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### Report, 1992-93: New England Region

Matthew M. Morry

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## REPORT, 1992-93: NEW ENGLAND REGION

The New England Region of the Mariological Society of America held its Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 24, 1992, at Providence College, Providence, RI. The Reverend Matthew F. Morry, O.P., S.T.D., director of the New England Region and professor of Mariology at Providence College, opened the meeting at 10:00 A.M. The Most Reverend George H. Pearce, S.M., D.D., offered the opening prayer.

The Keynote Speaker was the Reverend Walter T. Brennan, O.S.M., professor at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, IL. The title of his address was "Taking *Marialis cultus*, no. 37, Seriously: The Reform of Marian Devotions in the American Church Today."

Father Brennan cited the purpose of *Marialis cultus*: to facilitate and motivate certain programs for the whole Church, embracing its total Christian life. Of great importance among these programs is the role of prayer.

The speaker noted that there is need to emphasize concrete life along with the speculations of theology. Some theologians reflect in an aura of isolation from human beings and their social/cultural context. Happily, Pope John XXIII restored some of the balance to intellectual reflection, aided by Vatican II's emphasis to return to "real" life and its wisdom.

Concrete life is the mode of living within the social, psychic, physical interactions. It is upon this that we reflect. Our minds and human structures relate, now, to the existential situation of human existence: the universe, people, the individual. This kind of knowledge is symbolic. It is knowledge that is concrete, polyvalent, socially-based. It is this type of knowledge we use for our examples, stories and diverse modes of communication.

As we interact with such concrete elements we must do so within the context of specific cultures. For cultures are the bases for much in the character of human activity, the formation of consciences and, indeed, of religious expressions. Any consideration of Mary and her relationship to Jesus must be considered and understood in this intellectual, cultural context. Thus, relative to devotion to Mary for Americans today, it is necessary 1) to understand the role of Mary in the Gospel; 2) to recognize what our own cultural religious symbols are; and 3) to relate the prior two so that they express in an authentic fashion the Catholic faith in its tradition and substance, so that Mary is seen as "the mirror of our expectations."

Following an active discussion, a Marian Liturgy was celebrated in Aquinas Chapel by the Most Reverend George H. Pearce, S.M., D.D. The homilist was the Reverend Thomas L. Fallon, O.P., professor of theology at Providence College. In his homily, "Mary, Instrument of the Holy Spirit," Father Fallon offered a reflection upon the incident of the marriage feast of Cana (Jn. 2:1-11). It is an incident with significant signs and symbols. Mary is the maid-servant of the Lord, docile to the Holy Spirit. Jesus reads the signs of the times; He recognizes that it is time to manifest to those closest to Him the hidden power that is His. Now is the time to entrust

Himself to His Mother. In this, Mary is the instrument of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had come to save the whole world. So, He revealed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. Thus, Mary is the true underground spring of the Spirit of God.

Luncheon followed the Marian Liturgy in the Mural Lounge of Raymond Hall. A brief business meeting followed the luncheon. Fr. Morry announced that the Mariological Society of America would hold its Annual Meeting at Providence College on May 27 and 28, 1993. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 P.M.

MATTHEW F. MORRY, O.P.

*Director, New England Region, MSA*