

Marian Studies

Volume 6

Article 4

2-1-1955

Secretary's Report on the St. Louis Convention

Mariological Society of America

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Recommended Citation

Mariological Society of America (1955) "Secretary's Report on the St. Louis Convention," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 6, Article 4.

Available at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol6/iss1/4

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REPORT ON THE ST. LOUIS CONVENTION

Accepting a very gracious invitation from His Excellency, the Most Rev. Joseph E. Ritter, The Mariological Society of America held its Sixth Annual Convention at the Hotel Statler in St. Louis, Mo., on Monday and Tuesday, January 3 and 4, 1955. Following the preliminary registration of guests, the first general meeting was called to order at ten o'clock in the morning by the President of the Society, the Rev. Cyril Volpert, S.J., who made the customary introductory remarks, extending cordial greetings to the delegates from the various States. The official welcome was given by His Excellency, the Most Rev. Charles H. Helmsing, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, representing His Excellency, Archbishop Ritter. Bishop Helmsing, whose Marian apostolate is well-known, expressed deep satisfaction over the noble activities of the organization, explained that it was a distinct privilege for the Archdiocese to play host to the Society, and stressed the need of a sound theological appreciation of Our Lady's prerogatives as the only solid basis for a genuine Marian spirituality.

The first paper scheduled for the morning session was read by the Rev. Jasper Chiodini, of St. Louis, Mo. The learned speaker propounded *The Nature of the Divine Maternity*, particularly in connection with the views recently advanced by the Capuchin Mariologist, Crisóstomo de Pamplona. The prolonged discussion which followed Father Chiodini's thought-provoking paper was ably conducted by the Rev. Armand Robichaud, S.M., of Framingham Centre, Mass.

At 12:30 in the afternoon the delegates were invited to the beautiful *St. Louis Hall* of the Statler, where the usual refreshments were served, followed by an excellent luncheon.

According to original plans, the second general session was to feature an essay on *The Divine Maternity in the Early*

Church, by the Rev. Martin J. Healy, of Huntington, L. I. However, due to the author's inability to attend, his paper was replaced by one of the seminars scheduled for the next day. The seminar selected for the occasion was devoted to the much-debated question *Was Nestorius a Nestorian?* which was conducted with rare competence by the Rev. Joseph L. Shannon, O.S.A., of Washington, D. C., with the Rev. Vladimir Vancik, of the Byzantine Rite, serving as discussion leader. While frankly admitting that there were some extenuating circumstances favoring Nestorius, the speaker showed little sympathy for Msgr. Amann's attempts to exonerate the controversial Patriarch.

At 4:30 in the afternoon the delegates gathered in St. Joseph's Church to attend the traditional Marian Devotions and Holy Hour. The services were presided over by His Excellency, the Most Rev. Charles H. Helmsing, who was likewise celebrant at Benediction, representing the Most Reverend Archbishop Ritter. The preacher scheduled for the special occasion was His Excellency, the Most Rev. John J. Wright, Bishop of Worcester, Mass., and Episcopal Chairman of the Mariological Society. Most unfortunately, a sudden illness prevented the distinguished prelate from being present, and in his absence the President of the Society graciously invited the Secretary, Father Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., to address a few words to the select congregation.

The first general assembly on the second day of the Convention began promptly at ten o'clock in the morning with a profound and erudite dissertation by the Rev. Gerald Van Ackeren, S.J., of St. Mary's, Kansas. The speaker's difficult topic was *Did the Divine Maternity Formally Sanctify Mary's Soul?* As had been anticipated, the lecture gave rise to a long and lively discussion on the various schools of thought as outlined by the speaker. The Rev. Philip J. Donnelly, S.J., of Weston, Mass., served in the capacity of discussion leader.

Immediately after Father Van Ackeren's lecture the guests separated into two groups to attend the following seminars: *The Divine Maternity in Sacred Scripture*, by the Rev. Bernard J. Le Frois, S.V.D., of Techny, Illinois (discussion leader: The Very Rev. Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm.), and *The Nexus Between the Divine Maternity and Mary's Other Prerogatives*, by the Rev. Harold E. McBride, S.M.M., of Litchfield, Conn. (discussion leader: Very Rev. Francis D. Costa, S.S.S.). Both speakers were warmly congratulated on the scholarly presentation of their papers.

