

Marian Studies

Volume 38 *Proceedings from the Thirty-Eighth National Convention of the Mariological Society of America held in Washington, D.C.*

Article 8

1987

Report on the 1987 Conventio (Washington, D.C.)

Théodore Koehler

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Koehler, Théodore (1987) "Report on the 1987 Conventio (Washington, D.C.)," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 38, Article 8.

Available at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol38/iss1/8

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Library Publications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Studies by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

REPORT ON THE 38TH CONVENTION

(June 2-3, 1987: Washington, D. C.)

Some sixty participants responded to the invitation of Archbishop James Hickey of Washington and gathered at the Washington Retreat House (4000 Harewood Road, N.E., Washington, D.C.) for the 38th Annual National Convention of the Mariological Society of America.

The Board of Directors met on June 1 in the evening to discuss the future activities of the Mariological Society. All members were present: Most Rev. Austin B. Vaughan, Episcopal Chairman; Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., President Emeritus; Rev. James T. O'Connor, President; Rev. William J. Cole, S.M., Vice-President; Rev. Theodore Koehler, S.M., Secretary; Rev. Albert Bourke, O.C.D., Treasurer; the non-Officers: Rev. George F. Kirwin, O.M.I.; Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M.; Rev. Charles W. Neumann, S.M.; Rev. William L. Lahey, S.S.C.; Bro. John Samaha, S.M.; and Rev. James Parker. We had an invited guest: Rev. Roger C. Roensch, Director of Spiritual Programs and Pilgrimages at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Secretary began the meeting with some communications. First, he mentioned members who could not come and who sent us a letter of excuse. Michael Callanan, who is in a wheelchair, asked our prayers for a possible surgery in the next weeks. Father Alfred Boeddeker, O.F.M., was celebrating his golden jubilee as priest. Fathers Bertrand Buby, Provincial of the Marianists of Cincinnati, and James Heft, Marianist, could not come because they were preparing a Provincial Chapter. The Secretary proposed to send a card of congratulations to Father Boeddeker; the proposal was immediately accepted. The Secretary also received a letter from the International Commission on English in the Liturgy; John R. Page thanked the members of the Mariological Society who sent their

observations and corrections about the translation of the *Ordo Coronandi Imaginem Beatae Mariae Virginis*.

The discussion of our future activities focused immediately on the Marian Year, beginning June 7, Pentecost Sunday, and ending August 15, 1988, Feast of the Assumption. The Board first decided to write a letter to the Pope to express our gratitude for the proclamation of the Marian Year and for the encyclical on Mary, "Mother of the Redeemer." Father Charles Neumann accepted to write the letter so that it could be submitted to the General Assembly on Wednesday afternoon.

Then began a long discussion on the participation of our Mariological Society in the activities of the Marian Year. The Board decided to change the topics of our convention in 1988. At this convention we will study the recent encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, and take for 1989 instead the topics on *Marialis Cultus* which were previously established. Another proposition was accepted: the Secretary would invite our members to give their areas of expertise for possible contributions—Marian studies, publications, or conferences—that might be requested by various parties or dioceses. Several members of our Society were already engaged in activities promoting the Marian Year. Our President, Father James O'Connor, received a letter from His Grace Edward D. Head, Bishop of Buffalo, who was nominated by the bishops of America as Chairman of the Marian Year. In this letter our Society is invited to the Diocese of Buffalo for the MSA convention held during the Marian Year. Brother John Samaha, Secretary of the Western Regional Unit, had already sent out various indications concerning the anniversaries commemorated within the Marian Year: in particular, the baptism of St. Vladimir and his people in the Dnieper at Kiev in 987-88, and the apparition in Fatima in 1917; this latter anniversary was celebrated by MSA/West last May 13 with a pilgrimage ceremony at the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace in Santa Clara, led by Cardinal Jaime Sin of the Philippines.

It was mentioned that two years ago, His Beatitude, Msgr. Beltritti, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, began a series of pastoral letters in

preparation for the year 2000, the 20th Centennial of the Birth of Christ; he calls it "Marian Advent." Two countries have followed this initiative—France and Canada; for fifteen years (1985 to 2000), each year will be dedicated to a mystery of the rosary. This is done to follow the suggestion of the Holy Father to begin preparations already for this extraordinary millenium, a suggestion he made very explicit in his homily at Lourdes, August 15, 1983.

