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ECUMENICAL ROUNDTABLES AT INTERNATIONAL MARIOLOGICAL CONGRESSES

EAMON R. CARROLL, CHICAGO

At the end of its third session, the Second Vatican Council promulgated its decree on ecumenism (*Redintegratio unitatis*), on November 21, 1964, the same day it also promulgated the dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*; it was the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the afterglow of that double highlight, the international congresses on our Lady resumed, even before the Council ended. The last congress had been held in 1958, as the third of the cycle inaugurated in 1950, picking up the series of seven that ran at two-year intervals from 1900 to 1912. In 1950, there were held at Rome the first "Mariological" congress and simultaneously the eighth "Marian" congress.

There were four-year intervals in the resumed series: hence Rome, 1954, was the second "Mariological" and ninth "Marian"; Lourdes, 1958, the third Mariological and tenth Marian. One planned for Canada in 1962 was cancelled because of the Council preparations, but while the Council was still on (it ended in the fall of 1965) the congresses resumed, riding the tide of conciliar achievements and hopes. The fourth Mariological and eleventh Marian Congresses were held at Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, in the spring of 1965.

At the first session of Vatican II, fall 1962, the International Pontifical Marian Academy, the body responsible for the international Mariological/Marian congresses, presented the Council Fathers with the book *De Mariologia et oecumenismo* (xi + 593 pp., 1962), consisting of seventeen articles by well-known authors, from Gérard Philips to Charles Balić, O.F.M., president of the Academy, and covering many topics, e.g., scripture (A. Feuillet), patristics (D. Fernández), Orthodoxy (B. Schultze), Protestantism (E. Stakemeier and A. Brandenburg), and Cardinal Newman (Franz M. Willam). All the authors were Catholic; all the articles were in Latin.

SANTO DOMINGO 1965

The study theme of the Santo Domingo Mariological gathering was "Mary in Sacred Scripture," preparing for the consideration of Marian cult (*de cultu mariano* ...) in the subsequent congresses, namely, Lisbon, 1967, on the origins of devotion to Mary; Zagreb (Yugoslavia), 1971, sixth through eleventh centuries; Rome, 1975, twelfth through fifteenth centuries; Saragossa, 1979, the sixteenth century; Malta, 1983, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; Kevelaer (West Germany), 1987, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, up to the Council.

The first tentative ecumenical outreach was at Santo Domingo, in the setting of scriptural studies on Mary. That somewhat tremulous start developed into formal "roundtables" of ecumenical dialogue in the subsequent congresses, where the general theme, the progressive growth of devotion to Mary over the centuries, provided good occasions for ecumenical consideration. At Santo Domingo, a lone Lutheran was the invited guest and also a featured speaker, F. W. Künneth, son of one of the signers of the Barmen Declaration of 1934, shortly after Hitler came to power. Rather than a dialogue or roundtable, such as would develop at the following meetings, there was a friendly conversation between Künneth and three Catholic theologians from Germany on the topic "fundamental differences of Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and Calvinist Mariologies." The moderator was Gérard Philips of Belgium, *peritus* of Vatican II and, with C. Balić, principal author of the Marian eighth chapter of *Lumen gentium*. The three Catholics were H. J. Brosch, with the Catholic stance; H. M. Köster, reporting the Orthodox view; M. D. Koster, considering the Reformed (that is, Calvinist) position.

The meeting was by invitation only, a pattern that has persisted in subsequent congresses, though Künneth also spoke in a general session of the Congress. He spoke out of his Evangelical-Lutheran tradition, noting that "to proclaim the truth correctly and to answer error effectively, the supreme and sufficient standard is Scripture alone." The Congress *acta* reported the event optimistically. The ecumenical interchange with F. W. Künneth was a fraternal meeting rather than a true dialogue; it was an augury of fuller and better-planned future meetings. The *acta* noted that the various ways of investigating theological truth follow more general patterns of thinking and, hence, "ecumenical dialogue in the Churches on the Marian question will make greater progress when more attention is given to the underlying psychology and theology; at the same time this dialogue will show that the various outlooks, so long as they are correctly understood, are not only not opposed but in fact can assist each other."

