

Marian Studies

Volume 36 *Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth
National Convention of The Mariological
Society of America held in Dayton, Ohio*

Article 16

1985

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Recommended Citation

Morry, Matthew F. (1985) "Report, 1984-85: New England Region," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 36, Article 16.
Available at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol36/iss1/16

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REPORT, 1984-85: NEW ENGLAND REGION

The New England Region of the Mariological Society of America held its annual meeting Saturday, October 20, 1984, at Providence College, Providence, R.I. The meeting opened at 10:00 A.M. with a prayer offered by the Most Reverend George H. Pearce, S.M. Fr. M. Morry, O.P., Director of the New England Region, introduced the keynote speaker, the Most Reverend Eugene A. Marino, S.S.J., D.D., Auxiliary Bishop, Washington, D.C., who spoke on "Reflections on Marian Devotion in Relation to the Liturgy, Doctrine and Life of the Church."

Bishop Marino noted that Vatican II saw Mary as an eminent and singular exemplar of the Church, as the one comprehensive model of the Church in her perfection. Yet, some suggest that Marian devotions are opposed to the nature and spirit of the liturgy. This is inaccurate. A solid Marian piety leads us both to a deeper understanding of the liturgy and to appreciation of Marian doctrines. Bishop Marino developed this under three headings: (a) the nature of liturgy, (b) the relationship between liturgy and doctrine, and (c) the indispensability of Marian doctrines.

From the liturgy, comprised of the great and marvelous deeds which Christ has accomplished for us and our redemption, the Church and its members continually draw life and strength. Now the Church's liturgical proclamation and accomplishment of God's saving act finds in Mary its definitive model: Mary is as a living liturgy—she prays with us and for us.

Between liturgy and doctrine is an indissoluble bond, because the liturgy is for the Church the living expression of her faith, and the chief organ of the ordinary magisterium of the Church. Liturgy divorced from its moorings of doctrine degenerates into unusual beliefs and practices. "The Marian structure of the wor-

ship which the Church offers points toward a living and indissoluble link between liturgy and doctrine." Mary, woman of faith, who enters deeply into the history of salvation, unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrine of the faith. "In Mary orthodoxy and orthopraxis meet in perfect harmony." Indeed, Mary is as a living catechism. In Mary we recover the link between liturgy and doctrine, for Marian devotions lead us to contemplate more deeply the mysteries of which the Church's doctrines are living expressions. Such a link of liturgy and doctrine may not ignore Marian doctrines. For, while there exists a hierarchy of doctrines, yet out of the central core of Christian mysteries emerge other doctrines either as auxiliary points or as *in extenso*. Marian doctrines are included in both these latter categories; e.g., the Immaculate Conception, the perpetual virginity of Mary, her title of *theotokos* are all doctrines supporting and undergirding the doctrines pertaining to the Incarnation and Redemption, and the Assumption is a doctrine which is an extension of the Resurrection of Jesus. Thus, the hierarchy of doctrines does not allow us to cast off any doctrine which is *de auxiliis* or *in extenso*. And integrity of doctrine is necessary to form a complete picture of Christian life and worship. Indeed, denial of Marian doctrine imperils not merely obscure points of faith, but also Catholicism itself. The deeper harmony and integrity of Catholicism are found in the link between doctrine, ethics and spirituality. Only in Mary, the exemplar of the Church in her perfection, are these three dimensions of discipleship perfectly integrated.

In Mary's fidelity to the faith of her fathers, her constant prayer, the goodness of her thoughts and actions we find the living link between doctrine, ethics and spirituality. Worship and right belief have as their proper outcome a life which can only be thought of as a single protracted act of worship and praise. Marian doctrine and devotion should help point the way to such integrity. Neglect or denial of the importance of Marian doctrines only retards the proper integration of these three interdependent aspects of Christian existence: "We cannot forget Mary because she calls to us from the very heart of the Church's existence."

The audience of 140 joined in the Marian Liturgy which followed the address. Archbishop Pearce was the principal celebrant. The Reverend William C. Dettling, O.P., was homilist. Fr. Dettling raised the question: Could a young girl understand that God was calling upon her to become the mother of the Messiah and Savior and so be the natural link for the whole human race? The words of the Archangel provide the answer; an avalanche of grace is poured into the soul of Mary to become a new springtime of grace and life through and in Mary. Mary, the prodigy of grace, becomes a fountain of grace; she who is full of grace will now overflow as the fruitful Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Mary will bring forth God's Good Word—He Who is God's Beloved Son. So at the Annunciation, Mary is eager to make *present* the future plan of God. Deborah, Esther, and Judith fade before the courage and strength of Mary as she freely responds, as she becomes the very throne of God Himself, as she sets about to crush the head of her people's mortal enemy, in the power and presence of God's own Word and Will. The handmaid of the Lord gives birth to the Servant of the Lord and, in doing so, turns around world history.

A luncheon, with a brief business meeting, followed the Liturgy. The Annual meeting adjourned at 2:00 P.M.

REV. MATTHEW MORRY, O.P.

Director, New England Region, MSA