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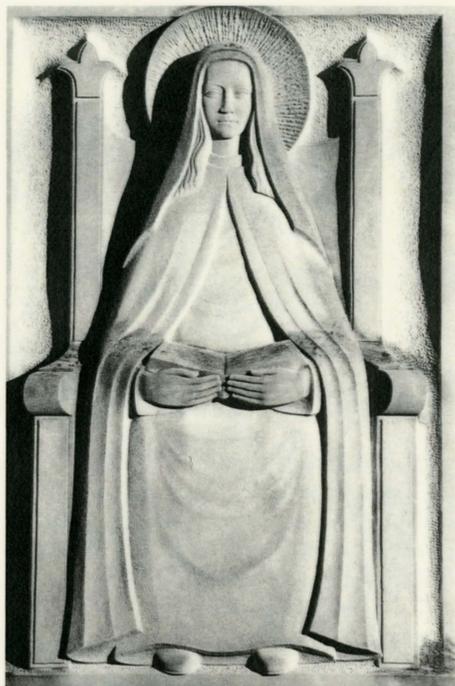
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MARIAN LIBRARY STUDIES

New Series 31

2013-2014



Mary in the Consecrated Life

THE MARIAN CHARISM IN THE CHURCH

HISTORICAL CONCRETIZATION OF THE MARIAN CHARISM

THE APOSTOLIC DYNAMISM OF THE MARIAN CHARISM

ISSN 0076-4434

MARIAN LIBRARY STUDIES, New Series (1969-), is a multi-lingual journal published by the Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute. It fosters original and scholarly studies on "the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the mystery of Christ and his Church" (*Lumen gentium*, Chap. 8). The editors of *Marian Library Studies* seek to integrate Marian studies in and with modern spheres of research, reflecting doctrinal, biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, anthropological, and cultural dimensions. Of particular concern to the editors of *Marian Library Studies* is the encouragement of young and unpublished Marian scholars.

