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## REPORT ON THE 1983 CONVENTION (NORTH PALM BEACH, FLA.)

For the third time in the history of the Mariological Society of America, at the invitation of Archbishop Edward A. McCarthy of Miami, the annual convention was held in North Palm Beach, Florida, at the retreat house of the Passionists, Our Lady of Florida. Some forty delegates and friends attended the sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 4 and 5, 1983, and enjoyed the warm, sunny climate of Florida. Some ten members, however, at the last moment had to cancel their participation.

The meeting was called to order at 10 A.M. as scheduled on Tuesday, January 4th, after breakfast and registration, by our President, Dr. William H. Marshner. He introduced Archbishop McCarthy who opened the session with a prayer and welcomed us to his archdiocese, recalling the Marian past of the diocese and of Florida.

The Spanish explorer, Juan Ponce de León, arrived on Palm Sunday, 1513, and christened the area "Florida" (*Pascua florida*). Thus, much later, the historian John Gilmary could write that in Florida "the altar is older than the hearth." Indeed, the first priests came already in 1521, and St. Augustine, Florida, the first permanent Spanish settlement in the New World (1565), has the oldest parish in the United States. Initially, Florida pertained to the Bishop of Havana, Cuba, but in 1821, it became part of the Church in the United States. Today, there are five dioceses in Florida: the first (St. Augustine) was created in 1870; the second (Miami) was created in 1958. In this latter archdiocese, Archbishop McCarthy noted, there is a great Marian Shrine named "Our Lady of Charity," a title cherished by the Cuban Catholics and celebrated by them on September 8th.

Following this official welcome by Archbishop McCarthy, Father Gabriel Bendernagel, C.P., greeted us in the name of the Passionist retreat center. Next, a special ceremony was held to honor our former

President, Very Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., who received the Cardinal Wright Mariological award. The Citation (text given below) was read by our President, Dr. William H. Marshner. All then congratulated Father Charest who is well known for his Marian apostolic work as editor of *Queen* magazine, as the organizer of numerous pilgrimages abroad, as a lecturer on Marian topics, as a former provincial for the Montfortians, and as an active member of our Society, having served as its President in 1981 and 1982.

The Rev. William L. Lahey, S.S.C., of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Winter Haven, Florida, introduced our first speaker, our President, Dr. William H. Marshner, of Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia. Dr. Marshner delivered the Keynote Address, which was also his presidential address for 1983, entitled: "Mary and the Church: Symbolism of Brideship and Maternity." In it, he studied the Immaculate Conception mystery in relation to other Marian titles and definitions of the Church, in particular: Mary's Christo-conformity, her brideship and maternity, Mary as exemplar and type of the Church. He pointed up the need for a clear meaning of the various significations given to the word *Church*. For example, Mary, as Full of Grace, is the archetype of the Church in its holiness. Mary, in her Immaculate Conception, is type of the Church as Spotless Bride of the Lord. Mary, Woman of Faith, is type of the Church as Virgin and Mother. She is not herself Bride of Christ, but she represents the bridal Church to Jesus. She also represents the bridal Church to the Church itself, as our Model. Mary does not transcend the Church; she exceeds and precedes the Church (in her predestination, Immaculate Conception, Assumption, . . .).

Rev. Lahey, as reactor, guided the discussion to various matters related with symbolism: the role of representation to the world; the title "New Eve"; Mary, the Church, and the imitation of Christ. This discussion strongly underlined the importance of biblical symbolism, in which are rooted the titles given analogically to Mary and the Church: but Mary is first Mother of God, Mother of the Church; the Church is Bride of Jesus.

In the afternoon, the General Meeting began at 2:30 P.M. The Nominating Committee submitted the following candidates: 1) for the

Nominating Committee itself: Rev. William Smith (to replace Rev. John J. Fee); 2) for the Board of Directors: Rev. James T. O'Connor (to replace Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.—term expired); Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P. (to replace Rev. Bernard Lazor, O.S.A.—term expired); Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M. (to replace Rev. Vincent P. Branick, S.M.—resigned). These candidates were all approved unanimously.

