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FRANK DUFF—THE SPIRITUALITY OF A LAYMAN

MICHAEL O'CARROLL, DUBLIN

The spiritual outlook of Frank Duff was formed from two sources: experience and the teaching of others. It was from a rather exceptional experience in his case. So we should look at the main facts of his life, the phases through which he worked and thought his way. St. Augustine, who loved interpreting numbers, would have delayed on the importance of "7" in Frank Duff's case. He was born on 7 June, 1889; he founded the Legion of Mary on 7 September, 1921; he died on 7 November, 1980.¹

It was a long span of time, but (I am in a position to testify) the man's mental powers were unimpaired to the very end. I met him for the first time in 1937; I attended a meeting of the Pauline Circle, an inter-faith group, where he spoke—and with some vigour—three days before he died. One of his great relaxations was long-distance cycling, and he had planned the itinerary—around the Head of Howth, at the end of Dublin Bay—for the following weekend. Death came to claim him on

¹ While awaiting the definitive biography, cf. T. O'Flóinn, C.M., *Frank Duff as I Knew Him*, Dublin, 1981; L. O'Broin, *Frank Duff, A Biography*, Dublin, 1982; H. Firtel, *A Man for our Time: Frank Duff and the Legion of Mary*, Cork, 1985; R. Bradshaw, *Frank Duff, Founder of the Legion of Mary*, Bay Shore, New York, 1985. On the Legion of Mary, see C. Hallack, *The Legion of Mary*, 5th ed., with additional chapter by M. O'Carroll, C.S.Sp., London, 1950; L. J. (Cardinal) Suenens, "Spiritualité et rayonnement de la Légion de Marie," in *Maria*, ed. H. du Manoir, S.J., III, 1954, 637-658; L. C. Morand, *The Character of the Legion of Mary in the Law of the Church*, London, 1955; and esp. F. Flanagan, *John Henry Newman and Frank Duff*, Dublin, 1982. For the writings of Frank Duff, see *The Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary*, many editions (1964 here used)—translations in all European languages and many others including Russian, Chinese, Korean; *Souls at Stake*, done with F. J. Ripley using pen-name F. S. Mitchell, Dublin, 1948; *The De Montfort Way*, London, 1950; *Miracles on Tap*, Bay Shore, New York, 1962; *Walk with Mary, Virgo Praedicanda*, Dublin, 1967; *The Woman of Genesis*, Dublin, 1976; *Victory through Mary*, Dublin, 1981. In the general plan of this paper, I have been helped by S. Grace, "Frank Duff, Exemplar of Spirituality," a paper, read at the International Conference of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Easter week, 1989, which the author gave me.

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Friday. There was little delay in the call or the response. That morning he had, in addition to his daily Mass, attended a Requiem Mass for the Legionary Envoy, Joan Cronin—her areas had been Latin America and the Middle East. Returning from the graveside to the Regina Coeli Hostel, he was disinclined to eat and decided to rest. He forbade the sister attending him to call a doctor. Some hours later she went to see him hoping to suggest a cup of tea.

Frank was dead. His hands were folded on his breast as he lay on his bed. Nearby was a copy of Cruden's Biblical Concordance; he had apparently been preparing a lecture. For a man aged ninety-one years and five months, this was a splendid exit; for one who had twice within the previous few years been physically assaulted by hoodlums who broke into his residence, in one case leading to a stay in hospital, it represented a special triumph. It was the sealing of a legend.

Frank did have his legend. Intrinsic to it was exceptional vitality. His background would be middle class, middle class in an Ireland still governed from Westminster, with all that this entailed. The Catholic religion was free, but many of the social and economic levers were still in Protestant control—not, fortunately, education. Catholic secondary schools existed through the initiative of religious congregations of priests and brothers.

The future Legionary founder was sent to Blackrock College, located in the Dublin suburbs; it had been founded in 1860 by a group of French Holy Ghost Fathers, led by a remarkable religious, destined in the event to become a foremost educationalist; Fr. Jules Leman. French priests were still in the College in the days of Frank's schooling and the atmosphere was French.

