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Report on the 1985 Convention (Dayton, Ohio)

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REPORT ON THE 1985 CONVENTION (DAYTON, OHIO)

For the second time in the history of the Mariological Society of America, the annual convention was held in Dayton, Ohio. At the invitation of Archbishop Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, we met at the Bergamo Center, a Marianist retreat house. Some forty delegates and friends attended the sessions on Wednesday and Thursday, May 29 and 30, 1985.

The Board of Directors met already on Tuesday evening, May 28, at 8:00 p.m. Present were: Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. (President Emeritus); Officers: Rev. Emmanuel Sullivan, O.C.D., President; Rev. James T. O'Connor, Vice President; Rev. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M., Secretary; Rev. Albert Bourke, O.C.D., Treasurer; Non-officers: Dr. William H. Marshner, Rev. George Kirwin, O.M.I., Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M., and Rev. Roger Charest, S.M.M. Absent were: our Episcopal Chairman, Bishop Austin B. Vaughan, and Rev. James Parker (Both men had to go to Rome for the installation ceremony in which the newly-designated American Cardinals, Law and O'Connor, received the red hat.); also Rev. Frederick Jelly, O.P. (He was committed to lectures in Alaska.). Rev. William L. Lafey, S.S.C., and Rev. Charles W. Neumann, S.M., also attended.

Since the dates for the convention of 1986 had already been set last year for May 28 and 29 (with possible arrival on May 27 in the evening), we had only to choose the place of this convention. This led, however, to a discussion about the time and the place of our conventions in the future. It seems that for many members of the Society, the price of the airfare to a secondary city like Dayton becomes prohibitive. We also recognized that for many possible convention sites, the distance from the airport can require an additional costly transportation fee. Therefore, the best solution would seem to be to hold the conventions in big cities and at locations nearer to the airports.

For 1986, the Board decided to return to the retreat house of the Franciscan Sisters in Tampa, Florida. As decided last year, the topic will be Chapter VIII of *Lumen gentium*; it will be treated as follows: Father Jelly, the Introduction and paragraphs 52 to 54; Father O'Connor, paragraphs 55 to 59; Father Neumann, paragraphs 60 to 65; and Father Kirwin, paragraphs 66 to 69. As usual, Father Eamon R. Carroll will present his survey of Marian literature.

For 1987, four topics were chosen from a list of suggestions that members of the Society had made to the Secretary in the past: Mary and Liberation, the Magnificat, Mary and the Missions Today, Invocation and Intercession in the 17th-Century Anglican Divines, and, of course, the annual Survey by Father Eamon R. Carroll. Some Board members asked about changing the time for conventions back to January. It was decided to put this question to vote at the General Assembly on Wednesday.

The Board discussed once again the status of non-paying members. Those who have not paid their dues for three years will be dropped from our list, after we send them one last dues notice notifying them that if they do not pay this year, they will no longer be listed as members of the Mariological Society. Fr. Kirwin accepted to be the MSA representative to the Joint Committee of the Catholic Learned Societies.

The Board then discussed the proposed amendment regarding regional units. We favored the recommendation to add an article to the By-laws, rather than change the Constitution of the Society. The Board reworked the text for this article. Since the By-laws can be changed after discussion and vote of the Board of Directors alone, it would be easier in the future to make any needed revisions. Nevertheless, we decided to read this new article of the By-laws at the Business Meeting on Thursday, asking the vote of the General Assembly.

The Secretary showed a copy of the color print of the coat of arms adopted by the Society in 1983; he indicated the price (decided in 1984): \$3.00. He also reported that he sent to the International Liturgical Commission the remarks of some MSA members about the English translation of the Votive Mass in Honor of Mary, Mother of the Church. In response, the Secretary of the ICEL has thanked us for our

comments, which will be taken into account during the discussions regarding the definitive text.

Through the creation of the new regional unit of the MSA/West, the Society has received more than eighty new members. Eighteen bishops sent letters of approval; their dioceses include: Juneau, Alaska; Phoenix, Arizona; Los Angeles, Monterey, Oakland, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Rosa in California; Boise, Idaho; Reno-Las Vegas, Nevada; Gallup, Las Cruces and Santa Fe in New Mexico; Portland, Oregon; Spokane, Washington; and the Chaldean Apostolic Exarchate of America centered in Southfield, Michigan.