The final *vota* of the Congress, March 20, 1965, rejoiced in the successful gathering of scripture scholars and systematic theologians, and concluded with the hope that a

sincere dialogue might be instituted and carried through with the separated brethren about the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of salvation. The influence of the Vatican Council is obvious—in terms of the biblically, patristically and liturgically oriented statements of the Council, from the first document on the liturgy (second session, 1963; e.g., no. 103), then in the constitution on the Church (1964) and specifically in the decree on ecumenism (also 1964).

LISBON 1967

The next congress, fifth Mariological, took place in Portugal, Lisbon and Fatima [1917-1967], October 2-8, and featured the ecumenical roundtable with four Catholic participants and four from other Christian churches. Attendance was by personal invitation; the equal numbers and non-public character were to be permanent features, although there were usually present a few non-voting observers and advisors, a role René Laurentin has filled a number of times, and also Michael O'Carroll, C.S.Sp. Members of the roundtable, both Catholics and others, normally have given papers as well, in both the plenary and the language-section sessions.

The Lisbon group issued two statements: one from the non-Catholics, the other from the Catholics. The Catholic comment was a brief expression of gratitude for the gracious longer statement of their brothers and the promise to study the problems raised. Catholic signers were: F. Mussner (Germany), I. Ortiz de Urbina, S.J. (Spain), G. Söll, S.D.B. (Germany), René Laurentin (France), M. Miguens (Spain). The Protestant signers were: W. Borowsky, Lutheran pastor (Germany), F. W. Künneth, Lutheran (Germany), Petrus Meinhold, Lutheran (Germany), and Brother Laurent of Taizé. Their statement concluded with the hope that in an age when Christian believers face such grave dangers there may be shown forth to a faithless world, even in our differing understanding of Mary, the Mother of God, that "we all live and struggle under the one Lord Christ." The final phrase is from the Augsburg Confession of 1530.

ZAGREB 1971

In 1971, the congress took place in Zagreb, Croatia, Yugoslavia, an officially Marxist atheistic country, where we were welcomed warmly by state officials. It was a triumph for native son Charles Balić and his Franciscan Croatian associates, among them his successor as president of the Pontifical Academy (PAMI), Paul Melada, with his able aide-de-camp Dinko Aračić. Due to poor planning, tardy organization and an agenda that was unclear, the ecumenical roundtable was somewhat unsettled.

There were a good number of participants: representatives of Eastern Orthodoxy (Yugoslavia has a large Orthodox population, especially in Serbia; it also has many Muslims) and Anglicans; as well as Lutherans and members of the Reformed churches.

On short notice, Father Théodore A. Koehler, S.M., was asked to moderate the gathering, but even his patient skills were unable to harmonize strongly different viewpoints. A final statement was hurriedly achieved, but only a few of the group signed it: Fr. Koehler, Fr. T. Sagi-Bunić, O.F.M.Cap., W. Borowsky (Lutheran), P. Meinhold (Lutheran), D. Dimitrijević (Orthodox). Stated non-signers were: F. W. Künneth and Hans Düfel (both Lutherans, the latter author of *Luthers Stellung zur Marienverehrung*, 1968), Eric L. Mascall (British Anglican theologian) and J. Neville Ward (British Methodist pastor and author), both members of the English Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose founder was also present, Mr. H. Martin Gillett. Some of the Catholics present failed to sign it by omission or confusion; among them were: J. Alonso, C.M.F., Fidelis Buck, S.J. (Canada), and Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm. (Washington, D.C.).

R. Laurentin's comment on Zagreb was severe¹; it was his view also that the Protestant participants (presumably the four Lutherans) felt less intimidated at Zagreb than they had at Lisbon. *Pace* Laurentin, Zagreb was not a total washout. The statement read to the assembly by the German Lutheran P. Meinhold, however hastily put together after a difficult meeting, makes good sense.² It compares Eastern and Western pre-Reformation piety to the Blessed Virgin. The East has always maintained a sharp distinction between prayer to God and to Mary and the saints, as at II Nicea. The statement included the lines:

In the last analysis Marian devotion has its foundation in the unique place of the Virgin in the economy of salvation, both in the Church and in the communion of saints. ... History shows that where Marian piety was truly Christo-centric, rooted in saving history ..., there were positive values that still speak to today's ecumenical dialogue. ... This sixth international Mariological congress has asked for an open expression of views on this subject leading to collaboration between Catholics and their brothers—this is cause for gratitude and hope for unity of the churches.

