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Report, 1986-87: Houston, Texas Region

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REPORT, 1986-87: HOUSTON, TEXAS REGION

Since 1978, the Texas Regional Unit of the Mariological Society of America rotated between Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio under the leadership of Father Fred Jelly, O.P., Msgr. Francis G. Wearden and Father Charles Neumann, S.M., respectively. However, since 1985 these three are now separate regions.

The Basilian Fathers of St. Thomas University once again welcomed the Houston Texas Region meeting to their campus, February 21, 1987. The auditorium of Cullen Hall was a very suitable setting for the Sixth Annual Convention, with approximately 125 religious and laity in attendance.

Our Holy Father, Pope John II, has called Mary the "proper model" for helping Christians. The desire of better understanding her presence in the mystery of Christ and the Church was the purpose for choosing this year's theme, Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*.

The morning session was entitled "The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Economy of Salvation"; Father Mike Miller, C.S.B., Basilian Father and Head of the Theology Department of St. Thomas University, presented an excellent background introduction of Mary's place in the Church. He then reviewed the genesis of the Mary-Church relationship before developing it in two parts: intercession and exemplarity. He concluded with a synthesis from the Constitution on the Liturgy (Art. 103). The discussion which followed was led by Dr. Manuel Chavez, a Houston physician and current President of the Spanish-Speaking Curia of the Legion of Mary, along with Laura Bourgeois, business woman and President of the Houston *Comitium* of the Legion of Mary. Bishop Enrique San Pedro, S.J., Auxiliary Bishop of Galveston-Houston, then spoke to the assembly before the session adjourned. Mass in the university chapel followed, concluding the morning session.

The afternoon program, entitled "The Blessed Virgin in the Church," was presented by Fr. Charles Neumann, S.M., of the Department of Theology at St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Father's summary and analysis of Chapter VIII was excellent. He touched on Mary's maternal intercession and care, her role as model for the Church as a whole (ontological aspect of exemplarity) and her role as model for the individual members of the Church (moral aspect of exemplarity). The concluding topic was the devotion to the Blessed Virgin in the Church. Vatican Council II saw Mary as sign of sure hope and solace for God's people.

The afternoon discussion was led by Sr. Carla Marie Crabtree, O.S.U., Diocesan Director of Hispanic Ministry, and Mrs. Winnie Honeywell, mother of four sons and the current Co-Director of Diocesan Family Life. A good response came from the audience.

The Blessed Mother represents unity. She seeks to unify us to God the Father through Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The feeling mounted among those present that persons devoted to the Blessed Mother must unify their efforts now. Through the intercession of the Mother of Christ they will accomplish their objectives, while drawing always closer to God.

Next year's meeting, during the Marian Year, will focus on Pope John Paul II's sixth encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*.

REV. MSGR. FRANCIS G. WEARDEN
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