MSA member Father James McCurry, O.F.M.Conv., met with Cardinal Bernardin in Chicago for approval of a National Marian Year Congress to be sponsored by the Militia Immaculatae. It will be held at the end of the Marian Year, August 13-15, 1988, at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, Illinois. Planners have foreseen a convention with three parts: 1) August 13 and morning of August 14: a theological part on the Universal Mediation of Mary; 2) August 14 in the afternoon: special study groups—Marian Groups, Religious Congregations; 3) August 15: in the morning—festive celebrations, programs for ethnic groups; in the afternoon—the Solemn Eucharist for the Feast of the Assumption to end the Marian Year. The newly-founded MSA Midwest Regional Unit, under the direction of Father Eamon R. Carroll, organized a conference on "Mary, Woman of Faith," held on May 16 at Aylesford Carmelite Spiritual Center, Darien, Illinois. Under Father Frederick Miller's leadership a New Jersey Regional Unit has recently been launched; recruitment and plans for meetings on the Marian Year and a study day for priests on *Redemptoris Mater* have been foreseen. Another MSA member, Reverend Roger Roensch of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., outlined some activities that the Shrine will promote for the Marian Year, especially the Rosary of the Pope to be televised, Saturday, June 7. We all now know the great success of this ceremony that coordinated the prayers of sixteen shrines all over the world, with the Pope leading this universal rosary from Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

The Board then discussed various proposals about our participation in the activities of the Marian Year. Could we have our con-

vention in 1988 at an earlier date—at the beginning of January—so we could publish a special issue of *Marian Studies* on *Redemptoris Mater* early next year? Or, should we retain our ordinary meeting date in early June or late May? The Board discussed at length these two proposals because it seemed necessary that our learned Society should take immediate action to promote scientific research on the Marian doctrine and devotion based on *Redemptoris Mater* for the needs of the Marian Year. The Secretary explained the difficulties of rapid publication of such a work. Since we could not come to a decision, the Board formed a little committee to study the question and prepare a final proposal for the General Assembly on Wednesday afternoon. The committee was to meet under the direction of our President; Rev. Parker, Rev. Bourke, and Bro. Samaha were members of this committee.

The Board also discussed places for future meetings; Dallas and St. Louis were again mentioned. But the Board retained also the possibility to hold a convention in the West, since this region has had such a good development; if not in 1988, we could at least think of 1989 for a convention in the West.

The Board decided the following program for our 1988 convention which will be centered on the encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*. First, we will have a Presidential Address. The keynote address will then be given by Bishop Vaughan, our Episcopal Chairman, on "Mary, Dawn of the Redemption." The second topic will be "Mary, Pilgrim of Faith, and the Church in Pilgrimage." The third topic will be "Mary and Ecumenism." The fourth topic will be "Mary and Women." Finally, as has become our custom, we will end the session with the "Survey of Recent Mariology" by Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.

Father Kirwin mentioned the two coming meetings of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the U.S.; these are held on the first Saturday of October and May. The Secretary made the proposal, readily accepted, that our *Marian Studies* 37 (1986), on *Lumen Gentium*, might be offered to an editor for a new printing. The Board also agreed to the proposal made by Mr. Blake

Ratcliffe, publisher representative for University Microfilms International, that our publication, *Marian Studies*, could be reproduced and distributed in microfilm or microfiche formats. This would involve a contract which should be studied by a lawyer. The Secretary was charged with arranging that agreement.

The meeting ended at 10:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 2

After breakfast and registration at 10:00 a.m., our President, Rev. James O'Connor, introduced His Grace Most Reverend Thomas W. Lyons, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, D.C., who began our first session with a prayer and welcomed the participants in the name of Archbishop Hickey. Sister Frances Rooney, Director of the Washington Retreat House, welcomed us in the name of the community of the Sisters of Atonement. Then our Vice-President, Reverend William Cole, Marianist, professor at IMRI (the pontifical International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton), introduced our first speaker, Reverend Bertrand de Margerie, the well-known French Jesuit, who has written numerous studies on the Sacred Heart, the Holy Trinity, Mary, and our ecumenical needs. Since January 1987, invited to the United States, he has been teaching at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Father De Margerie presented a brilliant report on "Mary in Latin American Liberation Theologies." He avoided a polemical presentation and gave us a synthesis of the positive elements that characterize the Marian thought of seven theologians, representative of the theology of liberation in Latin America and in the States. Basing himself on these theologians, our speaker first analyzed popular Latin American Marian devotion: Mary is not only the glorious mother of God, but the mother of all mankind, the advocate of the poor, a woman of the people. This corresponds to the papal message at Puebla, completing the teachings of Medellin and Vatican II with a more popular mariology, a doctrine from and for the poor. In a renewed ecclesiology—the doctrine of the Church as People of God—Mary per-