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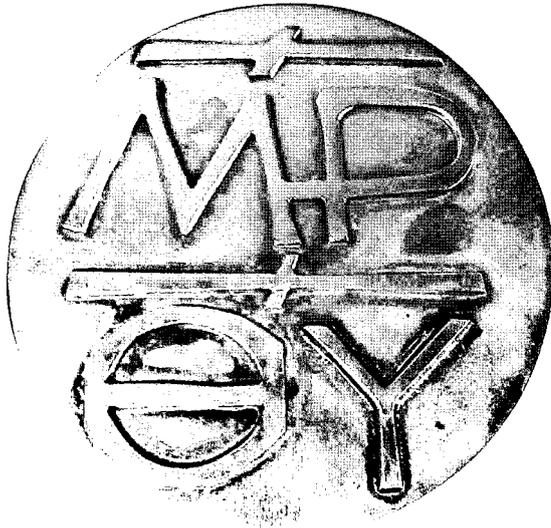
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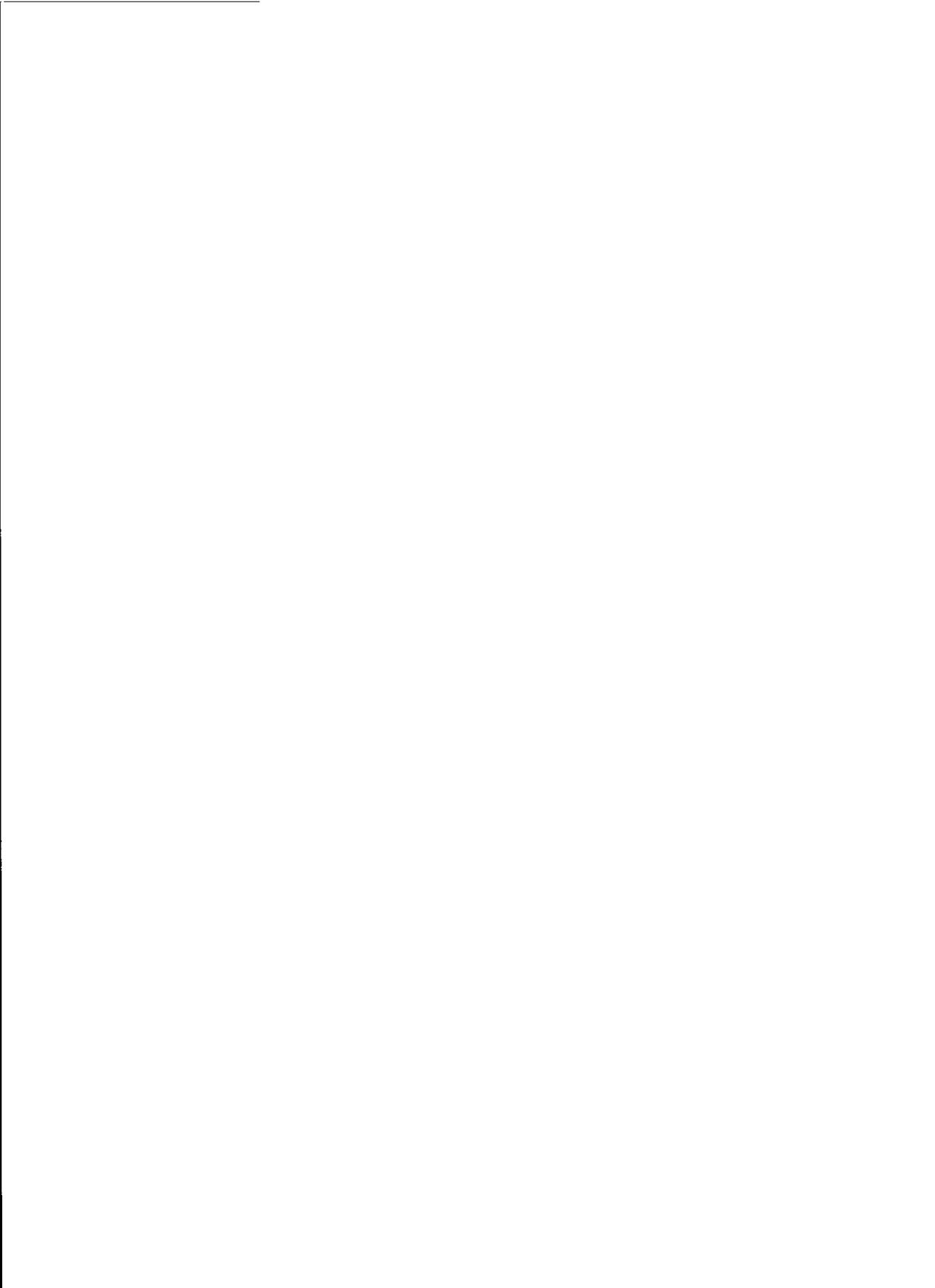
FROM MONOGRAM TO MISSION

**THE GIFTS OF OUR LADY TO HER FOLLOWERS
TO ENHANCE VISIBILITY, ATTRACT ATTENTION,
AND KEEP THE MEMORY OF THEIR CHARISM ALIVE.**



**The Marian Library Medal.
Joe Barish, ca 1965-70**

**Intermingled with the texts of this volume you will find illustrations
of some of Mary's gifts to individuals and religious communities.**



MARY IN THE CONSECRATED LIFE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton organizes every other year a symposium on specific mariological issues. These encounters which take place at the end of July are geared toward special groups of persons or deal with themes of a certain prominence and actuality. Some time ago, the symposium addressed the issue of a fifth Marian dogma. More recently the symposium took stock of recent developments in Marian studies, and their meaning for the new evangelization. Centering on specific groups within the Church, the 2008 symposium addressed the parish situation, and reached out to pastors and parish ministers. In similar fashion, the 2010 symposium targeted religious life and its Marian dimension and charisms.

The rationale for this thematic concentration lies in the widespread observation that Mary's place in classical orders and new institutes of consecrated life devoted to her seems to be wanting. None of these institutions contests the objective importance of the Marian charism for their history and identity. Granted various degrees of commitment to the Mother of the Lord due to the time and circumstances of their foundation, they all profess loyalty and indebtedness to the one who is the ultimate model of Christian life. What then do we mean by "wanting"? Religious life, like many other segments of the Church, had to adjust to the theological and pastoral challenges of Vatican II. This led to much soul-searching and debate over identity and mission. For many religious orders and congregations these efforts jelled and took form in updated constitutions or declarations of foundational intent. By the same token, the Marian charism had to be updated and was given an adjusted and sometimes new theological expression or context. To which extent were these mostly welcome changes understood and assimilated by the membership of the various institutes? Add to this the drastic changes in the demographic configuration of most institutes, in particular the dwindling numbers in the Northern hemisphere and the fledgling renaissance in the Southern hemisphere. This ongoing process, which in more than one way represents a qualitative shift, implies a new kind of adaptation which comes in the guise of inculturation, a term with many and sometimes confusing meanings. What does the Marian charism become in this process?

