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Report on the 1982 Convention (San Antonio, Texas)

Théodore Koehler

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REPORT ON THE 1982 CONVENTION (SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS)

Despite the terrible weather which at that time afflicted the country, forty delegates came to the Convention. Ten members had to cancel their reservations at the last minute, due to poor travel conditions. But, once in San Antonio, Texas, the delegates enjoyed a delightful week, with temperatures in the 70s and 80s F. The sunny days; the great hospitality and facilities of the Oblate Retreat House, Casa San José; the quality of the reports and the reactions which they stimulated; the opportunity to visit San Antonio, which is a crossroad and product of so many cultures—all these factors contributed to transforming our two days of study and discussion into a remarkable convention.

Father Bill Elliott, O.M.I., Associate Director of Casa San José, greeted the delegates at breakfast on Monday, January 4th. Shortly thereafter, His Excellency, Patrick F. Flores, Archbishop of San Antonio, who had warmly invited the Mariological Society to his diocese for this Marian convention, began the first session of the Thirty-Third Convention with an opening prayer and a welcoming address (the text of which has been included in this volume of *Marian Studies*). The President of the Mariological Society, Very Reverend Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., paid homage to several recently-deceased members and also dedicated his address to Our Lady of Guadalupe, in honor of the 450th anniversary of Mary's apparitions to the Indian, Juan Diego (1531-1981). Mindful of her patronage under this special title and delicate aspect, Father Charest then introduced us to the theological task which the Society initiated in this Convention: a reappraisal of the Marian dogmas for our modern times.

The keynote address was delivered by Father James L. Heft, S.M., professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton in Ohio; it was entitled "Papal Infallibility and the Marian Dogmas: An Introduc-

tion." The dogmatic definitions of the Immaculate Conception (1854) and of the Assumption (1950) were directly proclaimed by two popes and not by ecumenical councils. The speaker analyzed the various positions on pontifical infallibility, stressing throughout the Catholic comprehension of the charism linked with the function of the Pope, successor of St. Peter, as head of the (infallible) Church founded by Jesus Christ. The reactor, Father William B. Smith of St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, New York, added various precisions and insisted on the Catholic definition of pontifical infallibility, which is independent of other approvals. In March of 1982, Fr. Heft participated in the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue of Canada and drew up a *Postscript* which has been appended to his article.

In the afternoon, our second session began with a General Assembly at 2:30 P.M. and the election of the following Board Members: (Officers) Dr. William H. Marshner, President, replacing Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M.; Rev. Emmanuel Sullivan, O.C.D., Vice-President, replacing Dr. William H. Marshner; (Non-Officers) Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., replacing Rev. James T. O'Connor; Rev. James Parker, replacing Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J. Since the Rev. William L. Lahay, S.S.C., of Winter Haven, Florida, was prevented from attending at the last moment by a sudden illness, Father Matthew F. Morry, O.P., of Providence College in Rhode Island, introduced our second speaker. Father Charles Neumann, S.M., a past-president of the MSA and currently theology professor at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, presented his report on the most fundamental Marian dogmas: "The Virginal Conception and the Divine Motherhood: A Modern Reappraisal." After a summary of recent controversies on the virginal character of Jesus' conception, Father Neumann formulated the teaching of the Church through its many centuries: the virginal conception as sign of the divinity of Christ; Mary as Mother of the Son of God, Jesus, who has no other Father. Acting as reactor, Father Morry insisted on the importance of these dogmas for our faith in Jesus Christ and our true salvation.

Later this same afternoon, a concelebrated Eucharist gathered the del-

egates around His Excellency, Austin B. Vaughan, our Episcopal Chairman, who was principal celebrant and homilist for the occasion. The Chapel where we met had undergone repairs that very day, after some flooding suffered just before the Convention. The concelebration was followed by the traditional "happy hour" and dinner, served in the refectory of the Oblate Center.

That evening, at 8:00 P.M., the Board of Directors met. Present were: Most Reverend Austin B. Vaughan (Episcopal Chairman), Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. (President Emeritus), Dr. William H. Marshner (the newly-elected President), Rev. Emmanuel Sullivan, O.C.D. (the new Vice-President), Rev. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M. (Secretary), Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., Rev. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., and Rev. James Parker. Members absent were: Rev. Vincent P. Branick, S.M., Rev. William L. Lahey, S.S.C., Rev. Bernard Lazor, O.S.A., and Rev. Albert Bourke, O.C.D. (Treasurer), who was unable to attend due to the inclement weather. The meeting opened with a prayer led by Bishop Vaughan. The preparation of future conventions was taken up for discussion. In 1983, as decided last year, the convention will be held at the Passionist Retreat House, Our Lady of Florida, in North Palm Beach (January 4 and 5). It was agreed to continue the work, begun at this convention, of reappraising the great mysteries of Mary. For this reason, the following topics were suggested for the coming convention: *Mary and the Church: Symbolism of Brideship and Maternity*, *The Apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Present State of Research Regarding the Image and the Origin of the Pilgrimage*, *Our Lady and the Eucharist*, and *Mary and the Meaning of the Body* (Corporeity). The annual Survey of Recent Mariology was also, of course, included in the proposals regarding the 1983 Convention. For 1984, we will probably change the convention date to the end of May; the experience this year showed us how difficult it is for many people to come at the beginning of January, either because of other obligations or bad weather for traveling.