sonifies the mercy of God, his preferential option for the poor, for those who suffer. Mary is our model of commitment in faith and discipleship towards Christ. Mary, in her compassion, offers us the type of the poor who suffer, oppressed by the injustices of our world. Jesus through the "Behold, your mother!" gave us his own mother as our mother. This is the New Creation; it is in this sense that Mary is a symbol of liberation and reconciliation in Latin America and for all the world. The speaker gave his negative and positive appreciation of such a theology. He indicated some omissions, especially an insufficient deepening in the understanding of Mary's role in Christ's work of spiritual liberation of sinful mankind; he pointed out that true liberation through Mary becomes, without alienation, a reconciliation. We see this in the message of Guadalupe.

In the afternoon, at our second session, Reverend Bernard Confer, O.P., chaplain of the Priory of the Dominican Sisters in Buffalo, New York, introduced his colleague, Reverend Matthew Morry, O.P., professor at the Dominican School in Providence, Rhode Island. The topic, "The Magnificat: Reflections," allowed the speaker to comment on the song of Mary in view of other approaches to this text, but with his personal, in-depth understanding, nourished by years of study and meditation.

Mary, in her praises to God, opens to us her heart, her experience of God, our Savior, as her child. She is type and mother of the Church, our model, the Woman of Faith. Luke relied on witnesses and demonstrated how the promises of the Old Testament were realized in the New Testament. Luke, therefore, sees the Magnificat in the history of salvation and shows how the role of Mary is integrated in this history. We should view the Magnificat in its context: the visit to Elizabeth. Mary proclaims the praises of God in the name of the poor (the Anawim), for the new world, the world to come. Mary is the joyful woman of faith for all generations; she models the eschatological joy which comes for the poor and through the poor. Luke does not show an abstraction of the poor, but a person, Mary. The Magnificat proclaims that the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled; the Kingdom is at hand. The prophecies of Isaiah are

emphasized; God is the God of the poor and even of the oppressed: the cry of the poor goes to God. Through a prophetic Magnificat, God reveals his intervention in our existence: for the poor, for the "remnant" which is the Church. Mary is a prophet for today, for every age.

At 4:30 p.m., we gathered at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, for a concelebrated Eucharist. His Excellency Austin B. Vaughan, Auxiliary Bishop of New York and our Episcopal Chairman, presided and gave the homily. Afterwards, we gathered again at the Retreat House for a happy hour followed by dinner.

Wednesday, June 3

The last day of the convention began with a concelebrated Eucharist at 7:45 a.m., presided over again by Bishop Vaughan who also gave the homily. At 9:00 a.m., Reverend Michael Griffin, O.C.D., of the Carmelite Monastery in Washington, D.C., presented our third speaker, Reverend J. Armand Robichaud, Marist, from Harper Woods, Michigan. The speaker, who spent considerable time in the missions, gave us a very up-to-date report on "Mary and the Missions Today." Using the recent documents of the Church on the missions and also his own experience, the speaker first gave the theological foundations of missionary work; then he showed how Mary relates to the missions, especially in the areas that are currently under stress in the modern missionary effort. Finally, he gave the example of the Marian dimension as seen by the Marists, his own Congregation, in their missionary efforts. The foundation of the Church's missionary labors is in God's love, sending his own Son and his Spirit. Its beginning is described in the Acts of the Apostles: the first part of the history of the missions. Mary was present in this praying and missionary church, as she was present in the life of Jesus, the first missionary. The recent encyclical, "Mother of the Redeemer," insists on the unique presence of the mother of Christ in the history of the Church. Father Robichaud quoted

various texts of the documents on the missions and liturgical texts showing how the Church acknowledges the present role of Mary in the missionary church. The Pope, in his travels, insists on this presence; in all his travels he recommends the various countries to the prayer of Mary, Mother of the Church. Describing specific aspects of modern missionary apostolic work, Father Robichaud emphasized five features: 1) inculturation and adaptation, 2) involvement of the laity, 3) preferential option for the poor, 4) evangelization by witnessing, 5) evangelization-and/or-development. In all these approaches he showed how Mary, Mother and Queen of the Missions, is our help. At the end of his paper, Father Robichaud quoted the Curé d'Ars, "Many things would go along better in our lives, in our apostolate, if we gave Mary a greater place, her rightful place."