Famous men tend to be either backward or brilliant in their schooldays—brilliant, foreshadowing their future achievements; backward, to show how they either confounded their teachers or just proved that the handicap of educators of men of genius is ignorance of the future. Frank's record, coldly preserved, showed that he was brilliant. And he had character. When the family changed from the residence relatively near Blackrock College, he insisted, despite his mother's wish to send him to a school near their new home, on cycling right across Dublin city, morning and evening. Thereon hangs the first of the *Fioretti* of the man we think was a saint. Cycling so far, the young boy was often late for the first class and thus incurred the wrath of a teacher who seems to have disliked him.

This teacher would automatically insist on the young boy's reporting to the Prefect of Studies. In those days of Spartan discipline this would generally mean physical, that is, corporal, punishment. The Prefect in question, Fr. James M. Keawell, C.S.Sp., was strict. Surprisingly he made an exception of Frank, went so far eventually as to move him to a lower class, to a more kindly teacher. Thereon two things to surprise. In the national examination at the year-end Frank went ahead of all the

boys in the top class where he had been ill-treated. And Fr. Keawell received a touching testimony of gratitude. One day, leaving the sacristy after saying Mass in a suburban church, he found Frank waiting for him—he had left school some months previously and was working in government service. He presented to the priest a gold card case, purchased with the very first personal income he had earned.

The future Legionary founder would, on his brilliant examination results, have merited university education. But for domestic reasons, he chose to take up work at once. He would stay with government service, which during his time changed to native control, with the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921. Eventually, under pressure of Legionary work, he would be forced to take early retirement. But that was a long way ahead.

The first step towards a life of dedication in the lay state was the decision to join a Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. That was in 1913. Eight years later the Legion was born. Frank had served a most valuable apprenticeship with the older association. He learned the importance of group decisions and of cooperation in service of the poor. He learned to share ideas, and he learned the irreplaceable value of a precise task assigned and fulfilled within a fixed time, with a report delivered to indicate just what was achieved; and he learned the sound psychology of visitation in pairs.

Legionary meetings were given a more detailed prayer structure than would be used by some other lay associations. And there was a distinctive idealism. Here again the founder was indebted to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. It was a fellow member who gave him a copy of what was to become the book of his life—not that he was a man of one book. It was *The True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* by St. (still at the time Blessed) Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort. Frank's first reaction was unfavourable. But he changed and became captivated by the Marian theology and the sheer spiritual logic of the work.

This was an activist, a doer, an achiever. As he had to face one thorny problem after another in his apostolate—the foundation of the Sancta Maria Hostel for street girls, the Morning Star Hostel for down-and-out men, the Regina Coeli Hostel for unmarried mothers—each bristling with complications, contradictions, nerve-wracking drudgery, he had to have a solid core of idealism. He found it in De Montfort's doctrine of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.

Here we enter the direct consideration of his spirituality. But let us not forget the living framework within which it evolved: the expansion of the Legion of Mary outside Dublin—to other centres in Ireland, then to Scotland, other European and overseas countries, to wartime Europe, to Australia, to Africa, the Far East, the Middle East (eventually to 1,300 dioceses all over the world), to which add the immense diversity of works undertaken—everything that could serve the Church, except for material relief.

The convert movement was initiated as early as 1938, and it had an unusual offshoot, the Mercier and the Pillar of Fire Societies—the former the first inter-faith society for dialogue in Ireland since the Reformation, the second the first public gesture of friendship to the Jewish community made here, most welcome at the time as the Nazi genocide campaign was moving towards its appalling climax.² The Mercier Society was probably the most distinguished inter-faith group ever to assemble in these islands. It was twenty years before its time, which proved too much for the local Church authorities. But with so much else, there was incessant demand on the nervous energy and spiritual equilibrium of the man at the centre. It meant long, exhausting hours; for he had bound himself to full recitation of the Roman Breviary every day—I once heard him say that he sometimes completed it at four o'clock in the morning when he was "crazy with fatigue."

All of this gives interest to the spiritual doctrine which Frank evolved over the years, which was a necessity to him in his personal life and in the life of the association which he had brought into being. Where shall we find this doctrine? Principally in the *Handbook of the Legion*, which was obligatory reading for members and in the volumes which were composed of his occasional addresses and papers. These addresses were given at legionary meetings of one kind or another; the papers appeared mostly in the official journal of the Legion, *Maria Legionis*—its first editor was the distinguished Irish historian and public servant, long-time friend of Frank's and his biographer, Leon O'Broin.