Rev. Ronald D. Lawler, O.F.M.Cap., currently of St. John's University in Jamaica and Staten Island, New York, then introduced the second speaker, Rev. G. Gordon Henderson, S.J., Associate Director of Research for CARA, the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, whose topic was "The Apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Image, the Origin of the Pilgrimage." Since CARA has been carrying out a scientific investigation of the image, its influence on the Mexican people and the Americas, Fr. Henderson gave a status report on the studies presently underway. These research efforts will require much time, especially the examination of the sociological implications of the pilgrimage and the careful inquest by those scholars who earlier studied the Shroud of Turin. This captivating report stirred up a lively discussion led by Fr. Lawler. Many of those present were interested in knowing more about the image and its miraculous character. In it, scientists encounter an empirical reality for which faith alone can ultimately account.

At 4:30 P.M., the Assembly moved to the beautiful chapel of Our Lady of Florida where His Excellency, Most Rev. Austin B. Vaughan, our Episcopal Chairman as principal celebrant and homilist, was joined by His Excellency, Most Rev. Augustin A. Román, Auxiliary Bishop of Miami, other priests and conventioners for a concelebrated Eucharist. The day's activities ended with some refreshments and the dinner.

At 8 P.M., the Board of Directors, with its newly-elected members, met to discuss the projects of the Society. All members were present: Most Rev. Austin B. Vaughan (Episcopal Chairman); Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. (President Emeritus); the Officers: Dr. William H. Marshner (President), Rev. Emmanuel Sullivan, O.C.D. (Vice-President), Rev. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M. (Secretary), Rev. Albert Bourke, O.C.D. (Treasurer); the Non-Officers: Rev. William L. Lahey,

S.S.C., Rev. James Parker, Rev. Roger M. Charest, Rev. James T. O'Connor, Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., and Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M.

The Board decided to hold the next convention at a different time of year: May 29 and 30, 1984, with arrival beginning in the afternoon and evening of May 28th. The Board also discussed possible sites and dates for the Convention of 1985 (May 28-29—with arrival in the afternoon and evening of the 27th).

For 1984, the following topics were decided upon: 1) Mary, the Church, the Acts of the Apostles; 2) Mary, the Church, the Holy Spirit; 3) Divine Faith, Private Revelations, Popular Devotion; 4) Grignon de Montfort and Marian Devotion; 5) Survey of Recent Mariology (annual report of Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.). Other topic proposals were noted for the future. Suggestions were offered regarding speakers for 1984.

The problem of non-paying members was brought up. Those who have not paid for the last three years will be dropped from the list. The Board felt that the request for a regional congress in Oregon to help the Servites celebrate their centennial in Portland could be answered best by members of the Society in the West. To cut costs for the printing of *Marian Studies*, the Board decided the Secretary should ask for twenty-five unbound copies and distribute the offprints to the speakers from these. Concerned about the increasing number of volumes of *Marian Studies* no longer available, the Board recommended that the Secretary request members and non-members to send back any copies they no longer wish to keep. This could be an effective and inexpensive solution.

For the International Congress of Malta, it was announced that Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., had been charged with organizing the United States' section. Anyone interested in presenting a paper at the Congress should contact him.

The proposal made by Rev. James Parker in 1982, regarding a crest for the Mariological Society of America, was then taken up. A description of the coat of arms was adopted by the Board to be presented to the Assembly at the final Business Meeting of this convention. The Board Meeting adjourned shortly past 10 P.M.

On Wednesday, January 5th, the sessions began at 8 A.M. with a concelebration presided over by Bishop Román; Bishop Vaughan was homilist. At 9 A.M., substituting for Rev. Peter D. Fehlner, O.F.M.Conv., who at the last moment had to cancel his trip to the convention, Rev. Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M., Provincial of the Holy Name Franciscan Province and former President of MSA, introduced Rev. James T. O'Connor, professor at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Fr. O'Connor's paper treated "Mary and the Eucharist." He criticized some ICEL translations of Marian prayers, demonstrating that they do not adequately express the original Latin texts, which are more explicit in their affirmation of aspects of Marian doctrine (for example, the virginity and the intercessory role of Mary). Father O'Connor explained how Mary has her own place in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and in our communion with Christ. The *Communicantes* expresses the faith of the Church in the Communion of Saints. Jesus is the One High Priest, offering himself through the ministerial priesthood. Mary, through her role in the Redemption, is with us, offering Christ and herself for our salvation.