Dr. John F. Britt, professor in the School of Education at the University of Dayton, introduced our fourth speaker, the Reverend William L. Lahey, S.S.C., pastor of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Winter Haven, Florida. This report shed new light on the "Marian Theology and Devotion of 17th-Century Anglican Divines." England had been called the Dowry of St. Mary, but after Henry VIII, Marian doctrine rapidly lost its former importance in the Church of England. The situation worsened under Cromwell. We must see this historical context to appreciate the Marian doctrine of the Anglican divines during the 17th century. The speaker gave a remarkable anthology of texts showing that this period was not at all one of complete decline in Marian veneration. However, we must admit that these theologians were somewhat exceptional. For them, Mary was the most blessed Mother of God; she was the most holy one; she enjoyed a perfect happiness in heaven (in this regard, the book of Anthony Stafford, *The Female Glory*, is a beautiful homage to the Assumption of Mary and, in general, to all her life). The Anglican divines followed the Gospel: "All generations will call me blessed." They believed we have to honor Mary, and more than any other creature. In our prayers, though, we should, they taught, distinguish between advocacy and invocation. We offer to Mary a prayer of advocacy; we greet Mary, but we cannot in-

voke her. These theologians were afraid that such an invocation to a human person could be construed as an act of adoration. Despite their lack of comprehension of Mary's intercession for us, we must say that these theologians saved Marian devotion for the Church in England:

With disagreement on all sides, with monarchs who wanted political servants rather than spiritual leaders where the church was concerned, with a background of heretical teaching that could not but have tempered their theological curiosity in all areas, with a research posture that put holy scripture in a unique if not narrow position, and with the necessity of keeping their heads actually as well as literally—it is amazing not only that they were able to do so much, but also that they did it with such scholarly process. (p. 169)

In the afternoon, Father Walter T. Brennan, O.S.M., professor at DePaul University, Chicago, introduced our last speaker, Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., professor at Loyola University, also in Chicago, who presented his annual "Survey of Recent Mariology." As always, Father Eamon surveyed the international Marian literature.

Among the English publications he pointed out are versions of the recent encyclical, "Mother of the Redeemer" (for example, a supplement to the *Catholic Telegraph* [Cincinnati, Ohio] was prepared with an introduction by Father James Heft, S.M.). Among recent Marian books there is the excellent synthesis, *Madonna: Mary in the Catholic Tradition* by the Dominican, Reverend Frederick M. Jelly (Our Sunday Visitor Press); *In Praise of Our Lady*, a splendid collection of Marian poetry, edited by Elizabeth Jennings (Saint Bede's Publications); *Speak to Us of Mary* by the Dominican Jean Laurenceau, translated from the French (Franciscan Herald Printing, Chicago); "Mary and the Churches: Papers of the Chichester Congress of the Ecumenical Society of the B.V.M." (Columba Press, Dublin, Ireland), edited by its General Secretary, Alberic Stacpoole, O.S.B. (it can be ordered from him: 11 Belmont Road, Wellington,

Surrey, SM6 8TE England); *The Reed of God* by Caryll Houselander, a welcome reprint of the great classic (Christian Classics, Westminster, Maryland); *The Prayer for the Faithful for Weekdays*, (Costello, Long Island) by Reverend E. Griffin, O.Carm., with a dozen and more Marian entries by dates and seasons; *Mary: Servant, Mother, Woman: Theological Reflections on the Religious Title*, by Reverend Walter Brennan, O.S.M.

There are also various articles that can be obtained by procuring the periodicals in which they appeared: in *The Catechist* (April/May, 1987), "Mary and the Women's Movement" (p. 6) by James L. Heft, and also "The Marian Year and Hispanics" (p. 27) by Marina Herrera; in *PACE [Professional Approaches for Christian Educators/Winona, Minnesota]* (May, 1986), "Mary in Cross-Cultural Perspective" by Marina Herrera; in *Theology Today* (April, 1987), "May We Invoke the Saints" by Sister Elizabeth Johnson, S.C.J.; in *Our Lady's Digest* (P.O. Box 1022, Twin Lakes, Wisconsin 53181), a special number for 1987 (Vol. 42:1) has articles signed by Sister M. Jean Dorcy, Cardinal Ratzinger, Sister Barbara Ann, and Rev. Theodore Koehler ("The Christian Symbolism of the Rose").