How much spiritual teaching was conveyed in the founder's correspondence is a matter for conjecture. The extent of this correspondence is itself, in the literal sense of the word, incalculable. Estimates based on known output over specific periods must still remain approximate. One such estimate is a quarter of a million, a unique volume of letters in one lifetime, unique certainly in the history of his country. But that may be very much lower than the real figure. Many who corresponded with the founder sought advice which would pass far beyond administrative demands. He was

² The Mercier Society lasted from 1941 to 1944; its membership included: two future bishops of the Church of Ireland—R. P. C. Hanson, the great Patristic scholar, and G. O. Simms, authority on the Book of Kells, ruler of the sees of Cork, Dublin and Armagh; three future Catholic bishops—J. Carroll, auxiliary to Dublin, D. O'Herlihy of Ferns, and W. Barden, Archbishop of Teheran; public servants—Desmond Fitzgerald, former Minister for External Affairs, F. H. Boland, future president of the United Nations Assembly, and W. Fay, future ambassador to France; writers—E. Leen, C.S.Sp., A. Doolan, O. P., Mgr. A. Ryan, L. O'Broin, and John Betjeman (future poet laureate, then at the British Embassy in Dublin); leading Catholic laymen like Lonan Murphy, president of the Vincent de Paul Society; and clergymen from all the Christian communions. The Pillar of Fire Society assembled, with a number of distinguished Catholics, the entire membership of the Jewish Representative Council and many Dublin Jews of the greatest distinction.

highly articulate and willingly expressed himself on the subjects which the apostolate had made dear to him. There is then probably much spiritual writing in the vast correspondence.

When Mary's universal mediation is mentioned as central in his thinking, an *idée-force* to borrow the French phrase, there may be some misgiving. But he did not have things out of proportion. He was a man of the Church and lived by the great certainties of the faith. Before reading him on the subject of Mary's great power with God and irreplaceable role in our lives, we should ponder such words as these:

The Legion is built in the first place upon a profound faith in God and in the love he bears his children. He wills to draw great glory from our efforts and he will purify them to render them fruitful and persevering The Legionaries' essential mainstay must be this knowledge of the companionship of God, their good Father, in their twofold work of sanctifying themselves and serving their neighbour.³

A little further on we read:

But what is the place of Mary herself in relation to God? It is that he brought her, as he did all the other children of earth, out of nothing; and though he has since then exalted her to a point of "grace immense and inconceivable," nevertheless, in comparison with her Maker, she still remains as nothing. Indeed she is—far more than any other—his creature, because he has wrought more in her than in any other of his creatures.⁴

In that general framework of thought, the following passage may be read:

The Legion's trust in Mary is limitless, knowing that by the ordinance of God, her power is without limit. All that he could give to Mary he has given to her. All that she was capable of receiving, she has received in plenitude. For us God has constituted her a special means of grace. Operating in union with her we approach him more effectively, and hence win grace more freely. Indeed we place ourselves in the very flood-tide of grace, for she is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit; she is the channel of every grace which Jesus Christ has won. We receive nothing which we do not owe to a positive intervention on her part. She does not content herself with transmitting all; she obtains all for us. Penetrated with belief in this office of Mary, the Legion enjoins it as a special devotion and sets in its Catena, for daily recitation by every member, the proper prayer of the Feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces.⁵

This idea is part of the intellectual fabric of the *Handbook* and recurs frequently in its contents. It is axiomatic in the thought-content of the work, as of the whole association. Frank Duff soon learned, as he became more fully acquainted with the life of the Church, that he was in a mighty current of Marian renewal stemming from

³ *Handbook*, p. 9 f.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Belgium. A great national and spiritual leader, Désiré-Joseph Cardinal Mercier, had remarkably reversed a sad trend in Marian theology and devotion.

Things were, in this domain, weak and uninspiring in the first decades of the century. Mercier was, in the post-war years, at the peak of his career. He had read and been captivated by the treatise of St. Louis Marie. With characteristic courage and zeal, he launched a whole programme of instruction on the message of the French saint and initiated a world-wide movement to have Mary's mediation of all graces declared a dogma of faith. Eventually, Pius XI would set up three commissions to examine the matter, Belgian, Spanish and Roman.

The year 1921 was a milestone in Mercier's apostolate. In that year he issued his famous pastoral on the theme he had made his own; in that year he organised a congress in Brussels to pool theological thinking, and in that year Rome granted his first request: Pope Benedict XV approved a Mass and Office of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces; it would be granted also to other bishops and to heads of religious institutes who requested it. In that same year, 1921, the Legion of Mary came into being, as I have mentioned.

