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Report on the 1980 Convention (New York, NY)

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REPORT ON THE 1980 CONVENTION (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)

About sixty delegates were present at the thirty-first annual convention of the Mariological Society of America, held January 3-4, 1980. They enjoyed some rather mild winter weather in New York City. Although the streets of Manhattan were windy as usual, the city's attractions provided well for the "soirées." However, the Board of Directors had to meet in the evening, beginning already on Wednesday, January 2, at 7:30 P.M. All Board members were present: Rev. Msgr. Albert W. Low, President; Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., Vice-President; Rev. Théodore A. Koehler, S.M., Secretary; Rev. Albert Bourke, O.C.D., Treasurer; Rev. James T. O'Connor; Rev. Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M.; Rev. Peter D. Fehlner, O.F.M.Conv.; Most Rev. Austin B. Vaughan; Very Rev. Kilian Healy, O.Carm.; and Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., *President Emeritus*. Mr. Arthur Keller, manager of the Southgate Tower Hotel (31st Street and 7th Avenue), had given the Secretary a magnificent suite on the 18th floor, where the ten members of the Board found all the facilities and the comfort useful for such a meeting and its discussions.

Before the arrival of His Excellency, Most Rev. Vaughan, Auxiliary Bishop of New York and Episcopal Vicar of Orange County, the other officers unanimously elected him Episcopal Chairman of the Society, replacing the late Cardinal Wright. During the meeting, Father Juniper Carol, founder of the Society and its *President Emeritus*, proposed to finance the CARDINAL WRIGHT AWARD in the coming years. To select the recipient of the Cardinal Wright Award for 1981, the Board of Directors nominated His Excellency Austin B. Vaughan, Msgr. Albert W. Low, and Rev. Juniper Carol as members of

the committee that will designate this honoree from among the members of the Mariological Society of America who have made outstanding contributions to Marian studies during recent years.

The Board then elected Rev. Juniper Carol, founder and *President Emeritus* of the Society, as permanent member of the Board. The Board also designated Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M., as member of the Nominating Committee, replacing Rev. Ladislaus F. Pelczynski, M.I.C.

In regard to the matter of extending Active Membership to scholars other than priests, Board members realized that we should change the By-laws. It was decided that the Secretary would send to all the members copies of both the current text of our Statutes and a proposed revision opening the Active Membership to scholars, clerical and lay. This new text would then be submitted to the vote of our Annual Assembly in 1981.

It was decided that our next convention would once again be held in North Palm Beach, Florida. However, when the Secretary asked the Passionists there if they could host the Mariological Society on January 6-7, 1981, he learned that their Center was already booked for another session on those dates. Therefore, the 1981 Convention will take place in Tampa, Florida, at the Franciscan Center, where the Society met in 1979. For this coming convention, the following program topics were established: "Modern Christologies and Mary's Place Therein" (treated from both the biblical aspect and the dogmatic aspect); "Mary in the Catechetics of South America During the 16th Century"; "Mary's Intercession: A Revised Presentation"; and the customary "Survey of Recent Mariology."

The Convention itself began with Registration at 9:30 A.M. on Thursday, January 3, in the Ballroom of the Southgate Tower Hotel. At 10:00 A.M., Bishop Vaughan welcomed the audience on behalf of Cardinal Cooke. The memory of our former Episcopal Chairman, the late Cardinal Wright, was honored both in the presidential address of Msgr. Albert W. Low of Boston and by Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. Father Carol spoke as founder

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of the Society and its longtime Secretary; he evoked with gratitude the history of Cardinal Wright's devoted association with the Mariological Society of America: the Cardinal became a member in 1949 and was elected its Episcopal Chairman in 1951.

Afterward, Father Carol introduced our keynote speaker, Bishop Vaughan, who addressed the very up-to-date topic: *The Marian Teaching of Pope John Paul II*. First, he analyzed the Marian actions of the Pope: their symbolic value (for example, the papal coat of arms) and, then, the main characteristics of John Paul's Marian teachings: Christocentrism; continuity with the Council and Paul VI; insistence on the history of salvation, on popular tradition (shrines like Czestochowa), and on Mary's spiritual maternity.

The second paper was delivered by Rev. James L. Heft, S.M., professor at the University of Dayton; he spoke on *Mary in the Doctrine of Urs von Balthasar*. After giving a short biography and a presentation of the theological method of this author, the speaker treated von Balthasar's Marian themes. According to Father Heft,

In his treatment of Mary, von Balthasar draws heavily on the Fathers and interprets their thought with his characteristic approach to theology: the emphasis on the contemplative and on the aesthetic, on the experience of Mary who, more than any other human creature, embodies the glory of God. She is the master work, the prototype and splendor, without stain or wrinkle, of the Church.

Mary is for von Balthasar the perfect contemplative, the hearer-of-the-Word par excellence; in the masculine/feminine polarity, she is "totally feminine," model of the Spirit, of the Bride: the Church. The Reactor to this paper was Rev. George Kirwin, O.M.I., of Washington, D.C. In the discussion, a true integration of Marian doctrine and devotion in Christian belief and prayer was stressed as being very important for our modern times. Urs von Balthasar's theology appeared as a great example of such an integration. And, comparing it with John

Paul II's Marian teachings highlighted it as the way of the future in doctrine and devotion.

At 5:00 P.M., the Eucharist was concelebrated in the Franciscan Church on the other side of 31st Street. It was followed by refreshments served in a lounge of the Southgate Tower Hotel. Our common dinner took place in the cafeteria located in the basement of the building. This facility rendered it easy for the delegates to take their meals each day in the same place where the sessions were scheduled.

On Friday, January 4, those who wanted an early concelebration gathered again at the crypt of the Franciscans. The sessions began at 9:00 A.M. in the Merryll Lynch Room, with the prayer directed by Bishop Vaughan.

Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P. introduced the speaker for the third paper: Rev. Théodore Koehler, S.M., Director of the Marian Library at the University of Dayton and Secretary of the Society. His topic was *Homage to a Great Pope and to His Marian Devotion: Paul VI*. He developed this theme with the following subtitles: 1) The Pope of *Lumen Gentium*: Mary's Unique Place in the Mystery of Jesus and the Church (Mother of the Church); 2) From *Lumen Gentium* to *Signum Magnum*: Insistence on the Spiritual Maternity of Mary; 3) A Doctrinal Devotion: Integral to the Christian Creed; 4) *Marialis Cultus*: The Value of Marian Devotion; 5) The Teachings of a Pastor: To the Pilgrims During the Liturgical Year; 6) The "*Via Pulchritudinis*"; 7) The Intercessory Function of Mary; and 8) Mary, Woman of Faith, Type of the Poor of Yahweh. Father Jelly, the Reactor, especially underlined the contribution of Paul VI to the devotion of the Rosary and noted the importance of *Marialis Cultus*. In the course of the discussion, comparison of Paul VI and John Paul II showed clearly the continuity in their Pontifical Marian teaching, but revealed their different styles, as can be seen in the Marian actions of the present Pope.

After an intermission at 10:10 A.M., the delegates reconvened for the fourth report, *The Theology of the Virginity "In Partu"*

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and Its Consequences for the Church's Teaching on Chastity, prepared by Father William B. Smith, professor in moral theology at the New York Dunwoodie Seminary. Because Father Smith had to be hospitalized for a sudden illness, his paper was read by his colleague, Father James T. O'Connor. The *virginitas in partu* is a tradition reaffirmed in the current liturgy; the Church believes in the total physical integrity of the Mother of Jesus, not only *ante* and *post partum*, but also *in partu*. This mystery has to be seen in light of the New Creation: with Jesus, the New Adam, and Mary, the New Eve. Furthermore, this New Creation has to be related to both the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary; the Mother of Jesus is the embodiment of the eschatological Church. Certain modern views on human sexuality are too subjective and disregard the meaning that God gave to our bodily functions; they discount the body as a human factor. Father O'Connor, acting as the Reactor to this paper, then made his own remarks: the dogma of the *virginitas in partu* is biological (During the discussion, Doctor Marshner suggested "somatic" as a better word.); virginity has significance in itself and not only in regard to consecrated celibacy.

In the afternoon, at 1:30 P.M., Father J. Armand Robichaud, S.M. (and not Father William Cole, S.M., who, though indicated in the program, was still in Africa) introduced our last speaker, Father Eamon R. Carrol, O.Carm., professor at the Catholic University of America. Father Carroll gave his annual *A Survey of Recent Mariology*; he indicated that the Marian literature of 1979 is dominated by an important theme: the Marian pilgrimages. The latter surfaced in the travels of the Pope, his visits to Marian shrines in Italy, Mexico, Poland, Ireland, the United States, and Turkey. Father Carrol presented: 1) the main periodicals which specialize in Marian doctrine; 2) writings on the "sources": the Magisterium, Bible, Tradition; 3) doctrinal studies; 4) studies relating to liturgy and devotion; 5) ecumenical activities; 6) varia. He pointed out that 1979 marked

the Centenary of the Death of Bernadette of Lourdes. It was also the year of the International Mariological and Marian Congresses in Saragossa (October 3-12, ending with the Feast of Our Lady of the Pillar: October 12); this great event was itself preceded by the International Conference of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary at London and Oxford.

At 2:30 P.M., the business meeting began, presided over by the new president, Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M. The Board of Directors had asked Bishop Vaughan to prepare the text for a telegram to be sent to the Holy See, expressing support of its action with regard to Hans Küng. The following telegram, read by Bishop Vaughan, was ratified by all but three of the delegates present at the session, and was sent to Rome by Father Charest, President:

THE MARIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA AT 31ST ANNUAL CONVENTION IN NEW YORK CITY WISHES TO EXPRESS WHOLE HEARTED SUPPORT FOR ACTION TAKEN BY CONGREGATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH WITH THE APPROVAL OF YOUR HOLINESS TO CLEAR UP CONFUSION CAUSED BY WHAT FATHER HANS KUENG HAS WRITTEN ABOUT INFALLIBILITY THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. WITH FILIAL AFFECTION WE ARE PRAYING THROUGH OUR LADY'S MATERNAL INTERCESSION FOR YOUR HOLINESS AND WE ASK FOR YOUR BLESSING.

Next, the Treasurer, Father Albert Bourke, O.C.D., made his financial report, which is given at the end of these proceedings. Father Charest concluded the session by expressing the gratitude of the Society

- 1) to His Eminence Terence Cardinal Cooke, who invited us to the diocese of New York.
- 2) to His Excellency Austin B. Vaughan, Auxiliary Bishop of New York and Episcopal Vicar of Orange County, elected at this convention as Episcopal Chairman of the Mariological Society of America.
- 3) to the Very Reverend Stanley Matuszewski, editor of *Our Lady's*

Digest, for his generous contribution to our Society.

4) to Mr. Arthur Keller, manager of the Southgate Tower Hotel; to his staff; to Msrs. Patrick and Vincent Cirilli, managers of the Cafeteria: for their great hospitality and all the facilities placed at our disposal in our working sessions and leisure.

5) and finally, to our distinguished speakers and reactors, for their scholarly studies and the leading of our discussions.

Father Charest called for any further business or a motion to adjourn. Adjournment was moved, seconded and officially declared at about 3:00 P.M. Father Charest, as President, closed the convention with a prayer of thanksgiving.

REV. THÉODORE KOEHLER, S.M.
Secretary