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THE CARDINAL WRIGHT MARIOLOGICAL AWARD

Citation

One of the purposes of The Mariological Society of America is to stimulate scholars to penetrate always deeper into the mystery of Mary in order to discover further insights relative to her unique position in the overall plan of salvation. Consonant with this noble end, the Society frequently honors one of its members who not only has rendered notable services in the area of Marian theology, but who also gives promise of further accomplishments in the field. Among the several candidates considered by the *ad hoc* committee to receive this year's Cardinal Wright Mariological Award, the selection fell on the Reverend James T. O'Connor of Yonkers, New York.

Father O'Connor was born in White Plains, N.Y., in 1939. He studied at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y., where he was ordained to the holy priesthood on May 28, 1966. From 1966 to 1969 he was assigned to Sts. Peter and Paul parish in the South Bronx. Aware of the young levite's unusual qualifications, His Eminence Cardinal Cooke sent him in 1969 to the Angelicum University in Rome for post-graduate studies. It was there that he received his degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology in 1972 with a dissertation entitled *Medellín: The Theology of Liberation*. Returning to The United States in 1972, he became professor of dogmatic theology in St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie. He has been head of that department since 1979. For the past eight years he has worked on weekends as prison chaplain at Taconic State Correctional Facility, thus tempering his strenuous intellectual pursuits with a modicum of pastoral endeavor.

Father O'Connor has been a member of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars since its inception in 1977. He has enriched

various publications and scholarly journals with thoughtful articles on Our Blessed Lady, Christology, marriage, and ecclesiology. His book entitled *The Father's Son* (St. Paul's Editions, 1984) has deservedly received the highest praise, particularly owing to the remarkable erudition displayed by the author. His latest monograph deals with *The Gift of Infallibility* (St. Paul's Editions, 1985), a translation of, and 'commentary on, Bishop Gasser's *relatio* on that subject during the First Vatican Council.

Father O'Connor has been a very enterprising member of our Society since 1978; he was a member of the Board of Directors between 1980 and 1983, and now honors us as our Vice-President. The very year he joined our group in 1978 Father O'Connor read a paper at our national convention in Baltimore, Md., entitled *Mary, Mother of God, and Contemporary Challenges*. This was soon followed by other valuable contributions, namely: *Modern Christologies and Mary's Place Therein: Dogmatic Aspect*, in 1981; *Mary and the Eucharist*, in 1983; and the one he is reading at this convention, titled *Mary in Lumen Gentium*, #55-59. In this connection we note with deep satisfaction that a salient characteristic of any and everything authored by Father O'Connor is his scrupulous adherence to the canons of doctrinal orthodoxy and his unswerving loyalty to the *magisterium* of the Vicar of Christ.

The very fact that in the brief span of six years Father O'Connor has been invited to address our national convention four times is already highly significant. It is a tangible proof that our Society fully recognizes the many talents of this gifted theologian and is anxious to make us all beneficiaries of his vast learning.

And today The Mariological Society of America wishes to add yet another unequivocal witness to its recognition by bestowing on him the coveted CARDINAL WRIGHT MARIOLOGICAL AWARD for outstanding contributions to the field of Mariology. It is an honor he richly deserves—an honor which, we trust, will spur him on to even greater achievements in the province of the sacred discipline having for its object the Blessed Mother of God and our Mother.