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Editor's Preface

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Mary in the liturgical year is a new topic in Marian studies. The first reference to Mary in the documents of Vatican II spoke of her association with Christ in the liturgical year: "In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, holy Church honors with special love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son" (*SC*, 103). *Marialis cultus* (1974) stated that the reform of the Roman liturgy made possible the commemoration of Christ's mother in the liturgical year in "a more organic and closely knit fashion" (*MC*, 2). The *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (1986) contains forty-six Masses arranged according to the seasons of the liturgical year. Finally, in announcing the Marian Year (1987-88), Pope John Paul II indicated the "liturgical year as the natural context" to celebrate the year dedicated to the Blessed Virgin (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 2-3 Jan., 1987, p. 5).

After studying Paul VI's *Marialis cultus* in 1989, the Board of Directors of the Mariological Society of America decided upon a three-year series of programs on the Virgin Mary's participation in the mystery of Christ celebrated in the liturgical year. The calendar of the programs is the following: I. Advent-Christmas-Epiphany (1990); II. Lent-Easter-Pentecost (1991); III. Ordinary Time (1992). Each program was to include a study of the Scriptures of the season, an analysis of the liturgical texts, and a theological commentary relating the liturgical themes to contemporary concerns. This project was undertaken as assistance to homilists and teachers. The papers in this issue of *Marian Studies* are from the first year's program: Mary in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

In the opening address of the 1990 Convention, Fr. Rod-

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erick Strange, former Catholic Chaplain at Oxford University, spoke on "Newman on the Blessed Virgin Mary: In Search of Christian Unity." (1990 is the centenary of the death of John Cardinal Newman.) In the final presentation, Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., provided his annual comprehensive survey of Marian literature from the past year.

We thank in a special way the three other speakers for their professional cooperation as they responded to the Society's wish for a program on Mary and the liturgical year. Fr. Bernard Lazor, O.S.A., was asked to reflect on the meaning of the Scriptures for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany; Fr. John A. Melloh, S.M., to analyze the liturgical texts; and Fr. Frederick Jelly, O.P., to provide the commentary on principal themes for preaching and teaching.

We also wish to acknowledge and thank all who helped make the 1990 meeting at Providence College possible: the Most Rev. Louis E. Gelineau for his invitation to the diocese; Fr. Matthew F. Morry, O.P., members of the New England Region of the Mariological Society of America, and the staff of Providence College for their preparations and warm hospitality; and, finally, the benefactors and supporting members of the Mariological Society of America.