It is for all of these reasons that the Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute wanted to offer a time of reflection on Mary's place in religious life. In fact, the symposium was to be only the first stage of a more comprehensive endeavor. The proceedings of the symposium, the presentations and debate, are destined to become a platform for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the variety and riches of the Marian charism for religious life. Our ambition is to engage in a dialogue with the representatives of the many institutes of consecrated life which claim a Marian inspiration for their spirituality and apostolic mission. The goal is not only to further knowledge about Mary and her place in these religious communities, but also to generate love and admiration for her. Voices are heard, maybe pessimistic ones, which insinuate that there might exist a certain *anomia* among consecrated men and women; meaning that the name of Mary may be prominently featured on paper but may not be as deeply carved into the hearts of people. Accordingly the methodology chosen for this event centered on two main considerations and developments: one, sketching out major historical forms of Mary's presence in religious life; the other pinpointing foundational expressions of the Marian charism common, in part at least, to all institutions of consecrated life.

The general introduction (F. Rossier, S.M.) attempted to clarify the notion of charism defining it as to content and recipient. Thus, Mary's very life and mission were identified as personalized charism. The following presentations developed central features of three periods of Marian religious communities. The Marian profile of classical orders (V. Wiseman, O.P.) focused on Benedictines, Cistercians, Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, Servites, and Jesuits. Dealing not only with the original Marian inspiration of their founders and subsequent developments, the presentation highlighted also contemporary clarifications and developments of their Marian profile. In the second presentation a heroic attempt was made (Th. Thompson, S.M.) to design a common Marian profile for the sheer endless number of congregations founded in the 17th to 19th centuries. Special attention was given to *re-receiving* of the Marian charism and tradition by designating them as the outgrowth of "the love of Mary at the heart of the Church." The author of the third historical presentation (Sr. D. Peters, Schönstatt) described the role of Mary in the new ecclesial communities according to knowledge, education, and apostolic mission. Both novelty and continuity of these recent foundations were object of the author's intense scrutiny.

The second half of the symposium shifted attention to common characteristics of the Marian charism, specifically the nature and place of Marian spirituality, the apostolic dimension of the Marian charism, and Mary's place

in evangelization. Highlighting both the formative character of Mary's presence and the dynamism of her missionary profile, the three presentations dealt with some of the challenges of contemporary culture and how they can be met thanks to a faithful recourse to the foundational realities of the Marian charism. Thus, assessing apostolic boldness and the Marian charism of consecrated life (B. Buby, S.M.), the author identifies scripture as the "soul of Marian dedication," namely in the scenes of the Annunciation, Visitation, and Pentecost. The spiritual dimension of the Marian charism (J. Roten, S.M.) opens the self-understanding of the religious for a life "in Mary's image and likeness," and prepares his/her apostolic and missionary commitment. Taking into account new developments in religious geography, the shift towards the Southern hemisphere, specific attention was accorded to the rapport between the Marian charism and its missionary impact at different periods of Church history. *Mary's place in Evangelization* (Sr. Celia Chua, MIC) studies the Marian presence and dynamism in three successive missionary movements from the 19th to the 21st century, and locates Mary's influence as "guide for the transformation" of today's Church and world. In all of the presentations constant referrals were made to the Christo – and ecclesio – centric foundations of the Marian charism, re-affirming thus what John Paul II writes in *Vita Consecrata*: "Thus do consecrated persons become witnesses and instruments of the Incarnation and the vitality of the Spirit. This task of theirs is one of the most significant manifestations of that motherhood which the Church, in the image of Mary, exercises on behalf of her children" (VC 97).

A symposium on *Mary in the Consecrated Life* would not be complete without the prayerful celebration of Mary's presence in the Eucharist and the daily prayer of the Hours. A *Marian Hymn Festival* (choral and readings), a presentation on *Mary in the Visual Arts Today* (Marian filmography by M. Duricy), and *Marian Imagery of Religious Orders and Congregations* (J. Roten) rounded off this rich and well attended study program and celebration of Mary's historical, formative, and apostolic presence in religious life.