Rev. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M., reported on his experience at the meeting of the JCCLS (Joint Committee of Catholic Learned Societies

and Scholars) held at St. Anselm's Abbey (Washington, D.C.) on October 29, 1981. Eleven different groups were represented. Delegates discussed first the lack of communication among the various Catholic learned societies. Possible means to improve this situation were suggested, and it was decided that a memo of limited circulation might serve as a vehicle for the exchange of information, without incurring the expense of a regular newsletter with a lengthy mailing list. Frederick Brigham, Director of the IICR (Institute for Interuniversity Cooperative Research), and David Johnson, Assistant Director of the ACCU/AGSCU (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities/Association of Graduate Schools in Catholic Universities), had been invited to provide some background on the operations in which they were involved. Rev. Donald Buggert, O.Carm. (CTSA), reported on the 1981 Colloquium of Bishops and Scholars; ideas for the 1982 Colloquium were offered. JCCLS Chairman, Rev. Frederick McManus, reported on the state of the projected canons for Catholic colleges and universities. Also, the JCCLS is interested in knowing the areas of expertise among the members of its various member organizations.

Some time was spent on the question of whether a less expensive mode of publication can be found for *Marian Studies*. It was decided to continue the search for possibilities. The Secretary then read a letter (partially reproduced below) sent to the Society by Rev. Msgr. Lawrence K. Breslin of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West in Cincinnati, Ohio:

You may be aware that the Athenaeum of Ohio, Mt. St. Mary's Seminary of the West, will be moving to the Mt. Washington campus, formerly the location of St. Gregory's Seminary in Cincinnati. This move of the theologate is expected to occur sometime during the summer of 1981.

With the approval of Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, Mt. St. Mary's Seminary has decided to name its new library the *Eugene Maly Library*. Father Maly was an esteemed professor here for thirty years. In that time, he wrote many weekly columns as well as books,

commentaries and magazine articles. I'm sure that your own publication benefitted from his work. We believe that the library dedication is a fitting memorial to this good man.

An endowment fund has been established as the Father Eugene Maly Memorial Fund. It is our hope that many of his friends will contribute to memorialize the memory of this fine priest.

A proposal from the Servites of Portland, Oregon, to combine our 1984 Convention with the celebration of the anniversary of their Shrine was discussed. It was decided that the Secretary would propose to them to hold a regional MSA conference instead, and he would provide them with a list of MSA members in the West. At the suggestion of Fr. James Parker, the project of designing a coat of arms for the MSA was brought up. Fr. Juniper Carol informed the Board of previous discussions about such a project.

Fr. Charest introduced two motions: one from the Montfortians, to petition the Holy See to declare St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort a Marian doctor of the Church, and the other from Father Dominic J. Unger, O.F.M.Cap., about the lack of a proper adverb to convey the sense of *in primis* in the current English translation of Eucharistic Prayer I. Father Frederick Jelly, O.P., agreed to prepare a formal statement regarding the first motion; Dr. William Marshner was to prepare the second statement. These two proposals, it was decided, would be presented to the General Assembly at the closing session the next day.

On Tuesday, January 5, 1982, we began with another concelebration. After breakfast, Dr. William H. Marshner spoke on "The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception in Modern Ecclesiology: Prolegomena." A professor at Christendom College in Virginia, he questioned the kind of ecclesiology we should use and what concept of the Church. After reviewing a number of definitions, he demonstrated that today Mary appears as type and Mother of the Church as defined by Vatican II. The Reverend James Parker of Springfield, Missouri, serving as reactor, introduced the various comments which followed. Above all, it was concluded, we must consider the mystery of Mary Immaculate and of the

Church as bound up with the mystery of Mary as the New Eve.