The final sentence is pregnant with hope, even after the not-altogether happy meetings that ran two-and-a-half days: "Because the ... Congress asked us to express our thoughts on this subject and has led us to a cooperative effort with our Catholic brothers, we are deeply appreciative, and our hope for a coming together of the

¹ R. LAURENTIN, "Bulletin sur la Vierge Marie," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 56 (1972): 469-470.

² Among other places, this statement appeared in *Esprit et Vie*, December 2, 1971, p. 684.

churches has been strengthened." Then there is this splendid closing sentence, all the more so given the rocky course of the Zagreb roundtable: "For our unity in Christ is not only the goal towards which we are moving, but is also the experience from which we are coming."

ROME 1975

The Roman meeting, May, 1975, was well planned. C. Balić had reason to regard it as the principal result of the whole congress. The general theme was Marian devotion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, eve of the Reformation. The roundtable topic was "Mary's role in redemption." There were six Catholics and six representatives of Lutheranism, the Reformed Church and Orthodoxy. The two Lutherans were P. Meinhold and K. Selin (Sweden); the three Orthodox were K. Kalokyris and J. Kalogirou (both of Greece) and D. Dimitrijević (Belgrade); representing the Reformed Church was H. Chavannes (Switzerland). Catholic members were C. Balić, T. A. Koehler, V. Bajsić (Zagreb), I. Ortiz de Urbina, Leo Scheffczyk (Germany), J. Alonso, C.M.F. (Spain), with Fidelis Buck, S.J. (Canada), as secretary. Adalbert Rebić, O.F.M. (Zagreb), also attended.

H. Chavannes had set the stage for the Roman dialogue by an article on its topic (Mary's role in redemption) in *Ephemerides Mariologicae* (24, 1-2 [1974]: 29 f.; J. Alonso, editor). His article stimulated many responses in the same journal: S. Benko, W. Borowsky, E. L. Mascall, T. Gallus, S. C. Napiórkowski, C. Sträter, J. Míguez Bonino. After the Roman congress the subject was further pursued (*EphMar* 26, 2-3 [1976]), with Chavannes reacting to the reactions.

The Roman agreed statement, dated May 16, was published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 14, 1975, with comment by G. Concetti under the title "An Important Ecumenical Text: The Role of Mary with Respect to Redemption." Concerning the Roman agreed statement, Cándido Pozo, S.J. (who has been moderator of the roundtables beginning in 1979 up to and including Kevelaer in 1987), advises the reader that the very fact that a Catholic reader finds the agreed statement "very Catholic" should raise the suspicion that not all who signed understood the words in the same way. Pozo appeals to his experience with the subsequent roundtables, and I agree.³

The 1975 statement was this:

1. One must hold as a dogma of the faith that the man Jesus Christ is the one Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2, 5). Christ unites in his person divinity and

³ See article by Cándido Pozo, S.J., "Dos declaraciones ecuménicas marianas. De Zaragoza (1979) a Malta (1983)," in *Scripta de Maria* (Saragossa) 7 (1984), pp. 527-543.

humanity. The mediation of Christ consists in the Redemption, the reconciliation between God and human beings. Hence it belongs to Christ to be our irreplaceable Mediator.

2. God has willed to associate to the work of the Redemption created collaborators, in various degrees, among whom the Virgin Mary has exceptional dignity and efficacy.

3. Mary was chosen to conceive and give birth to the Redeemer, who received from his Mother the humanity he needed to accomplish his sacrifice on Calvary, as victim and high priest.

4. Her *fiat*, which possesses a lasting character, was Mary's free consent to be Mother of God, and hence her consent to our salvation.

5. Mary's collaboration was shown in an altogether special way [the French control text has *singulièrement*] when she believed in the Redemption accomplished by her Son, and when she stood at the foot of the cross, while almost all the apostles ran away.

