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Remarks by His Excellency, Bishop Begin, During the Holy Hour

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REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, BISHOP BEGIN, DURING THE HOLY HOUR

"Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum."—"Be it done unto me according to Thy word."

MAY I take this opportunity to congratulate the Mariological Society on its efficient program for crystallizing the theology about Our Blessed Mother. Reports of recent National Conventions give eloquent evidence of true love for Mary, as well as a scientific approach to the theology of Mary's vocation. May Our Blessed Mother further inspire and generously bless the members of this Society and all who cooperate with it in making Our Blessed Mother better known and loved throughout the world.

The study of the theology of Our Blessed Mother is not new, but up to recent years has been treated as a kind of corollary to the theology of her Son. St. Justin called her "the new Eve," as he called Christ "the new Adam." Only recently have theologians begun to evaluate scientifically the position of Our Blessed Mother in her relationship with the human race.

Certain phases of Our Blessed Mother's vocation have been treated quite fully in the history of the Church by necessity because of heretical notions about her Son. Defense of the doctrine that Christ is true man and true God necessitated an examination of Mary's position in the Incarnation, and the Church boldly declared her "Theotokos and Christotokos"—which means that she is the Mother of God, the Mother of Christ.

Christian tradition has always held Mary in veneration as the Mother of men because—first, she was given to us on Calvary by her Son. . . . "Behold thy Mother"; secondly, because as the Mother of Christ she is the Mother of the Mystical Body of Christ; thirdly, because as a Co-Redemptrix she personally contributed to our rebirth in Christ through

the Redemption. In this latter sense she is a true Mother and a source of life—the life, of course, being the grace of Christ, of Whose fullness we have all received. The Church salutes her as “*Mater Divinae Gratiae*” . . . “Mother of Divine Grace.” In that sense, if we live the life of God through the communication of Sanctifying Grace in our souls, that life in us we owe to Christ—its chief source, and to Mary—the Mother of God’s life in our souls. Mary’s co-operation in the plan of Redemption is complete, at least as complete, if not more so than Eve’s contribution to the fall of man. Mary’s contribution was her lifelong “fiat”—the perfect agreement with the Divine Will, wherein she consciously became the Mother of the Redeemer, the Mother of the Redemption, and the Mother of the redeemed. Mankind reached its highest dignity and its greatest contribution to the honor of God and its own salvation in the one word issued by Our Blessed Mother in response to Gabriel’s announcement that she was to be the Mother of God. Her “fiat” is the high spot in human history, because she—with the freedom enjoyed by all to accept or reject a vocation—freely and consciously accepted her role as the Mother of the Redeemer. Nor was this “fiat” a concession made by a sinful member of the human race. It was spoken by one free from sin from her conception. The whole plan of the Redemption hung in the balance as Mary questioned, “How shall this be done?” By her “fiat” she became at once the Mother of the Redeemer and of the redeemed.

The “fiat” of Mary was not a single act of the will, but a continuous co-operation with the plan of God, as the plan of Redemption unfolded through the years of Christ’s hidden and public life. She said “fiat” when Simeon prophesied that a sword of sorrow would pierce her heart. She said “fiat” when her Son, at the age of twelve, told her that He must be about His Father’s business. She said “fiat” when He left

her home and began His public life. She said "fiat" when He announced to the crowd, after learning that His mother was waiting for Him, that they who do the Will of His Father are related to Him as mother, brother and sister. She said "fiat" when He was exposed to the ridicule and persecution of His enemies. She said "fiat" to His betrayal at His trial. She said "fiat" to the unjust sentence of death. She said "fiat" on the way to Calvary, and "fiat" beneath the Cross. She placed in the cup of Christ's chalice the sacrifice of her own maternal rights as His Mother. She offered with Him, as the Great High Priestess of the human race, the sacrifice of His life by which the human race was redeemed. What He won for us, she, too, won for us in a similar but auxiliary manner. How appropriately, then, could our Holy Father, Pius XII, proclaim to the world on May 13, 1946: "Having been associated to the King of Martyrs in the ineffable work of human Redemption as Mother and co-operatrix, (Mary) remains forever associated to Him, with an almost unlimited power, in the distribution of the graces which flow from the Redemption. Jesus is King throughout all eternity by nature and by right of conquest; through Him, with Him and subordinate to Him, Mary is Queen by grace, by divine relationship, *by right of conquest* and by singular election" (*A.A.S.*, 38, 1946, 266).

Christ came—as He told us—"that we might have life, and have it more abundantly." He spoke of the supernatural life—the life we would receive as a result of His sacrifice. That life we receive from His sacrifice we receive also from Mary's sacrifice as a Co-Redemptrix. Since she is the source of supernatural life in my soul and in yours, we salute her in very truth as Our Mother and Our Queen, and on the occasion of this Convention in her honor we ask her to extend the gift of supernatural life to all men, so that not only all generations, but every soul will call her blessed—Blessed Mother, Blessed Queen!