The address prepared by Bishop Vaughan, "The Assumption and Eschatology," studied the dogma of the Assumption of Mary within the broad general context of the last times. There are many related issues which puzzle those in theological research, including: the Pauline affirmation of our glorified bodies and our similitude with the Risen Lord. The reactor to this presentation, Father Bernard Lazor, O.S.A., a professor of sacred scripture at Villanova, Pennsylvania, underscored the victory involved in the Resurrection of Jesus and the Assumption of Mary.

That afternoon, Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., professor at Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois, gave his annual "Survey" of recent Mariological publications. His report each year provides us with the best and most extensive bibliography on what has been published concerning Mary, in English, since the previous convention. At the Business Meeting which followed, and which closed the Convention, Father Matthew Morry, O.P., reported on the New England Regional Convention of the MSA, held at Providence College in Rhode Island. His Eminence Humberto Cardinal Medeiros, Archbishop of Boston, addressed that assembly on "Mary, Our Mother"; the Cardinal called for further study of the title "Mother of the Church" that was used by Pope Paul VI in his concluding message to the third session of the Second Vatican Council. Father Charles Neumann then announced plans for the Third Annual Texas Regional Unit Convention, to be held on February 6, 1982, in Houston, Texas. The topic of that gathering was to be "Our Lady and the Eucharist"; Father Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., was to speak on "The Rosary and the Eucharist" and Father Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., was to address "Mary and the Eucharist in the Light of the Writings of St. Louis de Montfort."

Finally, the two motions mentioned earlier were put to the vote of the General Assembly; both passed unanimously. Father Jelly presented the first Resolution:

Because of the wide influence the writings of St. Louis Marie Grig-

nion de Montfort have had and continue to have on the spiritual life and apostolate of countless Christians around the world, particularly since the discovery of his Treatise on *True Devotion to Mary*, we, the members of the Mariological Society of America, wish to petition the Holy See to declare St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort a Marian doctor of the Church.

Dr. Marshner read out the second Resolution:

Whereas, a work of revision on the English version of the Church's liturgy has already begun, and whereas the present English translation of the First Eucharistic Prayer contains no adverb which would convey in English the sense of *in primis* in the Roman Canon,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Mariological Society of America hereby recommends to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy and to the NCCB Committee on the Liturgy that the present work of revision should address this lack and should restore the force of *in primis* to the English text.

After the Convention, the Secretary communicated both these resolutions to the appropriate parties. The Apostolic Delegate to the United States of America, His Excellency, Most Reverend Pio Laghi, wrote us (January 22, 1982):

I have your letter of January 19, 1982 in which you informed me that the Thirty-third National Convention of The Mariological Society of America voted unanimously to petition the Holy See to declare St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort a Marian doctor of the Church.

Please be confident that the official text of the resolution dated January 5, 1982 will be forwarded to the Holy See as you request.

To the second resolution of the MSA, the Executive Secretary of the ICEL (International Commission on English in the Liturgy) responded (22 January 1982):

I am happy to acknowledge receipt of the resolution concerning the translation of the words "in primis" in Eucharistic Prayer I, as passed at the recent convention of the Mariological Society of America. Please know that the resolution presented will be given very careful consideration by those charged with the work of revising the English texts of the eucharistic prayers now in use.

We expect that the final revision of the texts of the eucharistic prayers will not be ready for at least three years. I will be sure to keep you informed as the work progresses.

Concluding the 1982 Convention, the new President, Dr. William Marsfiner, announced that the next national convention would be held on January 4-5, 1983, at the Passionist Retreat House, Our Lady of Florida, in North Palm Beach, Florida. He then expressed the gratitude of the Society to the following:

- a) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Patrick F. Flores, Archbishop of San Antonio, for inviting us to his Diocese and for welcoming us so graciously at the Opening Session.
- b) to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Austin B. Vaughan, the Episcopal Chairman of our Society, whose presence at this convention was most appreciated.
- c) to our former President, Father Roger M. Charest, for his guidance during these past two years and for his constant devotedness to the interests of our Society.
- d) to Mr. Arthur W. Clinton, Jr., to Chaplain Major Alfred M. Croke, to Very Rev. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S. (Editor of *Our Lady's Digest*), and to Rev. Walter F. Pelczynski, M.I.C., for their generous contributions to our Society—and to the many other benefactors to whom we also owe our gratitude.
- e) to the staff of Casa San José, especially to Father John Sokolski, O.M.I. (Director) and Father Bill Elliott, O.M.I. (Assistant Director), for the warm hospitality extended to us during these past two days.

f) and, finally, to our distinguished speakers and reactors, for their scholarly papers and thought-provoking discussions.

Since there was no further business to transact, Dr. Marshner called for the motion to adjourn. The meeting was officially closed with a prayer offered by the new President.

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