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## Report, 1986-87: Dallas, Texas Region

Frederick M. Jelly

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## REPORT, 1986-87: DALLAS, TEXAS REGION

The second annual meeting of the Dallas Region of the Mariological Society of America was held on January 17, 1987. Once again the meeting place was St. Cecilia Parish in Dallas, thanks to the kind invitation of the Pastor, Fr. Weinzapfel. And, as at our first regional meeting last year, Bishop Tschoepe, the Ordinary of the Diocese of Dallas, presided and preached at the opening eucharistic liturgy in the parish church. Then we had registration in the parish cafeteria where the remainder of the day's program was conducted, until the closing in the middle of the afternoon. The participants numbered about fifty, almost doubling the attendance of last year's meeting, indeed a promising enough sign of future growth as the region becomes better known.

The theme of the program was "One Mary and Many Madonnas"; Fr. Fred Jelly, O.P., delivered two talks on the topic: "One Mary and the Many Madonnas in the Bible" in the morning session and "One Mary and the Many Madonnas of the Catholic Tradition" during the afternoon. Both lectures were followed by interesting questions and discussion. As he did in his recent book, *Madonna: Mary in the Catholic Tradition* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1986), Fr. Jelly tried to show in each talk that, while Mary is truly the one redeemed person in salvation history called to be the mother of Jesus, still both the New Testament revelation and the Tradition of the Church provide us with many madonnas or portraits of her. For instance, the picture of Our Lady portrayed by St. Luke is distinct from that depicted by John. And, based upon these biblical madonnas, the images of Mary in the Catholic Tradition—such as the New Eve—always provide us with a fresh insight into the mystery of the woman whose own son is also truly the Son of God. It is necessary for our limited minds to contemplate Mary according to many im-

ages, since she has been caught up so intimately into the infinite beauty of God's loving plan for our redemption in Christ as communicated to us in his body the Church. And, just as we cannot capture in a single photo the many beautiful scenes found in nature, but must take several pictures to view it from many angles, so too we must gaze upon Mary in accord with the many ways that she reflects the glory of God to us. Each one of these madonnas, however, must be faithful to the inspired portraits of the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church in the Catholic Tradition in order to be authentic. Finally, the importance for Roman Catholics to portray a madonna today that is in keeping with the teaching of Vatican II and more recent developments, as well as with the ecumenical needs of other Christians, was also emphasized.

During the question-and-discussion periods after each talk, there was good opportunity to make practical applications of such doctrinal points to our devotional life and our mission of witnessing to Christ in the world of our time. Of course, as seems to be characteristic of such meetings that discuss Mary's role in the Church today, the faithful manifested much interest in the place of private apparitions and revelations of Our Lady, especially in those alleged to be taking place in Medjugorje. These exchanges indeed provided good opportunities to help our people view such events in their proper perspective of serving the truth of the Gospel today through the special intercession and inspiration of Mary.

This year I was fortunately able to take time from my sabbatical to take part in our meeting of the Dallas Region of the MSA, and would like to share with you that I hope eventually to have another book published on Mary, this one to be a consideration of her place in the ecumenical movement based largely upon my sabbatical research project. I have just moved to Mt. St. Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland, to serve as the dean of studies and a professor of theology. So, I cannot anticipate my personal participation in the coming year's regional meeting in Dallas, but will do

whatever I can, particularly through Fr. Weinzapfel, to encourage others to keep this promising young region growing.

REV. FREDERICK M. JELLY, O.P.  
*Mt. St. Mary's Seminary*  
*Emmitsburg, Maryland*