Father Paul Melada, President of the Pontifical International Marian Academy in Rome, has announced in a letter that the next International Marian Congress will be organized at Kevelaer in Germany in 1986. We also received a letter from the director of the German Lexicon: *Marienkunde*; he asks the MSA to indicate to him American saints who should be included in this dictionary because of their Marian devotion. Any suggestions will be welcomed at the MSA secretariat.

In a discussion about a possible brochure on the MSA and *Marian Studies*, it was suggested that some pictures could be included in our newsletters and in such informative brochures. We might also place advertisements in various periodicals.

After discussing the matter of including telephone numbers with our membership list, we decided to ask members, when we send the 1986 dues notice, if they want to give their telephone numbers for our membership list.

Wednesday, May 29

After breakfast and registration, we began our sessions at 10:00 a.m. Our President, Rev. Emmanuel Sullivan, O.C.D., introduced His Grace, the Most Reverend James H. Garland, Auxiliary Bishop, who opened the convention with a prayer and welcomed us in the name of His Excellency Daniel E. Pilarczyk, Archbishop of Cincinnati. Sister Mary Ann Rogers also greeted us in the name of the Bergamo Marianist Center and its director, Bro. Victor Forlani, who had been called unexpectedly away. The Secretary then gave the usual advice about our con-

celebrated Eucharist and other practical matters. He announced the sudden death of Father Vincent Vasey, S.M., one of our speakers. Fr. Vasey had, however, prepared his report, and Father William Cole, S.M., had accepted to read it.

The Rev. John Harvey, O.S.F.S., professor in moral theology at DeSales Hall in Washington, D.C., introduced our first speaker, Dr. Germain Grisez of Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This report on "Mary and Christian Moral Principles" was based on the analysis made by Dr. Grisez in his recently published book, *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Vol. 1: Christian Moral Principles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983). The speaker extended these analyses to Mary's role in our salvation history, and he also pointed out how Marian studies can help us today to understand better our Christian moral principles. Dr. Grisez thought that his report would make no significant direct contribution to Marian studies, but the readers will see that, on the contrary, it is an important introduction to research which is easily forgotten: In our human society, the unique vocation of each person is fully understood only through the revelation that we are all created in the image of the Divine Persons and their Trinity, and that we are free to accept God's plan and his grace. It is in Jesus that we realize our vocation; it is in Mary that we contemplate the closest human relationship with Our Savior. The speaker stressed the importance of Mary's faith—her free, conscious, responsible fiat which is the perfect human act by which she accepted her unique role in the history of salvation. Her consent is a lasting spiritual reality and, "like any free act of the will, it builds up a moral personality, self-determines the person's identity and relationships." If Jesus is the source of all life, "the central moral principle of each Christian's life," we see in Mary "a subordinate but real moral principle" for our lives. Because of Mary's responsible fiat, our union with Jesus is also union with her. Dr. Grisez also stressed frequently the teachings of Vatican II. Mary is our mother in the order of grace (*Lumen gentium*, 61). This spiritual motherhood is demonstrated at Cana and not only at Jesus' passion and resurrection. For the discernment and the acceptance of our own unique personal vocation, Mary is our model: by her correspondence to the call of God, to the gifts given by

him, and to the fulfillment of the responsibility inherent in her vocation. Finally, in an era of permissiveness, Marian doctrine helps us not only to believe in the mercy of God but also to understand our response to God's grace as a free and responsible commitment. The mystery of Mary's Assumption is a good reminder that we are called not only to an earthly work but also to a heavenly eternal beatitude.

To introduce the discussion, Father Harvey summarized the report of Dr. Grisez and underlined the main conclusions indicating their importance for future Mariological research. He insisted on her role as Second Eve. Through the grace of God, she built up her moral personality, not only to be the Mother of Jesus but also our mother, the Mother of the Church.

After lunch, the second session began with a General Meeting at 2:30 p.m. The Nominating Committee submitted the following candidates: for the Board of Directors: Rev. Charles Neumann, S.M. (to replace Rev. R. Charest, S.M.M.) and Rev. William L. Lahey, S.S.C. (to replace Rev. James Parker); for the Committee on Admission: Rev. Roger Charest, S.M.M. (to replace Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J.). These candidates were all approved unanimously.