6. Prayers of intercession addressed to the Virgin have as their foundation, in addition to the confidence in the Mother of God that the Holy Spirit has inspired among Christian people, the fact that Mary remains forever associated to the work of redemption and hence to the application of redemption across space and time.

SARAGOSSA 1979

The general theme of the Saragossa Congress, held at the famous shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar, was devotion to Mary in the 1500s, century of both the Reformation and Trent. The roundtable took up the various forms of devotion to the Blessed Virgin mentioned by the Council: praise, imitation, veneration, then invocation (Ch. 8 of *Lumen gentium*, also no. 103 in the liturgy document). It is a painful paradox that divided Christians are in basic agreement, at times strongly so, on three of the four aspects, i.e., veneration, praise, imitation. They do not agree on "invocation," even when there is some admission of a possible heavenly "intercession" by the Mother of the Savior.

To praise God in his saints, indeed particularly in St. Mary, is truly Christian and not contested. This was her prophecy in the Magnificat. But as Protestant scholars admit, even the praise has been greatly muted over the polemic centuries, apart from hymns. Both Luther and Calvin preached imitation of the holy Virgin. The great Protestant formularies of faith reject calling on the saints in prayer (i.e., "invoking" them, even St. Mary) as prejudicial to confidence in Christ the one Mediator.

There were twenty-four participants at Saragossa: Cándido Pozo, S.J., presided; I. Ortiz de Urbina, S.J.; E. Llamas, O.C.D. (president of the Spanish Mariological Society); F. Courth, S.A.C. (Germany); H. M. Stamm, O.F.M. (Germany); Charles Molette (France); Adolf Hoffmann, O.P. (Germany); René Laurentin (France); Adalbert Rebić (Yugoslavia); C. Napiórkowski, O.F.M.Conv. (Poland); and from the United States: F. M. Jelly, O.P.; Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.; and Théodore A. Koehler, S.M. The secretary was the talented, multi-lingual Pierre Masson, O.P. (Canada).

[Bibliographers of the future may find it helpful to know that Reginald and Pierre Masson are one and the same person.] Representing other Christian churches were J. Kalogirou and D. Dimitrijević (both Orthodox); U. Wickert and P. Meinhold (Lutherans; Meinhold died in 1981); H. Chavannes (Reformed); Max Thurian of Taizé (since then a Catholic and a priest); W. Borowsky (Lutheran pastor); A. M. Allchin, John Milburn, and John de Satgé (Anglicans; de Satgé died in 1984).

In my judgment, Saragossa is the high point of these agreed statements. It concentrated on the place of the Blessed Virgin in the communion of saints, setting forth calmly and clearly agreements and disagreements. Among the "common convictions," certainly "more indeed than they could have expected," the group described the praise of Mary as Mother of God as essentially giving glory to God; for God in glorifying the saints crowns his own gifts (from the preface of the Roman liturgy). Such praise "has become an urgent question for all Christians" (par. 1).

Imitation of the Virgin Mary is also common to the traditions of different churches. Among its elements is the Gospel understanding of poverty before God, exemplified in Mary's spiritual attitude of total response to the Word of God (par. 2).

Suggested by I. Ortiz de Urbina, the precision of II Nicea rates its own separate reference: the distinction between the adoration of God and the veneration given the saints; this is a "vital" distinction for us all (par. 3).

The thorny topic of invocation and intercession was considered "against the background of the communion of saints." A fairly strong statement is then made, with an added *cautela*: "As a Christian can and should pray for others, we believe that the saints who have already entered into the fulness which is in Christ, *amongst whom Mary holds the first place* [my emphasis], can and do pray for us sinners [implicit evocation of the second part of the Hail Mary?] who are still ... struggling on earth." "The one and unique mediation of Christ is in no way affected by this," a point made strongly by the Second Vatican Council. A remaining difficulty is stated simply and frankly: "The meaning of the direct invocation of the saints who are alive in God, an invocation which is not practised in all the Churches, remains to be elucidated" (par. 4).