Father Brennan responded to this year's "Survey" by expressing the appreciation of us all; he remarked: "I think that Father Carroll has done such a remarkable good work in this area, for American and all English-speaking Catholics for so many years, that it will be good to let him know how useful his work has been." Father Brennan ended by suggesting various questions we might ask ourselves:

- Do we use his list to help us in our spiritual reading?
- Do we use his survey to help us in our writing of parish bulletins or of articles or of books or of video scripts?
- Do we use his survey when recommending reading to other persons in catechesis or counseling or teaching?
- Do we make his survey familiar to others?

We ended the Convention as usual with a second business meeting. The President, Rev. James T. O'Connor, asked for a vote about the date of our next convention, since the Committee that discussed this matter had made no decision. The President explained the two proposals made at the Board Meeting: 1) a session advanced to January in order to publish our proceedings rapidly (i.e., during the Marian Year), 2) a session in June at the regular time. The assembly voted for a convention held June 1 and 2, 1988, with arrival on May 31. We can now also inform you that, at the invitation of His Excellency Edward D. Head, Bishop of Buffalo and U.S. Episcopal Chairman of the Marian Year, we will go to his diocese at Christ the King Seminary (East Aurora, New York). Father O'Connor then reminded us that the 10th International Mariological Congress, followed by the 17th International Marian Congress, would take place on September 11-20, 1987, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Kevelaer (in the diocese of Münster). The topic of the Mariological Congress is "The Marian Cult During the 19th and 20th Centuries until Vatican Council II Exclusively (1789-1962)"; the topic of the Marian Congress is "Mary, Mother of the Faithful."

Five reports were given about MSA regional activities: Rev. Matthew F. Morry, O.P., for the Rhode Island Region; V. Rev. Frederick Jelly, O.P., for the Dallas area; Rev. Msgr. Francis G. Wearden for the Houston area; Brother John Samaha, S.M., from California, for the Western Region; and Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., for the Midwest Region. The letter for the Pope was read by Rev. Charles Neumann, S.M., who had written it in the name of our Society; it was unanimously approved. The Treasurer informed us that we had \$17,587.84 in our bank account; the printing of *Marian Studies* 37 (1986) was covered.

The President expressed the Society's gratitude for the gifts and donations received over the past year. He urged prompt payment of the annual dues; the notice is sent out early in the year. The President then brought the meeting to a close, expressing the gratitude of the Society to the following persons:

- a) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Thomas W. Lyons, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, D.C., for welcoming us to the archdiocese and for offering the Opening Prayer at our first session;
- b) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Austin B. Vaughan, the Episcopal Chairman of our Society, whose presence at this convention was most appreciated;
- c) to Mr. Arthur W. Clinton, Jr., to Chaplain Lt. C. Alfred M. Croke, to the Very Reverend Stanley Matuszewski (editor of *Our Lady's Digest*) and to Very Reverend Walter Pelczynski for their generous contributions to our Society—and to many other benefactors not mentioned here by name to whom we also owe our gratitude, especially to our Supporting Members;
- d) to the Staff of the Washington Retreat House, especially to Sister Frances Rooney, S.A. (Director), for the warm and efficient hospitality extended to us these past two days;
- e) and, finally, to our distinguished speakers and reactors, for their scholarly papers and thought-provoking discussions.

There was no further business to transact, so Fr. O'Connor called for a motion of adjournment. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The convention ended at 3:00 p.m. with the singing of the "Regina Coeli."

REVEREND THEODORE KOEHLER, S.M.
Executive Secretary

Note:

The new New Jersey Region held a most successful Marian Congress (1500 in attendance) at Felician College in Lodi, New Jersey

on October 10, 1987—a good initiation for the Marian Year. Audio tapes of the presentations were made available:

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (English)

Keynote Address: ***“Mary, Full of Grace”***

Mother Mary Angelica P.C.P.A. (English)

“The Encyclical Letter, Mother of the Redeemer”

Rev. Frederick Jelly O.P. (English)

“La Verdadera Devoción a la Santísima Virgen María”

Mrs. Gladys Dominguez (Spanish)

“True Devotion to Mary”

Sr. Frederick Douglas M.C. (English)

“Como Vivir la Devoción Verdadera a María”

Sr. Carmen Rivera P.V.M.I. (Spanish)