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LETTER OF CARDINAL COOKE TO M.S.A.

October 1, 1979

Dear Father Koehler:

Together with the clergy, religious and laity of the Archdiocese of New York, I am pleased to extend to you and the members of the Mariological Society of America a cordial invitation to attend the annual convention of the Society which will be held, January 3rd and 4th, 1980, at the Southgate Tower Hotel here in the heart of New York City. This year's joyful celebration of the Birth of Our Savior stands to be further enhanced by your presence in our midst and by the prayerful and scholarly focus on the "Ever-Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ Our Lord and God," (Eucharistic Prayer No. 1), which will be presented in the major addresses and papers of your meeting.

Among the excellent topics to be treated at your convention, it is appropriate that the memorable Marian teachings of the late Pope Paul VI, as well as the on-going Marian reflections of Pope John II, are being accorded an honored place in your program. From the time of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI began to invoke Our Lady under the title, Mother of the Church, and now Pope John Paul II happily continues to draw out even further implications of the meaning of this title for all of us. Thus, in his homily, at Jasna Gora, June 4th, 1979, the Holy Father declared:

This title enables us to enter into the whole of the mystery of Mary from the moment of her Immaculate Conception, passing through the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, to Calvary. . . . The Church, which was once born in the Pentecost upper room, continues to be born in every upper room of prayer. She is born to become our *spiritual Mother in the likeness* of the Mother of the Eternal Word. She is born to reveal the characteristics and power of that motherhood (the motherhood of the Mother of God) thanks to which we can "be called children of God; and so we are"

(1 Jn 3:1). For, in his plan of salvation, the holy fatherhood of God used the virginal *motherhood of his lowly handmaiden* to bring about in the children of man the work of the divine author.

May the efforts of all those associated with the Mariological Society of America serve to insure that the special love and veneration due to Mary, as Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church and our spiritual Mother, will ever continue to be a cherished heritage to be handed down to future generations in our Country.

Invoking the assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of *Our Lady of New York*, for the success of your convention, and assuring all of you of a warm welcome to New York, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,
✠ Terence Cardinal Cooke
Archbishop of New York

Reverend Théodore Koehler, S.M.
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