dialogue.

Succeeding chapters treat the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, and Mary as Mediatrix. These titles are explored in the light of both history and theology. As he explores the history of the development of dogmas, Macquarrie notes a defensiveness in the explanations of the Catholic Church. He relies on Catholic theologians for understanding the titles, while pointing out the shortcomings of such titles in the light of the Scriptures and Church history.

I recommend this work for discussion in ecumenical groups willing to consider the person and role of Mary in the Church and the Scriptures. It would also be a fine gift to seminarians and pastors of all denominations.

Bertrand Buby, S.M.


Our age appears less than enthusiastic about the doctrines and institutions of religion, but there is no shortage of interest in prayer, meditation, and spirituality. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has noted this interest and has offered guidelines in its 1986 letter “On Some Aspects of Christian Meditation.”

Some look to the East for guidance in meditation, unaware perhaps that in the West the Rosary has served both as an introduction to and as a method of prayer and meditation. David Burton Bryan is a specialist in Near Eastern studies and biblical languages and reads widely in anthropology, spirituality, and science. He brings many interests and the enthusiasm of a convert as he considers the Rosary, not as a practice limited to Marian devotees but as a method of prayer profitable for all believers. For Burton, the Rosary is symbolic of the prayer and meditation necessary for the life of every Christian. He begins with several considerations on the nature of Christian prayer and meditation, on Continued on page 7

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each individual Christian is expected to be. Put another way: Mary, as Luke's Gospel intimates, is the first disciple, the most remarkable model of what Christian disciples should be, what you and I should be. For she lived, more perfectly than any other human, the essence of discipleship, a ceaseless "Let it happen to me as you say" (Lk 1:38). She laid at God's feet the yes that altered history—carried it into eternity with her.

A Catholic art. To thrust the Mother of God into a religious attic is to lose sight of the painting and poetry, sculpture and architecture, music, dancing, and dramatic art that have nourished the Catholic imagination for centuries, more powerfully than our philosophy and theology. It is to forget Michelangelo and Botticelli, Chaucer and Chartres, Bach and Brahms. In brief, it is to forget what power there is in the way poet Gerard Manley Hopkins compared our Lady to the air we breathe:

... men are meant to share
Her life as life does air.
If I have understood,
She holds high motherhood
Towards all our ghostly good
And plays in grace her part
About man's beating heart,
Laying, like air's fine flood,
The deathdance in his blood;
Yet no part but what will
Be Christ our Saviour still. 10

III

This leads into my third point: Mary in our future. Jesuits, of course, but actually the wider spectrum of Catholics, indeed of Christians. Here a homilist tiptoes around land mines. A distinction is all-important: There are devotions, and there is devotion. No homiletic dare tell you, Jesuit or not, what devotions you must practice, what specific acts of piety you must perform to be Catholic: Way of the Cross, Nine First Fridays, Novena to the Sorrowful Mother or the Holy Face of Jesus, Our Lady of Guadalupe. So much of that depends on different cultures, changing times, personal likes and dislikes. I dare not dogmatize, dare not declare that if you are meditating on the glorious mysteries of Jesus and Mary, you do it best while your fingers are caressing a rosary.

But devotion is something else again. One spiritual writer called it "the total religious élan [thrust] directly towards God." 11 I may legitimately stay away from Medjugorje and Lourdes, from Fatima and Czestochowa; but I risk a rift in my spiritual life if Mary is not intimate to me. Why? Because Mary—this Jewish woman who gave birth to the world's Savior, this woman who at this moment is gloriously alive in soul and body—this woman is one of the most powerful symbols the Christian possesses, and symbols are what give life to our belief. Let me explain.

What is a symbol? A sign. Not just any sign, like "Baltimore 40 miles." A symbol is a sign that "works mysteriously on [our] consciousness so as to suggest more than it can clearly describe or define." It is "pregnant with a depth of meaning which is evoked rather than explicitly stated." 12 And God has revealed God's self especially through symbols: Abraham as father of God's people, the burning bush seen by Moses, the brazen serpent in the desert, the "kingdom of God" in the preaching of Jesus, the cross on Calvary, Jesus' resurrection, the descent of the Holy Spirit.

And Mary? Mary is a remarkable symbol. Not "just a symbol," that devastating expression. She is remarkably real as a person, and that is why she is so significant a symbol. But what does Mary reveal about God that is so terribly important—reveal not so much in words as more eloquently in who she is?

I said above that Mary reveals what it means to be a disciple. Her life discloses what is sometimes called a feminine principle, but a principle that is crucial for man as well as woman. Mary's life is an open-ended yes to life as it unfolds. Our God is a God of surprises. If you haven't experienced that as yet, I promise you that you surely will. Your spirituality, your life with God, is not a matter of ever onwards, ever upwards. It is an adventure wherein you can promise yourself only two certainties: (1) The Holy Spirit will ceaselessly surprise you, and (2) God will always be there. Symbol supreme of such open-endedness is the mother of Jesus—from an angel's surprise in Nazareth, through a ceaselessly surprising youngster in Nazareth, to a dead Christ cradled in her lap and a risen Christ leaping from the rock. But you will not make this discovery unless our Lady is more than a swift "Hail Mary," unless you warm up to her as to your own mother.