The highlight of the afternoon session, which opened at 2:30, was a very informative and revealing lecture on *Contemporary American Protestant Attitudes Toward the Divine Maternity*, delivered by the Rev. Kenneth Dougherty, S.A., of Washington, D. C. His factual survey, based on firsthand documentation obtained from Protestant ministers throughout the country, graphically showed the surprising distance still separating us from our non-Catholic brethren on this fundamental dogma of Christianity. The animated exchange of views elicited by Father Kenneth's paper was led by the Rev. Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., of Woodstock, Maryland, who graciously substituted for the scheduled discussion leader, Father Vincent J. Nugent, C.M., of Brooklyn, N. Y.

Immediately following the last paper on the program the delegates were requested to remain in the same room to attend the usual business meeting. After a brief financial report by the Very Rev. Msgr. George W. Shea, Treasurer of the Society, the President called upon the Secretary, Father Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., to read the names of the new applicants for membership. Following a unanimous vote of approval for the new candidates, the Secretary announced that the total enrollment in the Society had now reached 335 of which 280 were active members, and 55 associate members. Whereupon the

President proceeded to make the following important announcements:

(1) Since the Society has recently been incorporated in the State of Delaware, its legal status should be computed only as of now. Hence the old Constitution is no longer binding. The new By-laws, formulated with the assistance of a legal expert in Wilmington, Delaware, have been provisionally adopted by the Board of Directors. They will be printed in the proceedings of this Convention, together with the Certificate of Incorporation, and should be carefully studied by all our members with a view to further discussion and definitive approval at the next annual meeting.

(2) The next Annual Convention of the Society will be held, *Deo volente*, at the New Yorker Hotel, in New York City, on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 3 and 4, 1956. The general theme for discussion will be: the Virginity of Our Blessed Lady.

(3) The winners of the Seminarians' contest in 1954 are: Rev. Alexander Di Lella, O.F.M., Washington, D. C. (first prize: \$150.00); Frater Anthony Schreck, O.F.M.Cap., Washington, D. C. (second prize: \$100.00); and Brother Alfred Bourque, S.S.S., Cleveland, Ohio (third prize: \$50.00). The circular announcing the 1955 contest, which will be on the Divine Maternity, will be mailed to the various seminaries shortly after the Convention.

(4) The Very Rev. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S., of Olivet, Illinois, has been designated as the recipient of the special Mariological Award for 1954 (\$100.00). The citation follows:

THE MARIOLOGICAL AWARD FOR 1954

Citation

Each year the Mariological Society of America confers a special Award on one of its active members for outstanding contributions in the field of Mariology.

Of the several worthy candidates considered this year, the judges have decided that the Award should be given to the Very Reverend Stanley Matuszewski, M.S.

Father Matuszewski made his studies at La Salette Seminary, Altamont, New York. He holds a degree in journalism from the University of Denver. Among the responsible offices which his Order has entrusted to him, is that of Rector of La Salette Seminary and Assistant Provincial of the La Salette Fathers in the Midwest. In the year 1946, he founded the now universally esteemed Marian publication, *Our Lady's Digest*, of which he is still editor-in-chief. The excellent repute and growing influence of *Our Lady's Digest* have been due mainly to the dynamic and intelligent leadership of Father Matuszewski.

For these reasons the Mariological Society of America today wishes to give public recognition to this prominent apostle of Our Lady by conferring on him the Special Mariological Award for the year 1954.

Upon receiving the award, Father Matuszewski, whose support of our organization is well-known to all, handed his check over to the treasurer of the Society, thus giving another eloquent proof of his great generosity. His gracious gesture evoked a warm and prolonged applause from the grateful delegates.

Before bringing the meeting to a close, Father Vollert mentioned that he owed a word of sincere thanks to all the guests present for contributing to the success of the Convention. He expressed his gratitude particularly to Archbishop Ritter for having so graciously sponsored the St. Louis meeting; to Bishop Wright, for his continued and valuable support of the Society; to Bishop Helmsing, for his keen interest in the activities of our organization, and for presiding over the various sessions of the Convention; to the members of the Program Committee (Fathers Aloysius J. Heeg, S.J., Marion Habig, O.F.M., and Jasper Chiodini) for their co-operation in making

the proper arrangements for the annual meeting; to Father Anthony H. Corey, S.J., pastor of St. Joseph's, for his kindness in placing his church at the disposal of the Society in connection with the Holy Hour; to the management of the Hotel Statler, for its excellent and efficient service; to the various speakers and discussion leaders for their learned papers and discussions; and finally, to the various committees, the Board of Directors, and his fellow officers for their valuable assistance during his first year as President of the Society. The meeting adjourned with an appropriate prayer of thanksgiving at four o'clock.