Rev. Matthew F. Morry, O.P., professor at Providence College, Rhode Island, introduced his colleague, professor in Exegesis at the same college, Rev. Thomas A. Collins, O.P., who delivered the second report of our sessions entitled "Laurentin's New Book on the Infancy Narratives in Comparison with Other Such Studies." This book by René Laurentin is still only available in French (*Les évangiles de l'enfance du Christ* [Paris, 1982]). An English translation is being prepared by St. Bede's Publications in Massachusetts, under the proposed title *The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ: The Truth of Christmas Beyond the Myths*. To explain Laurentin's position, Fr. Collins used another of Laurentin's works, one published in France in 1984: *Comment réconcilier l'exégèse et la foi?* (Paris, 1984). This booklet corresponds to a series of lectures on exegesis and faith given by Laurentin at Bergamo Center in Dayton last year. It shows why Laurentin is so preoccupied by the historical-critical methods used in modern exegesis. For its third French edition, his book on the infancy narratives received a very laudative preface by Cardinal Ratzinger. The controversy about this book must not be exaggerated; it

should remain a question of methodology. With "Divino Afflante Spiritu" (1943), Pope Pius XII summarized the teaching of the Church about the genuine meaning of Holy Scripture. These teachings were also given by Vatican II, in the Constitution on Holy Scripture, "Verbum Dei." St. Thomas Aquinas summarized the Church's doctrine on Tradition, distinguishing the various senses of the Holy Scriptures: from the literal to the spiritual sense. There is always a literal sense which is fundamental; Holy Scripture must be taken as a whole—a revelation in which we read the Word of God. Fr. Collins explained the difficult task of the exegetes who must define the literal sense of the text. Laurentin himself, in earlier books on the infancy narratives, used historical-critical methods. In his recent book, he uses semiotics, but he is, above all, interested in the historical background of the infancy narratives, especially the virginal conception of Jesus. As Reactor, Fr. Morry stressed again the difficulties of modern exegesis. Faith and science are both necessary to find the authentic interpretation of our biblical texts.

At 4:30 p.m., we gathered in the chapel at Bergamo Center for the concelebrated Eucharist. Most Rev. Oscar Alzamora, S.M., Bishop of Tacna in Peru, was our principal celebrant and homilist. Bishop Alzamora, who is a Marianist, wanted to participate in our convention; he is visiting the United States to obtain some financial help by preaching in local parishes about the needs of his diocese, one of the poorest in Peru.

After the Eucharist, we enjoyed a happy hour followed by dinner. At 7:30 p.m., a bus transported to the Marian Library at the University of Dayton all those who wanted to visit this world-famous collection of Marian books and materials. Brother William Fackovec and Brother Donald Fahrig, both Marianists, showed the visitors the resources of the Library. A video cassette was played; it presented the activities and the purpose of the Marian Library. An exhibit demonstrated the variety of its resources: cards, medals, statues, stamps, slides, and, of course, the rare books with their illustrations.

Thursday, May 30

We began the day at 7:45 a.m. with the concelebration of the Eucharist presided over by Rev. Roger Charest, S.M.M. After breakfast, at

