

# Marian Studies

---

Volume 53 *The Marian Dimension of the  
Christian Life: II. The Middle Period*

Article 17

---

2002

## Report, 2001-2002: New England Region

Matthew F. Morry

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian\\_studies](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies)



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Morry, Matthew F. (2002) "Report, 2001-2002: New England Region," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 53, Article 17.  
Available at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian\\_studies/vol53/iss1/17](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol53/iss1/17)

This Back Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Library Publications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Studies by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact [mschlangen1@udayton.edu](mailto:mschlangen1@udayton.edu), [ecommons@udayton.edu](mailto:ecommons@udayton.edu).

## REPORT, 2001-2002: THE NEW ENGLAND REGION

The New England Region of the Mariological Society of America held its annual meeting at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island, on Saturday, October 20, 2001.

The Reverend Matthew Morry, O.P., S.T.D., director of the New England Region, opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The Reverend Brendan Murphy, O.P., M.Div., Chaplain at Providence College, offered the opening prayer and blessing for the 125 members in attendance. Fr. Morry then introduced the Keynote Speaker, the Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, D.D., S.T.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Providence. Bishop McManus presented "The Images of Mary in Selected Writings of Pope John Paul II."

Bishop McManus focused on the Holy Father's understanding of the Virgin Mary and her place in the history of salvation. There must always be, in the life of every Christian, an interrelation of faith, doctrine and life: the gift of faith must be the very vital principle of the Christian life, and what the Christian believes must be inseparable from his/her everyday Christian living.

The context of the images presented by Pope John Paul II embraces theological anthropology, Christology and ecclesiology. For explaining the anthropological dimension of the Pope's Marian images, there is the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas that the human act necessarily involves the relation of intellect and will. The person knows the good through the intellect and desires to attain the good through the will. Human freedom is basic to help the person realize that he/she is the image and likeness of God. Thus, the core of one's being is to enter into relationship with God Who calls. The believer responds to this call by a continuing faith-response all through the journey to eternal life with God. To assist us for this journey, Christ offers us His basic surrender to the will of the Father as Messiah and Redeemer in the Saving Act.

Mary is presented as the human person who placed herself at the disposal of the will of God as the Mother and faithful disciple of her Son, Jesus. The salutation of the angel Gabriel stresses this relationship, as he greets Mary as "full of grace," for it is grace that is the basis for Mary's unique place and role in the Saving Act. It was precisely at this moment of the Annunciation that Mary enters the mystery of Christ. Her place in the mystery of Christ brings her to the very presence of the Trinity. Mary receives the gift of participating in divine life from the One to whom she will give natural life in her surrender in faith to God's will. Mary is the woman of obedient faith.

In this manner, Mary is the model for all Christian believers, as through obedient faith she becomes the handmaid of the Lord and the first Christian disciple. Further, the virginity of Mary is exemplar of that complete and total surrender in faith to allow for the grace of God to render all believers, the Church, holy. It is precisely in her virginal maternity that Mary is disposed to become Mother of the community of the redeemer, that is, Mother of the Church.

The obedient faith response of Mary embraces the fullness of the Saving Act. As Abraham initiates the Old Covenant by his response in faith, Mary inaugurates the New Covenant by her surrender in faith to the will of God. The intimacy of Mary's involvement in the Saving Act is presented in the reality of her presence at the foot of the Cross. So, Mary enjoys a uniquely close relationship with Jesus, the Redeemer. In obedient faith Mary surrenders to God's Saving will, the Incarnation: the life, death and resurrection of her Son. As Mother, Mary mediates the redemptive work of Christ to those who call upon her as Mother of the Redeemer.

In the Cana event, the Fourth Gospel presents Mary as the Mother interceding for those in need and giving her faith response as the "sign" to help enkindle the faith of the disciples. God's revelation gives the evidence of Mary's place of mediation in the history of salvation. It stresses the intimacy of the relationship of Mary's place in salvation history to the reality of Jesus as Savior and Redeemer.

The Church is the pilgrim people of God, the body of Christ, a communion. From the moment of the Annunciation until her Assumption, Mary is the exemplar for all those who are pilgrims within the household of faith, the members of the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ embraces the physical body of Jesus born of Mary, the sacramental body of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and the Church as his Mystical Body. Mary is the icon of the eschatological fulfillment of the Church, for the Church is a communion of the members of the Body of Christ. The Church must place her members into relationship with the Trinity. This relationship is concretized in Jesus through Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Mary leads God's people to Jesus. She intercedes and protects these people in need on their pilgrim way, for Mary is the Mother but also a member of the Body of Christ.

Human nature is transformed in the mystery of Christ. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, the people share in the very divine life of God. As Mary gave birth to Christ in the flesh, so the Church gives birth to the brothers and sisters of Christ through the sacraments. To these brothers and sisters in Christ, Mary models living by *faith*, showing *peace* in spirit amidst the storms of this world, active in *hope* from the attentiveness and docility to God's will. The bond for the members must be that relationship of love and openness to the needs of others.

As the one free of sin, Mary stands before all God's people to pursue life precisely as life in Christ. "Do whatever he tells you."

After a period of discussion, the participants assembled for the Marian Liturgy with the Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, D.D., as celebrant. The homily was preached by the Reverend Walter Urban Voll, O.P., S.T.D., of Providence College.

In his homily, "Revision of the Mysteries of the Rosary," Fr. Voll noted that while the popularity of the Rosary has somewhat diminished, it still remains a staple of Catholic devotion. He cited the fact of the firm scriptural bases for the joyful, sorrowful, and the first three glorious mysteries. The Assumption is derived from Scripture and is a dogma of the Church, while the coronation has a history in the Tradition of the Church. Still, we may ask, what is missing relative to the Mysteries of the Rosary? The Liturgy of the Epiphany includes the adoration of the Magi and the Baptism of the Lord. This is an important inaugural event for the Public Life of the Lord. Further, we note the long stretch between the last joyful mystery and the first sorrowful mystery—the "finding of the child Jesus in the Temple" and the "agony in the garden." How much does Scripture indicate has taken place between the two? Should we include reflection of a Mystery on the temptations of Christ? Then, another mystery to reflect upon is the Transfiguration. This is a reality to understand how Jesus endured His Passion and for us to enter into His Passion with a hope of sharing the Glory. The Wedding Feast of Cana stresses Mary as exemplar of her intercessory concern for those in need and as the kernel to faith in the mission of Jesus.

If the "Hail Marys" are the material part of the Rosary, the meditation on the mysteries is its soul. So we may go to Sacred Scripture for a specific saying, or a miracle for our personal meditative conversation with God through his Mother. Now, St. Thomas Aquinas notes there are several kinds of attention in prayer: 1) attention to the words—this might be applied to the recitation of the Hail Mary; 2) attention to the meaning of the words—that is, to the mysteries; 3) the most perfect type—attention to the persons with whom we speak. Thus, the Rosary is the threshold of contemplation to solicit Sacred Scripture to speak with and engage personally Jesus and Mary that we may be united in faith, hope and love.

Following the Marian Liturgy, there was a luncheon for the members. The business meeting followed the luncheon. At the business meeting, the Reverend Matthew Morry, O.P., announced there were plans for the meeting of the Mariological Society of America to be held in New York City. He also announced that the next annual meeting of the New England Region would be its twenty-fifth. To observe this anniversary, the meeting would be held on October 18, 19, and 20 of 2002. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

*Rev. Matthew F. Morry, O.P., S.T.D.*  
Director, The New England Region, MSA