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Editor's Preface

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The 62nd annual meeting of the Mariological Society of American (MSA) took place at the Franciscan Renewal Center (Scottsdale, AZ), May 17-20, 2011. The historic southwest was an appropriate location for a meeting dealing with the early history of Marian devotion in the United States. At the Franciscan Renewal Center we enjoyed beautiful Arizona weather on a property offering many places of reflection—a prayer labyrinth, Stations of the Cross, and a healing garden. We were welcomed to the Diocese of Phoenix by Bishop Thomas Olmsted, who graciously changed his schedule so that he could be with us for the Eucharist on Thursday, May 19, 2011.

This was the first of two programs devoted to the history of Marian devotion in the United States and Canada. (The 2012 program will deal with Marian devotion in the United States and Canada from 1900 to the present.) This year's program contains three presentations on the evangelization of peoples in early Hispanic culture (two related to Our Lady of Guadalupe and one to the early Franciscan missions in California); one presentation on the Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, known as the "Lily of the Mohawks"; a presentation on the shrine of Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna, New York; one on Adele Brise, the recipient of the message of our Lady in 1859 in rural Wisconsin, later the site of a shrine to Our Lady of Good Help; and, finally, a study on the evolution of the symbol of the "Heart of Mary" from the nineteenth century to the present.

Lynn Marie Busch spoke on the Marian spirituality of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680), canonized by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. Along with the Virgin Mary, Saint Kateri is the co-patroness of the United States Association of Consecrated Virgins. Born in Auriesville, Kateri lived the first twenty years of her life along the Mohawk River in upstate New York. Later,

she moved to Canada. In imitation of Mary, she chose to lead a life of holiness and virginity.

Two presentations dealt with the influence of Our Lady of Guadalupe on prehistoric cultures. Fr. Emery de Gaál spoke of the two "Guadalupes": the old Guadalupe (1314) of Extremadura, Spain, which held a venerable position in Spanish devotional history in the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and the new Guadalupe of Tepeyac, Mexico (1513). The word *guadalupe* had a similar meaning for the native peoples of both Spain and Mexico and may have served as a bridge spanning the continents. Richard Bulzacchelli spoke of figures in ancient Aztec and Nahua cultures and how the colors and symbols of the garments of Our Lady at Guadalupe transliterated the Gospel story of the victory over Leviathan, the ancient serpent, into the Aztec context, wherein the Gospel would signify liberation from a culture of human sacrifice.

Bro. Lawrence Scrivani, S.M., spoke of the early evangelization of "new" California in 1769 by the Franciscans (eventually comprising twenty-one missions). The missionaries, among them Junípero Serra, established a program of evangelization known as *Doctrina Christiana*, a program which included prayers, songs, instructions, processions, and the central symbols of the Christian life. Throughout the program, the Virgin Mary was seen as part of the Christian life.

Fr. Richard Gribble, C.S.C., spoke of Fr. Nelson Baker (declared "Venerable" by Benedict XVI) and a well-known site of pilgrimage for Catholics in the 1930s and 1940s—the Basilica of Our Lady of Victory in Lackawanna, New York. Fr. Baker, a priest of the Diocese of Buffalo, was responsible for this magnificent Marian shrine and for the two orphanages attached to the shrine. He possessed an acute business acumen and good organization skills which enabled him to be an advocate for the poor, a "Father to the fatherless."

Seminarian Edward Looney spoke of Adele Brise, who in 1859 received from the Virgin Mary a message which changed the course of her life. In response to the Virgin Mary's request, Adele devoted the rest of her life to catechetical instruction. On December 8, 2010, Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin, issued the Decree of Authenticity of the Apparitions

of 1859 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. Bishop Ricken stated that “the events, apparitions and locutions given to Adele Brise” are “worthy of belief (although not obligatory) by the Christian faithful.” This was the first Marian apparition in the United States to receive episcopal approval.

Professor Wendy M. Wright spoke of the transformation of the symbolism of the Heart of Mary associated with the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a religious congregation founded in Spain and now with many communities in southern California. Since the nineteenth century, and especially after Vatican II, the apostolic work of the Sisters and the character of the congregation underwent significant changes. The “kaleidoscopic heart” of Mary has become a sign of generosity and compassion, of solidarity with the poor and outcasts.

Finally, the “International Academic Marian Bibliography, 2010-2011” includes references not only as found in available research resources, but also from the European Mariological societies and journals whose articles frequently do not make their way into the larger databases. A perusal of the articles listed there will show the great differences to Marian studies found in different cultures.

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