9:00 a.m., Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M., introduced the talk "Mary in the Doctrine of Bérulle on the Mysteries of Christ" prepared by the recently-deceased Rev. Vincent Vasey, S.M., professor in the Law School at the University of Dayton. Father William J. Cole, S.M., read the text prepared by Fr. Vasey; part of a book he was writing on Bérulle and the mysteries of Christ, this first chapter was entitled "Charism of Bérulle." Father Robichaud, a Marist, noted that his own religious family and the Society of Mary (Marianists) were both founded at the beginning of the 19th century, each with a Marian spirituality directly inspired by the French School and, therefore, by Bérulle and his disciples. Bérulle's Mariology is an integral part of his charism, that is, his personal experience of God contemplated in the mysteries of Jesus and Mary and known through his writings and his foundation of the Oration. By his judicious selection of quotations, Fr. Vasey traced a spiritual portrait of Bérulle, rooted in his life, in his evolution from theocentrism to christocentrism. To understand his Vow of Servitude to Jesus and Mary, we must remember that in Spain he found devotees to Mary who proclaimed themselves slaves of Mary. This can be traced back to Ildephonsus of Toledo (d. 667), but his own spiritual doctrine comes from the adoption of Dionysius' theory of hierarchic mediation. These ideas structure Bérulle's theology and apostolate: *per Mariam ad Jesum; per Jesu mysteria ad Trinitatem*. Bérulle became the apostle of the Incarnate Word of God. This christocentrism became a kind of copernican revolution for the French School of Spirituality and all its disciples. Through Dionysius, a neo-platonism penetrated Bérulle's thoughts, emanating in a spiritual doctrine based on exemplarism: "God sustains an existence in the supernatural world though elevated by grace, just as he sustains His natural creation." We must depend entirely on God and on the Incarnation of the Son of God. Our spiritual life is union, adherence to the mysteries of Christ and of His mother. The hierarchic synthesis of Bérulle exalts the relations which express our dependence on the divine persons and their divine relations. Mary in her whole person is related as Mother of God to the Holy Trinity, to us and to the Universe. The Vow of Servitude manifests our acknowledgment of our dependence on Mary, Christ, the Holy Trinity.

After an intermission, Father Bernard M. Geiger, O.F.M. Conv., National Chaplain of the Knights of the Immaculata in Libertyville, Illinois, and Chaplain of the Felician Sisters in Chicago, introduced our second speaker of the day, his colleague, Rev. James McCurry, O.F.M. Conv., for his address on "The Mariology of Maximilian Kolbe." Our speaker was involved over the past years in many activities concerning the new saint: preparations for his canonization; the renewal of his *Militia Immaculatae* movement; coordination of the first International Congress on the Mariology of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, held in Rome last October; preparations for the upcoming extraordinary general chapter of the Conventual Franciscan Order which will focus on the topic of the Kolbean heritage in Franciscanism today; and, finally, the curatorship of the Kolbe archives at Saint Hyacinth College-Seminary, Granby, Massachusetts. There are over 300 volumes on Kolbe published in more than a dozen languages. The writings of Kolbe are known in their Polish edition and in an Italian translation. They are not theological treatises, but they show the doctrinal research of Kolbe in numerous apostolic activities and projects:

They contain everything from Kolbe's reminiscences with his mother about Polish Christmas customs to periodical articles on the existence of God, from inquiries of a Milwaukee pastor about radio transmitters to notations in his daily mass register, from sketches of interplanetary space ships to a significant scheme for a project of a book on the Immaculate Conception.

A good tool to study Kolbe is the quarterly, *Miles Immaculatae*, founded by Kolbe himself in 1938, which is now a multi-lingual publication under the editorship of Father Fehlner, a member of our Society. When we follow the apostolic thought of Kolbe from his formula of consecration to the Immaculate in 1917, through his final meditation on the Immaculate Conception dictated to his secretary just before the Nazis arrested him in 1941, we find the same purpose: to "extend as far as possible the best kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus." This means love, and the creature most completely filled with this love by God Himself is

the Immaculata "united with the Holy Spirit as his Spouse, she is one with God in an incomparably more perfect way than can be predicated of any other creature." Saint Maximilian Kolbe followed the Franciscan Scotistic tradition regarding the absolute primacy of Christ. The Immaculate Conception of Mary manifests this primacy, and Mary is one with Christ in His predestination. Our vocation is to be apostles of the Immaculate:

We have to win the universe and each individual soul, now and in the future, down to the end of time, for the Immaculata, and by her for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Further, we must be on the watch so that nobody tears any soul away from its consecration to the Immaculata; we should strive rather that souls may constantly deepen their love for her.