Here let me stress something even more profound: Mary our mother reveals God's own mothering. Lest you think this a sample of Jesuitry, listen to Pope John Paul I: God is not only Father but "even more so Mother, who ... wants only to be good to us," wants only to love us, especially if we are bad. 13 Mary takes us beyond herself as Mother of Mercy, Mother of Divine Consolation, Refuge of Sinners, Comforter of the Afflicted. She is all these, but she ceaselessly points to God as the One to whom these qualities most properly refer. "All that is creative and generative of life, all that nourishes and nurtures ..., all that is full of solicitude and sympathy originates in [God]... She exercises a maternity that does not leave us orphans." 14

It is no longer a judgmental Father who is led to smile at us by a mother's prayers; God is the most loving of all mothers, far more maternal than even Mary could possibly have dreamed of being. God's justice need not be tempered by Mary's merciful intercession. To forgive is indeed divine. It is the compassion of God that is disclosed in this merciful, compassionate woman. But I shall not discover this by memorizing the words of Mary in Luke—but only if the mother of Jesus is genuinely my
mother, only if I am as close to her as was John beneath the cross.

Good friends: Have I gotten away from Mary, Mother of the Company of Jesus? In a sense, yes. Our Lady was indeed an active lady in the Society’s prehistory, in what happened between a cannon ball in 1521 and the birth of the Jesuits in 1540. And we Jesuits are still privileged to pray to her, “Place me with your Son.” But the Mother of the Society of Jesus may work her best in us if this feast has a twin effect. I mean, if it not only revives in Jesuit hearts a Mary too long put “in her place,” but does not set us on a Marian pedestal “far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife.” The mother of Jesus reminds us that the “mighty” God who “has done great things for [her]” (Lk 1:49) is mother not only of Jesus but also of all who claim to be Christ’s, that her ceaseless role in redemption is to hold her Son out to all of us, that her value as a divine sign and symbol is that she more than anyone was endlessly open to a God of surprises, that her gifts as mother reflect a God who is not only Father but “even more so Mother.”

As we promote justice to the unfortunates of earth, would we not be well advised to restore to her just place in our lives the woman who was closest of all to Jesus, the woman who typifies all we as Christians should be, the woman who will never cease to be our mother, even into eternity?

The liturgical feast “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Society of Jesus” replaces the earlier feast “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Society of Jesus.” A communication (March 20, 1991) to Walter C. Deye, S.J., executive secretary of the U.S. Jesuit Conference, from Peter Gumpel, S.J., secretary of the Liturgical Commission of the Society of Jesus, informs us that “The question of the title of the feast celebrated on April 22 in honour of Our Lady was amply discussed by the Liturgical Commission of the Society before the new calendar was published. With regard to the title of this feast (Queen or Mother of the Society) the opinions were divided.” Some members favored change from Queen to Mother because “the title Queen had lost its meaning in today’s democratic world.” Others favored retention of Queen because “this title is closely linked to the Spiritual Exercises and the entire spirituality of St. Ignatius.”

1 The majority voted for Mother, and Father General Pedro Arrupe “decided that the title of the feast should be changed” from Queen to Mother. “Not all members of the Society were happy with this decision and we know that some continue to use the old title whereas others combine the two titles: Queen and Mother of the Society.

For details see Cândido de Dalmases, Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985) passim; also Harvey D. Egan, S.J., Ignatius Loyola the Mystic (Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1987) 114-118 (“A Marian Mysticism”).


3 Ibid. 239.


8 Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 63.


12Osservatorio Romano, Sept. 21, 1978, 2.


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the “seeking” and “waiting,” the praise and petition which are part of Christian prayer. Prayer, he maintains, must be organic, unitive, and intuitive. He offers several suggestions for seeing the Rosary as a complement to or extension of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours.

Several times he reviews the fifteen traditional mysteries of the Rosary—each time plumbing a bit further the relation of the individual mysteries to daily life. Each review of a mystery includes references to current studies in Scripture, spirituality, and psychology.

What is missing in this work is a historical perspective showing the Rosary as an evolving and flexible type of prayer. Only in the post-Tridentine period did it become a fixed, unchangeable formula as presented by Bryan. In their 1974 letter, the American bishops suggested that, in addition to the traditional pattern of the rosary, “we can freely experiment.” New mysteries, attuned to the spirit of liturgy, they said, are possible. Because of this encouragement to adaptation, the Rosary has become an attractive way of prayer for many who had difficulty with the traditional form. Finally, any commentary on the Rosary should be mindful of Paul VI’s advice: “We recommend this very worthy devotion not be propagated in a way that is too one-sided or exclusive. The Rosary is an excellent prayer, but the faithful should be serenely free toward it. Its intrinsic appeal should draw them to calm recitation” (Mundus crucis #55).
Nativity by Joan Bohlig
(From a recent exhibit in The Marian Library)

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