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Editor's Preface

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The sixtieth annual meeting of the Mariological Society of America was held May 26-29, 2009, at the Marywood Retreat and Conference Center, St. Johns, Florida. Administered by the Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine, the 100-acre retreat and conference center serves people by providing facilities, resources, and programs to aid spiritual renewal and faith development. The rural setting on the banks on the St. Johns River was an appropriate and fitting location to consider both the grandeur and simplicity of creation. We received a note of welcome from the Most Reverend Victor B. Galeone, bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine.

For the Mariological Society, whose very name suggests a doctrinal approach to theology, a program with the title "Telling Mary's Story" was an innovation, an approach which would have been considered hardly possible in the society's earlier history. "Telling Mary's Story" is an attempt at narrative theology, that is, relating the events of a life, in this case the Virgin Mary's, in such a way that the audience can in some way identify and resonate with the events recounted. Not unlike the parables of Jesus' preaching, the narrative approach presents points which in different ways may be applicable to various stages of our lives.

The Gospels present us with a few scenes from Mary's life. But, as the Gospel of John acknowledges, the written texts were not the sole or final account of the events of saving history. In his article, Fr. François Rossier speaks of intertextuality, which was the practice of developing or explaining within the Scriptures a text already stated. Intertextuality is especially evident in texts dealing with the Virgin Mary: one only needs to compare the earliest reference to Mary in the New Testament (Galatians) with the texts found later in Luke and John. Intertextuality of Marian texts developed in early apocryphal

writings, and biographies of the Virgin Mary began to appear early in the first millennium.*

This issue of *Marian Studies*, "Telling Mary's Story," begins with three presentations dealing with the lives of Mary written in Christianity's first millennium. Dr. Stephen Shoemaker treats the early apocrypha and Maximus the Confessor's *Life of the Virgin*, the latter considered the earliest complete biography of the Virgin, an influential work in the history of Marian literature. Fr. Luigi Gambero presents various "Lives of Mary," the first by John the Geometer, and then those by Epiphanius the Monk and Simeon Metaphrase. Dr. Deyanira Flores describes the Marian biographies written from the second to the end of the fifteenth century, dividing them into four sections: the apocrypha, the Byzantine writings, the medieval mystics, and other biographical accounts. Fr. Lawrence Frizzell presents references from Jewish literature on the life of the Mary.

In medieval works, accounts of Mary's life are found in songs, miracle tales, narratives and dramas—all categories of "imaginative theology." Dr. Judith M. Davis reports on the life of Mary as found in two such works: Gautier de Coinci's *Chants et miracles de la Vierge* and the Norman clerics' work *L'Advocacie Nostre Dame*. Marlyn H. Fedewa presents new perspectives on Mary of Agreda's *Mystical City of God*, and Sr. Donna Maria Moses presents some insights on Our Lady's life from medieval Dominican mystics.

Two presentations deal with Mary's life as found in iconography and art. Fr. Dorian Llywelyn spoke of the seven classical icons of the Orthodox Church, visual expressions of the twelve great feasts of Orthodoxy. Elissa Auberbach analyzed how the

*In the Marian Library of the University of Dayton, a gift that has frequently been presented is Abbé Orsini's *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, ... with the History of Devotion to Her ... Completed by the Traditions of the East...* This large and often handsomely printed and bound work, with many full-page illustrations, was originally published in France in 1838. There were over two hundred editions of this work (one hundred thirty-one in English), with slight variations in the content and illustrations. The work was strongly promoted by Catholics in the United States—perhaps by door-to-door book salesman, not uncommon in the nineteenth century. The Marian Library has received over seventy copies of this work, many of which were considered family heirlooms handed down over several generations.

Preface

vii

city of Haarlem was influenced by Hendrick Goltzius's *Life of the Virgin*.

There were two presentations on Mary's life in film, the first dealing with the twentieth century (by Michael Duricy), and the second, on the twenty-first century (Dr. Catherine O'Brien). Fr. François Rossier's contribution began with a section on intertextuality and then reported on Mary's life as found in recent American novels. Fr. Bertrand Buby presented images of Mary as found in works of three contemporary theologians—Sister Elizabeth Ann Johnson, Dr. Beverley Roberts Gaventa, and his own work.

Finally, the International Academic Marian Bibliography for 2008-2009 includes references, not only as found in the readily available research resources, but also from the European Mariological societies and journals whose articles do not make their way into the larger databases. A perusal of the articles will show the great differences of interest and approach to Marian studies found in different cultures.

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