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Preface: The Cooperation of the Virgin Mary in Redemption

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THE COOPERATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN REDEMPTION

59th Annual Meeting of the Mariological Society of America

The 59th annual program of the Mariological Society of America took place, May 20-23, 2008, at Holy Cross Family Ministries (North Easton, Massachusetts). Fr. John Phalen, C.S.C, director of Holy Cross Family Ministries and the current president of the Mariological Society of America, together with HCFM associates, hosted the meeting, welcomed the participants, and, during the course of the meeting, provided information and exhibits on the legacy of their founder, Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. The Holy Cross Family Ministries continues to carry on the spirit of Fr. Peyton, as expressed in his words "The Family That Prays Together, Stays Together," and it is at nearby Stonehill College, in the cemetery of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, that Fr. Peyton is buried.

The opening ceremony was the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, with Seán Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M.Cap., presiding. In his homily, the cardinal spoke of the Virgin Mary's response to the angel at the Annunciation: her word of assent signified her total commitment; it was her *Jawort*. At the dinner following the Mass, the Mariological Society had the pleasure of conferring the Cardinal Wright Mariological Award on Dr. Ronald Novotny of Clearwater, Florida. Dr. Novotny, a practicing psychologist, and his wife Adrienne are co-directors of the School of Spirituality, sponsored by the Marian Servants of the Cenacle of Our Lady of Divine Providence in Clearwater, Florida, where he teaches courses on Marian spirituality. Dr. Novotny obtained the Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the International

Marian Research Institute (IMRI) with a study on the Annunciation as a "dialogic event," in which he drew upon the writings of Martin Buber and Hans Urs von Balthasar to explain the freedom of Mary's response. Recently, he wrote *Seeking the Face of Jesus in the Mysteries of the Rosary*.

"The Cooperation of the Virgin Mary in Redemption," the theme of the 2008 program, was the last of a series of annual programs, begun in 2004, devoted to the principal Marian doctrines. The focus of the 2004 program was "The Immaculate Conception: Calling and Destiny", marking the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma; the 2005 program was on the Assumption, "Mary, Eschatological Icon of the Church"; the 2006 program treated the Divine Maternity, "Theotokos, Mother of all People," and the 2007 program was on the "Virginity of Mary."

The presentations at this meeting on Mary's cooperation in redemption ranged from scriptural perspectives, through the ecumenical dialogue, and finally to the historic doctrinal formulations. Dr. Vincent Branick spoke of the notion of cooperation in salvation as found in the writings of the Apostle Paul where redemption was an incomprehensible mystery, the work of God the Father. It involved the death of Jesus, an event which is part of this sinful world which is passing away. The followers of Jesus share both in the cross and the resurrection of Christ. Mary provided the flesh which made possible Christ's death and his subsequent resurrection from the dead.

Dr. Robert Garófalo dealt with the Virgin Mary's active role in the drama of redemption as found in the New Testament. An influential book published in 1978, *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Catholic Scholars*, hardly considered attributing such a role to Mary. Dr. Garófalo examined the origin and also the current translations of the so-called "negative" Marian passages, especially those found in Mark's Gospel (e.g., 3:20-35), which appear to minimize Mary's role. But, other New Testament passages which speak of the wonders worked by persons of faith are applicable to the Virgin Mary, the one whose faith-filled assent made possible the saving event of our redemption.

Rev. Dr. Judith Marie Gentle began with a reference to the "checked history of our ecumenical efforts." She praised the 2005 ARCIC document, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, for its recognition of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption as "consonant" with the Scriptures, while lamenting a statement in the document which says that "a powerful impulse for the Reformation was a widespread reaction against devotional practices which approach Mary as mediatrix alongside Christ or sometimes even in his place." Dr. Gentle referred to recent interpretations of the English Reformation not as a reaction against medieval Marian devotion but rather as a violent disruption of devotion imposed on the people. In medieval England, images and reference to the Virgin Mary could be found in wayside chapels, churches, and devotional manuals. The writings of Cardinal Newman and others testify to the presence of Mary in English culture.

The next two speakers dealt with Mary's cooperation as developed in the Franciscan tradition. Fr. Angelo Geiger, F.I., read the paper prepared by his confrère Fr. Peter Fehlner, F.I. Fr. Fehlner wrote of the founders of the Franciscan school—Francis of Assisi, Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus—and of the three Franciscans who contributed much to the development of the Marian dogmas in the twentieth century: St. Maximilian Kolbe, O.F.M., Fr. Carlo Balić, O.F.M., and Fr. Juniper Carol, O.F.M. Dr. Mark Miravalle, founder and promoter of "Voice of the People for Mary Mediatrix," a movement founded to gather petitions for a papal definition of the dogma of Mary as Mediatrix, Advocate, and Co-redemptrix, spoke of the historical and doctrinal development of the titles.

Completing this program on Mary's cooperation in redemption was Richard Bulzacchelli's presentation which drew upon John Paul II's philosophical insights on participation as related to personhood. Proredemption was suggested as a fitting way of understanding Mary's participation in the work of Christ.

A standard feature of every meeting of the Mariological Society of America since 1968 was the "Survey of Mariology" by Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm. Fr. Carroll's presentation was delivered with eloquence, enthusiasm, insight, and wit; it began with brief reviews of three highly-recommended works (books

or articles) and then proceeded to a survey of publications from several fields—church documents, liturgy, devotion. Fr. Carroll died on November 15, 2008, at Carmel at Mission Valley, in Nokomis, Florida. He was a stalwart patron of the Mariological Society of America, attending its annual meetings beginning in 1950 and continuing for the next fifty-six years—a record to which few in any organization can lay claim.

Beginning with this issue of *Marian Studies*, a new feature will be the annual “Select Marian Bibliography.” Academic bibliographies are arranged in different ways—by subject, by language. For the next few issues, the “Select Marian Bibliography” will begin with Marian-related materials found in the general publications and journals and, in addition, will include the publications from the various Mariological societies (the French, with *Études Mariales*; the Spanish, with *Estudios Marianos*) and the Marian journals (the *Marianum* from the Pontifical Theological Faculty, Rome; *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, from the Claretians, Madrid; *Theotokos*, from the Italian interdisciplinary Mariological association; and the publications of the Ecumenical Societies of the Blessed Virgin Mary of England and the United States). Unfortunately, the materials from these Marian journals from Europe are not usually found in American bibliographical databases. The hope is that such an annual listing might make known the abundant literature which is available and may contribute to an integration of Marian themes into the greater theological panorama.

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Editor, *Marian Studies*