The growth of the Legion proved the truth of Mary's mediation in practice. For along with belief in this truth, Frank Duff had another very strong conviction. In his idea of the apostolate he was ahead of his time. He did not see the apostolate, that is, service of the souls of others, as a *means* of sanctification, an option among others, like penance, spiritual reading, meditation. It was an essential part of the Christian vocation. To be truly a Christian one must be an apostle.

To this idea he returned incessantly. "Christianity," he wrote in the *Handbook of the Legion*, "is understood and practised only in a partial sense, that is as an individualistic religion directed exclusively towards the benefitting of one's own soul and not at all concerned with one's fellow-man. This is the 'half-circle' Christianity so reprobated by Pius XI."⁶ A Christian, he once said, "must pour his soul into another soul." Or again, "apostleship and faith constitute the life of the Church."

Vatican II has heavily endorsed this contention:

For this was the Church founded: that by spreading the kingdom of Christ everywhere for the glory of God the Father she might bring all men to share in Christ's saving Redemption; and that through them the whole world might be brought into relationship with Him. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, and the Church carries it on in various ways through all her members.⁷

⁶ *Handbook*, p. 160.

⁷ *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, art. 2; the Council speaks with equal clarity on the subject in *The Constitution on the Church*, art. 33; the *Decree on Bishops*, art. 17; the *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, art. 5; the *Decree on the Training of Priests*, art. 20; the *Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life*, art. 8; and the *Declaration on Social Communications*, art. 13.

This statement in the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* may be matched by equally explicit assertions in other Council documents.

Frank had linked apostolic initiative and endeavour with Marian idealism :

Another of those supposedly Legion ideas now endorsed is that Mary is the Queen of Apostles in the sense that the apostolate depends on her, so that her co-operation in all work for souls, including those outside the Church, must be sought. Success depends on that co-operation which she will give if she is asked.⁸

The founder of the Legion expressed this idea in other ways. The same idea was put thus by Vatican II :

Hence the Church in her apostolic work also rightly looks to her who brought forth Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin, so that through the Church Christ may be born and grow in the hearts of the faithful also. The Virgin Mary in her own life lived an example of that maternal love by which all should be fittingly animated who cooperate in the apostolic mission of the Church on behalf of the rebirth of men.⁹

Such a commitment brought the Church to life for Frank Duff. He had a very strong sense of the Church, with which went strong belief in God's power within it. Once in conversation I heard him answer the question, "Are you worried about what is going on in the Church?" It was in the years of upheaval after the Council. The answer was firm : "I've read history. If the Church survived Arianism, it will survive anything."

The head of the Legion, whether as president or as close counsellor to the president when he was not himself in office, had a very exceptional opportunity to know the Church in his time, the local Church and the Church universal. Legionary works in Dublin were increasingly varied ; they gave the founder an insight into the many problems facing ecclesiastical authorities, priests in their pastoral ministry ; it was sometimes a painful experience. Do not forget the span of his apostolic activity, almost seventy years—if one includes his early service in the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

All these interests spread to the universal Church with the worldwide growth of the Legion. Through the envoys, one more splendid than another in initiative and

⁸ *The Woman of Genesis*, p. 22.

⁹ *Constitution on the Church*, art. 65 ; the text was proposed by Cardinal Suenens and the official report stated that he had insisted on its inclusion. The Cardinal writes : "By uniting Mary with the apostolate, the Legion strives not to separate, in its soul and action, what God has united. The Second Vatican Council at my request willed to emphasize this alliance, which is the soul of the Legion of Mary." After quoting the words he adds : "This conciliar text, was to my knowledge, a joy and comfort to Frank Duff, who appreciated what it said and implied" (*La promesse légionnaire*, Paris, 1982, p. 10).

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achievement, through the *Peregrinatio pro Christo* movement,¹⁰ through the innumerable visits from Catholics of every rank in the Church, through the vast correspondence received and despatched during a long life—right to the last day, this unique individual acquired an in-depth, multidimensional knowledge of Christ's Church rarely equalled outside the immediate governing entourage of the Pope. It was knowledge drawn from experience, lived from day to day. Some idea of it will be obtained by whoever undertakes the task of reading Frank Duff's correspondence of which, as I have said, I estimate the contents at well over a quarter of a million items.