Paragraph five suggests that the "psychological" difficulties many Christians experience over these Marian questions arise from different spiritual heritages and also from linguistic and cultural differences. A case in point is the word "cult" used with respect to created persons. Fr. Koehler made the observation that St. Augustine had difficulty with its use even for God, because of pagan and profane usage; his comment is incorporated into the statement. A further current American difficulty would be the bad connotation caused by "cultist" groups, and still earlier by comparative religion.

Still another problem might be posed, as R. Laurentin noted with respect to the title of Pope Paul's *Marialis cultus*: that properly speaking "cultus" belongs to God alone, and "Marialis" is a late and clumsy neologism (of Carmelite origin!). "Worship" or "adoration" would be American English equivalents for Latin "cultus," applicable only to God.

After touching on the semantic difficulty of the term "cult," the statement continued: "At the point we have reached at present, we believe that the reality is more important than the words we use. This is why we have preferred to speak of the facts in which our attitude of veneration reveals itself." I find it difficult to render the French control text simply, without falling into such words as "cult," "worship," and their cognates. The English translation initially circulated read: "facts in which our worshipping attitude reveals itself." C. Pozo points out that the statement deliberately refrained from calling acts of veneration of Mary "cult-acts." (*C'est pourquoi nous avons parlé plutôt des faits où se manifeste l'attitude culturelle.*)

In paragraph six the signers express their joy at having found so many points of coming together (in French, *convergence*), "even though there may be members of our Churches who are not yet ready to accept them." The next lines repeat points raised in the previous paragraph:

Difficulties which are primarily of an *affective* [my emphasis] nature and which have divided us in the past ought not finally to separate us in our efforts towards the unity of Christians. This does not resolve all the remaining theological questions, but we wish to continue the dialogue and we have confidence in the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

They continued with a gracious acknowledgment of the prayerful atmosphere of the Saragossa Congress: "Here at Saragossa we have been supported by the prayers of many believers. We desire that our ecumenical search will be to the profit (*favorise*) of a common approach to the Mother of the Lord in the communion of saints." Anticipating an expected question: "By what authority ...?" the signers conclude: "It is clear that those who sign here, members of the ecumenical commission of the congress, do so on their own behalf, though they have worked with the constant concern to express the faith of their Churches. They hope that this document can be a contribution to ecumenical dialogue."

At Malta, 1983, the roundtable signatories repeated that clarification: "We should also remember, as did our predecessors at the Saragossa Congress in 1979, that those who sign this declaration as members of the ecumenical commission of the Congress, do not commit anyone else to their findings, although they have been working with the continual intention of expressing the faith of their respective churches."

Alberic Stacpoole, O.S.B., secretary of the English Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has reflected on the nature of these agreed statements. At first

sight, he noted, they seem a "new ecumenical phenomenon, namely, a semi-authoritative but unofficial utterance by teams of scholars not commissioned by their churches (so that they sign in private station)." He continued: "It may appear that the connection of such 'events' with the 'magisterium ecclesiae' is at best attenuated." The ecumenical statements have emanated from congresses under the aegis of a "pontifical" academy; does that qualify the Academia "to underwrite ecumenical declarations, as an official agent of the 'magisterium'?" "Or," concluded Fr. Stacpoole (monk of Ampleforth), "have we a new phenomenon, so to say, occupying No Man's Land?"⁴

With Stacpoole I agree that the "agreed statements" are indeed semi-authoritative, yet unofficial, in that the signers are not commissioned by their respective churches, as for example in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic consultations in the United States. All the same many of the same scholars have been and are commissioned members of high-level ecumenical dialogues, e.g., F. M. Jelly, O.P. Their names are sufficient evidence of their ecumenical experience; they have been invited to the roundtables because of that expertise and interest. At Malta, for example, several members belonged to the English E.S.B.V.M. Further, the Holy See has shown favor to the roundtables by sometimes publishing their conclusions in *L'Osservatore Romano*—from the Roman meeting of 1975, and again from Malta, 1983 (English *L'Osservatore Romano*, Sept. 26, 1983).

MALTA 1983

The Malta dialogue continued the Saragossa theme of the communion of saints. Beginning with the common bond between the members of the Body of Christ on earth (par. 1), a solidarity expressed in prayer for one another, deriving from the prayer of Christ who lives forever to make intercession for us (par. 2), the statement stresses that death does not break the "communion of those who in their lifetime were united by the ties of brotherhood in Christ" (par. 3).