Kolbe was evidently influenced by Saint Louis Marie de Montfort and the French School of Spirituality. But the Polish devotion to Mary as Our Lady of Czestochowa gave him a deep sense of Mary's presence in our activities. Mary's declaration to Bernadette of Lourdes, "I am the Immaculate Conception" became fundamental for Kolbe's Marian doctrine. He developed this under three aspects: first, the Immaculate Conception in its relationship to the mission of the Spirit; second, the Immaculate Conception in its relationship to the mission of the Son; third, the Immaculate Conception in its relationship to the Holy Trinity. In his last dictation before his arrest by the Nazis, February 17, 1941, he summarized his doctrine, defining the Holy Spirit as the uncreated Immaculate Conception and Mary as the created Immaculate Conception. A conception is the fruit of love. Our sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit—for this work, for this divinization—unites himself with Mary in an intimate and unique way. Evidently, Kolbe distinguished clearly the work of the unique mediator, Christ, and the mission entrusted to Mary by the Holy Spirit. Father McCurry, at the end of his talk, noted that the survivors of Auschwitz who lived with Kolbe recalled less often his heroic voluntary replacement of a companion condemned to death than the frequent lectures he gave to his fel-

low inmates on the mysteries of the Immaculate Conception, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Holy Spirit.

That afternoon at 1:30 p.m., Dr. John F. Britt, a professor in the School of Education at the University of Dayton, introduced our last speaker, Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., for his "Survey of Recent Mariology." This bibliographical review covered primarily the publications of 1984 and the beginning of 1985. As he does each year, our bibliographer reviewed the specialized Marian periodicals and presented his survey under the customary headings: Magisterium, Holy Scripture, Tradition, General and Specific Doctrines, Ecumenism, Liturgy, Devotion, and a final Miscellany of various titles.

We ended the convention as usual with a second Business Meeting. The President, Rev. Emmanuel Sullivan, O.C.D., announced that the next convention will be held at Tampa, Florida on May 28-29, 1986. Three reports were given about MSA regional activities: Fr. Matthew Morry, O.P., for the Rhode Island Region; Fr. Charles Neumann, S.M., for the Texas Region; and Bro. John Samaha, S.M., for the Western Region.

Voting members present at the General Assembly unanimously approved the Board's proposed new article for the By-Laws regarding Regional Units (text presented at the end of this report) and voted to keep the annual convention in late May.

The Treasurer informed the members that the Society has a current balance of \$14,226.12 in our bank account. He expressed the Society's gratitude for the gifts and donations received and 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 Daniel E. Pilarczyk, Archbishop of Cincinnati, for inviting us to his archdiocese, and to his Auxiliary, the most Reverend James H. Garland, for offering the Opening Prayer at our First Session and welcoming us to the archdiocese.
- b) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Austin B. Vaughan, the Episcopal Chairman of our Society.

- c) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Oscar Alzamora, Bishop of Tacna, Peru, whose presence at this convention was most appreciated.
- d) to Mr. Robert Andrews, to Mr. Arthur W. Clinton, Jr., to Chaplain Major Alfred M. Croke, to the Marian Fathers of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and to Very Reverend Stanley Matuszewski (editor of *Our Lady's Digest*) for their generous contributions to our Society—and to the many other benefactors not mentioned here by name to whom we also owe our gratitude, especially to our Supporting Members.
- e) to the Staff of Bergamo Center, especially to Brother Victor Forlani, S.M., to Sister Mary Ann Rogers, C.S.J., and to Mrs. Patricia O'Grady for the warm and efficient hospitality extended to us these past two days.
- f) and, finally, to our distinguished speakers and reactors, for their scholarly papers and thought-provoking discussions.

Having ascertained that there was no further business to transact, Fr. Sullivan then called for a motion for adjournment. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The 1985 Convention ended with the *Salve Regina*.

REV. THEODORE A. KOEHLER, S.M.
Executive Secretary

Text of new article for By-Laws of the Mariological Society of America:

ARTICLE X: REGIONAL UNITS

Section 1. The Mariological Society of America encourages the formation of regional units by active members of the Society in geographical proximity with each other.

Section 2. These units are organized, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors, to hold regional meetings in accord with the purpose of the Society but with a somewhat more pastoral orientation.

Section 3. Such meetings are open to and actively promote attendance by persons in the region who are not members of the Mariological Society of America. To obtain membership in the national Society one must be accepted by the national Committee on Admission and pay dues to the national Treasurer.

- Section 4. Reports of the activities of regional units are made at the annual national convention of the Society.

Section 5. The authority to permit or withdraw the use of the Society's Employer Identification Number for tax exemption purposes rests with the Board of Directors. An annual report on this use is sent to the national Treasurer.