So it was a pragmatic doctrine that inspired the Legionary founder? He knew what was wanted and did his best to meet urgent need, without pondering the reason why? Not at all. Frank had wrestled with the problem of motivation in apostolic dedication. He had gone to the foundation, sought unshakable truth. He found it in the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Not many manuals of active Catholic societies in the twenties set out the doctrine of the Mystical Body as the basis of service. The theology of the Church had been moving from an emphasis on the institutional aspect to the spiritual organic reality, the Pauline doctrine—what St. Augustine called *Totus Christus*, the concept of the Head and members bound in one. The Legionary read in the *Handbook* that his service was based on this doctrine, and this was decades before Pius XII published his Encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, which sealed and crowned the work of theologians.

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ and his fullness (Eph 1:22,23). Christ is its Head, its chief, indispensable and perfect part, from which all the other members of the Body derive their powers, their very life Sacred obligations of love and service are set up between the members and the Head, and between the members themselves (1 Jn 4:15-21). The image of the Body helps to a vivid realization of those obligations, and this is half-way to the fulfilment of them.¹¹

Was this "starry-eyed idealism," "escapist theological talk," "abstract, or even worse, mystical theory"? This was the language that St. Paul used to the neophytes of his day, converts from paganism. Ideas rule the world. They rule when they are given a vital clothing and reference, either by unique communal need or when they take flesh in a charismatic personality. Then they are not merely ideas, but ideals.

¹⁰ The *Peregrinatio pro Christo* movement is flourishing. It is the sending of teams of volunteers to countries where the Legion locally needs help or where it does not exist. These teams have been organised from different countries and sent to Eastern Europe; the Middle East, Turkey included; annually to Russia; to North Africa and most European countries.

¹¹ *Handbook*, p. 175 f.

Frank Duff's task was to make the Mystical Body an ideal to stir enthusiasm, loyalty, self-sacrifice. Inevitably he did it by the force of his own spiritual personality. Again and again, I have noticed how people of character were mentally moulded and morally motivated by him. I never met Edel Quinn, but I would put her in that category, to Frank's honour and hers. Is this a total departure from the theology of the Mystical Body? It is the way Christ works in his Mystical Body, to make it a living truth for his disciples.

It is a truth with many ramifications and many of them this great lay apostle pondered. One is the role of the priest, the minister of Christ in his Mystical Body. Many heard, at the time of the Council, at which Frank Duff was a Lay Auditor, of the compliment paid him in the aula by Cardinal Heenan, a former spiritual director of the Senatus, that is, the highest national governing body, of the Legion in England. His Eminence singled out the Legion as a lay association wherein collaboration between priest and laity was admirable.

The name of another Cardinal will introduce the final point I wish to make in these reflections on a remarkable spiritual legacy. It was Cardinal Suenens who suggested to Paul VI that he invite Frank Duff to the Council. The Cardinal's own interest went back to the days when he was an Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Van Roey, Archbishop of Brussels-Malines. He was deeply impressed by this fact: the promise or formal engagement of the Legion was not addressed to Our Lady, as might be expected, nor to Incarnate Wisdom, whom St. Louis Marie chose for his formal act of consecration, but to the third Person of the Holy Trinity. The future Cardinal's own spirituality was and remains strongly oriented towards the Holy Spirit.

The iconography of the Legion manifests this spiritual outlook. The Vexillum, or standard, modelled on that of the Roman Legion, which the association sought to spiritualize, replaced the eagle at the apex with the Dove, symbol of the Spirit; the Miraculous Medal figured lower down, where the image of the emperor would be placed. The dominant colour is red. And the Tessera, or official prayer leaflet, embodies the same symbolic imagery. The opening words of the legionary promise read thus:

Most Holy Spirit, I (Name of the Candidate), desiring to be enrolled this day as a Legionary of Mary, yet knowing that of myself I cannot render worthy service, do ask of thee to come upon me and fill me with thyself, so that my poor acts may be sustained by thy power, and become an instrument of thy mighty purposes. But I know that thou, who hast come to regenerate the world in Jesus Christ, hast not willed to do so except through Mary; that without her we cannot know or love thee; that it is by her, and to whom she pleases, when she pleases, and in the quantity and manner she pleases, that all thy gifts and virtues and graces are administered; and I realize that the secret of a perfect Legionary service consists in a complete union with her who is so completely united to thee.¹²

¹² *Handbook*, p. 52.