"In this context we are to understand the intercession of the saints on our behalf, an intercession similar to the prayers which the faithful offer for one another" (par. 4). Lest there be any simplistic misunderstanding that we need to "inform" the Lord about our human needs, the paragraph notes: "No prayer [of saintly intercession] can have this sense, for God's knowledge is infinite. Rather it is a matter of openness to the will of God, for oneself and for others, and a matter of fraternal love."

⁴ From A. STACPOOLE's introduction to *Communications at the VIth E.S.B.V.M. International Congress. 1. Post-conciliar Agreed Statements on Mariology* (Wallington, Surrey: E.S.B.V.M., 1985), p. 2.

The final two numbers concern Mary, Mother of God, within the communion of saints. "Precisely the relationship to Christ ... gives her a singular role in the Communion of Saints, a role that is of Christological origin." The eschatological carry-through is then expressed: "Further, the prayer of Mary for us should be seen in the context of that worship of the entire heavenly Church described in the Apocalypse, to which the Church on earth wishes to unite itself in its own corporate prayer" (par. 5). A further scriptural allusion follows: "Mary prays within the Church [note the careful formulation, not "over" the Church] as once she prayed in expectation of Pentecost (Acts 1,14)." The sense of solidarity permits the concluding line of paragraph 5: "There is no reason preventing us, even with our confessional differences, from uniting our prayer to God in the Spirit with the prayer of the heavenly liturgy, and especially with the prayer of the Mother of God." The statement has implicitly but carefully refrained from endorsing invocation, even as it explicitly so refrained at Saragossa.

Paragraph six was written with special care, seeking to meet Reformation difficulties by appealing to common Christian faith-convictions:

The inclusion of Mary in the worship of the Lamb that has been sacrificed (the Christological aspect) as well as her part in the heavenly liturgy (the eschatological aspect) must not give rise to any interpretation which would attribute to Mary the honor due to God alone. Moreover, no member of the Church can add anything whatsoever to the work of Christ, which remains the only source of salvation; it is not possible to "by-pass" him, or to find an "easier" way to come to the Father than through the Son of God. At the same time it is clear that Mary has her place in the Communion of Saints.

Even in the concluding part of the Malta statement, expressing gratitude for the prayerful support of the Maltese people, care was taken to respect ecumenical sensitivities, e.g., our "positive experience of brotherhood ... has extended to all activities of the Conference and owes much to the religious outlook of the Maltese people who in the fervor of their *prayer with Mary* accompanied us" (emphasis added; one is reminded of the Anglican term *comprecation*).

Signers at Malta were seven Catholics, plus P. Masson as secretary, and seven from other churches: W. Borowsky (Lutheran, Germany); H. Chavannes (Reformed, Switzerland); John Kalogirou (Greek Orthodox); four Anglicans: John Milburn (parish priest from England), Howard Root (of the Anglican Centre, Rome), John Evans (rector of the Anglican Church, Valletta, Malta), and John de Satgé (distinguished theologian and founding member of the English Ecumenical Society of the B.V.M.). Besides secretary Masson, the Catholics were: F. Courth (Germany), T. A. Koehler (U.S.A.), Eamon R. Carroll (U.S.A.), Stefano De Fiores (Rome), C. Pozo (Spain, chairman), Charles Molette (France, French Mariological Society), E. Llamas (Spain, president of the Spanish Mariological Society).

KEVELAER (WEST GERMANY) 1987

The general theme at the Marian shrine of Kevelaer in West Germany—tenth in the Mariological series, seventeenth of the Marian congresses—was “devotion to Mary from about 1800 to the eve of Vatican II.” The ecumenical roundtable stayed with the topic begun at Saragossa and continued at Malta: the role of Mary in the communion of saints. The joint statement was signed on September 17, 1987, by the following: from Germany, W. Borowsky and Dr. Hans Düfel (both had attended previous congresses); the veteran Reformed pastor from Switzerland, H. Chavannes; John Kalogirou, another returnee; Canon Harold Root, Anglican representative of Canterbury in Rome; and, on the Catholic side, Franz Courth from Germany, Charles Molette from France, Cándido Pozo from Spain (who presided), and, from the United States, Théodore A. Koehler (the Marianist from The Marian Library of the University of Dayton), and Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., from Loyola University, Chicago. Pierre Masson, O.P., again served as secretary.