Father Maguire opened the discussion. The questions brought up focused on the causality of Mary in our sanctification, her mode of presence among us. She is the Mother who gave Jesus his humanity, the "instrument of our redemption," the Body which we receive. Therefore, when we speak of her moral causality, we mean she is a real "second cause," one more than merely dispositive: *mater associata* at Calvary, in the heavenly liturgy, and in our sacraments here on earth.

After a brief intermission, Father Patrick Bearsley, S.M., missionary and professor at the Marist Seminary of Taradale, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, introduced Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., the academic dean at the Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. Fr. Jelly presented his topic, "Toward a Theology of the Body through Mariology," in a very challenging way. He explained the studies presented at a workshop organized last year at the Josephinum under the direction of Rev. Robert Brungs, S.J., of the Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology (ITEST). A panel of eight participants had prepared papers on the problems arising from modern discoveries in biology, studying

them in light of Catholic respect for the human person. Fr. Jelly pointed out four questions: 1) principal aspects of a theology of the body; 2) the teaching of John Paul II on the mystical meaning of the body; 3) Marian doctrine as a help for meeting the new biological problems by promoting a profound respect, a true love, for the human body and human person; 4) various ethical issues.

As reactor, Fr. Bearsley started off the discussion with some personal reflections (published in part in this volume). Only a few of the issues raised by Fr. Jelly could be discussed in the time available. The fact that the redemption saved Adam and Eve, i.e., both sexes, and that in Mary we see the perfect transformation of the redeemed body and person—these points were emphasized in the exchange.

That afternoon, at 1:30 P.M., Father William Cole, S.M., professor at the University of Dayton, presented our last speaker, the always dynamic and responsible agent of the annual "Survey of Recent Mariology," Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., now professor at Loyola University in Chicago. His unique bibliographical analysis of the Marian publications of each year is an invaluable tool for our studies. It is not only the best description of Marian bibliography in English, but it also summarizes what is published in other countries and other languages as well. It is remarkable both in scope and diversity.

The time for the final Business Meeting arrived. The President announced that our next convention would be held in Washington, D.C., May 29-30, 1984. Fr. Jelly then read the report prepared by Fr. Matthew F. Morry, O.P., on the regional convention of the New England members (text given below; report on the Texas Regional Convention of 1982 also published in this volume, though not read at the Convention). Father James Parker then presented to the Assembly the description of the coat of arms which the Board adopted for the Society:

The Board of Directors voted to adopt as the Coat of Arms of the Mariological Society of America the arms described heraldically as follows:

—ARMS: Azure, on a Cross or a lily of three blossoms slipped and

leaved proper, in dexter chief a crown of the second.

—MOTTO: Mater Sapientiae.

The President read from the Treasurer's Report that the Society had a current balance of \$6,296.80, and that the printing of *Marian Studies*, 1982, had been covered. He urged prompt payment of the annual dues, and remarked that the Society is always grateful for gifts and donations for its worthy cause.

Finally, bringing the meeting to a close, he expressed the gratitude of the Society to the following:

a) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edward A. McCarthy, Archbishop of Miami, for inviting us to his Diocese and for welcoming us so graciously at the Opening Session.

b) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Augustin A. Román, Auxiliary Bishop of Miami, for attending and gracing all our sessions.

c) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Austin B. Vaughan, the Episcopal Chairman of our Society, whose presence at this Convention was most appreciated.

d) to Mr. Robert P. Andrews, to Mr. Arthur W. Clinton, Jr., to Chaplain Major Alfred M. Croke, to the Marian Fathers of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to Very Rev. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S. (Editor of *Our Lady's Digest*) for their generous contributions to our Society—and to the many other unnamed benefactors to whom we also owe our gratitude, especially to our Supporting Members.

e) to the Staff of Our Lady of Florida Retreat House, especially to Fathers Roger Gannon and Gabriel Bendernagel, for the hospitality extended to us during the 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, Dr. Marshner then called for a motion of adjournment. He asked Bishop Román to lead us in a closing prayer. We sang together the *Salve Regina*.

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