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Bishop Suenens composed a thoughtful commentary on the entire text of the Legionary promise and entitled it *The Theology of the Apostolate*.¹³ His work *The Gospel to Every Creature*¹⁴ developed his thought on much the same lines, with a wider reference. He became the first biographer of Edel Quinn,¹⁵ Legionary Envoy to East Africa and Mauritius, presently a candidate for beatification.

Frank Duff thought that he had been led from on high to concentrate the idealism and devotion of his association on the Spirit of God. It was, at the time, an innovation. In those days we are not far from the publication of *Le Divin Méconnu* (English translation, *The Forgotten Paraclete*) by Mgr. Landrieux, a spiritual writer of stature, or when Dom Columba Marmion would begin his retreat lecture on the Holy Spirit by recalling the answer of some neophytes to St. Paul's question whether they had received the Holy Spirit, "We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). The great Benedictine would say that at present some, if not many, Catholics seemed to be in the same plight. Explaining his choice for the Legion, Frank wrote thus later on:

It was pointed out that the Legionary promise was addressed to the Holy Ghost, who received far too little devotion from the general body of Catholics, and for whom Legionaries must needs have special love. Their work, which is the sanctification of themselves, and of the other members of the Mystical Body of Christ, is dependent on the power and operation of the Holy Ghost, and hence calls for a very close union with him. Two things are essential to this: deliberate attention to him, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin, with whom he works in inseparable union.¹⁶

It is known that, for different reasons, Vatican II has been the starting-point of an immense interest in the Holy Spirit. The observers, foremost among them the Greek Orthodox theologian, Nikos Nissiotis (editor of *The Ecumenical Review*, organ of the World Council of Churches), criticised the Council documents for their deficiency in regard to the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ An effort was made during the last session to meet the criticism. Paul VI, in the wake of the Council, encouraged theological research and studies on the Holy Spirit, and they have multiplied during the last two decades. Many theologians approached the subject especially in the context of Mary's relation

¹³ English trans., Westminster, Maryland, 1954; there were many other translations; original French edition, Bruges, 1952.

¹⁴ English trans., Cork, 1955; many other translations.

¹⁵ *Une héroïne de l'apostolat: Edel-Mary Quinn*, 2nd ed., Bruges, 1953; many translations. Besides Frank Duff and Edel Quinn, Alfie Lambe, Legionary Envoy to Brazil, is also proposed for beatification.

¹⁶ *Handbook*, p. 53.

¹⁷ *The Ecumenical Review* 2 (1965), esp. p. 48; for the full background, cf. *Theotokos*, M. O'Carroll, C.S.Sp., art. "The Holy Spirit," pp. 329-333.

with the Holy Spirit. This was the theme of the International Marian Congress held in Rome at Pentecost, 1975. Cardinal Suenens was the Papal Legate. Simultaneously, the International Charismatic Congress was taking place in the Eternal City. The Pope spoke to the participants words of encouragement and advice.

On the theme of Mary and the Spirit Frank Duff wrote enthusiastically and to great effect. He spoke from strength and from a longer experience than many others who would have thought little of his directives to his Legionaries long before Vatican II. He had learned the basic truths from St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort; in that he resembled closely the founder of an association not unlike his, St. Maximilian Kolbe, the martyr of Auschwitz Camp, who gave the Church the *Militia Immaculatae*. The saintly Franciscan has left the most inspiring pages on the theme of Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Those interested in Frank Duff's distinctive treatment of a subject that will become increasingly important in the life of the Church should read the essays on "Mary and the Holy Spirit" in the collection entitled *The Woman of Genesis*, and, in the collection entitled *Victory through Mary*, "Mary's Mystical Union with the Holy Spirit" and "The Woman Clothed with the Sun." Some readers may find one thesis developed in the latter work disconcerting: *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is incomparably the best devotion to the Holy Spirit*. It should be considered in conjunction with so much else that the author wrote on the theme of the Holy Spirit and the need for deliberate attention to him. He was convinced that the union between Mary and the Spirit was so "profound as to stop short of identity." This is the word of one who had been a devoted lover of Our Lady and a faithful instrument of the Holy Spirit. On that high note these reflections may end.