The signatories sought and found a common ground in their shared Christian heritage, to which they allude in both the introduction and the conclusion of the Kevelaer statement, “aware of the differences that remain,” but sensitive too to the urgency of continuing to consider the difficulties in obedience to Jesus’ prayer for the unity of his disciples (Introduction). Our Christian communion is rooted in Christ; hence “to love and to be loved is our spiritual ‘way of life’ (*Lebensraum*)” (par. 1).

Death does not destroy the basic Christian attitude of love of God and love of neighbor. We look forward to unending communion with the Triune God and with all who belong to him (par. 2). Always under the headship of Christ (Eph. 4,16), the pilgrim people of God recognize their unity with those who have achieved perfect union in Christ (par. 3).

Paragraph four extends that understanding to the Mother of Jesus: “Those who have reached completion in Christ—and his Mother belongs to that glad company—love in him and with him all who are still on earth. An expression of this love is their prayer for us. We should be grateful for this.” Again the agreement stops short of invocation, while admitting intercession.

Paragraph 5 returns from the state of completion to the pilgrim condition, alluding to God’s dealings in saving history with his servants in both Testaments: patriarchs and prophets, John the Baptist, Mary and the Apostles. “A loving esteem for them is an ingredient of our Christian faith and contributes to its vigor and vitality.” Hence the confessional formulas of Christian churches include Mary, Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and “reflection about Mary ... serves to strengthen our belief that God shows his mercy ‘on those who fear him’ (Luke 1,50, the Magnificat).”

As expressed at Saragossa and Malta, roundtable participants at Kevelaer stressed again (par. 6) that Christian attitudes toward Mary and the saints are essentially directed to the praise of the eternal Father, with the Son, in the Holy Spirit: "Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the people of God on earth desire to unite their praise with Christ and with all who as the perfected ones belong to him."

A CONCLUDING REFLECTION

The agreed statements are evidence of a frank and friendly facing of difficulties and differences among Christians on the veneration of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The points of convergence have been comparatively few. There has been agreement on the Blessed Virgin's present intercessory role in the communion of saints, in union with the Risen Savior, and coming from her earthly association with her Son. More significant at the present state of ecumenical dialogue is the willingness to express even disagreements charitably and the resolution to continue the conversations.

Those who have taken part have done so under pressure of other Congress commitments, both in plenary sessions and in language groups, at both the Mariological and Marian components. The greatest possible care has been taken to provide not only the original agreed text (in French, as a rule), but also the various major translations. Even the translations have been normally reviewed by the entire body, e.g., the late John de Satgé and I worked on the English version from Malta, 1983. Master linguist, Pierre Masson, O.P., from French Canada, has served as secretary and assisted in this important task.

Footnotes have been kept to very few, but I owe grateful acknowledgment to a number of articles and their authors: in the first place, to Father Théodore A. Koehler, S.M., himself, who supplied many of the materials I used for the first draft of this paper which was given as a "communication" at the sixth international conference sponsored by the Ecumenical Society of the B.V.M., at Blackrock, Dublin, Ireland, April, 1984, and which the Society published as *Communications at the VIth E.S.B.V.M. International Congress. I. Post-conciliar Agreed Statements on Mariology*, specifically "Agreed Statements at International Mariological Congresses" (Wallington, Surrey, January, 1985).

Cándido Pozo, S.J., reported on Saragossa and Malta in the article "Dos declaraciones ecuménicas marianas. De Zaragoza (1979) a Malta (1983)," in *Scripta de Maria* (Saragossa) 7 (1984). The same volume of *Scripta de Maria* has the article by Pierre Masson, O.P., "La Madre de Dios en la Comunión de los Santos. La Declaración ecuménica del Congreso Mariológico de Malta, septiembre de 1983."

As would be expected, the ecumenical roundtables were reported in such scientific journals as *Marianum* and *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, and in the *Acta* of the Congresses themselves.