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## Editor's Preface

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

The 63rd Annual Program of the Mariological Society of America was held at the Mount Angel Abbey, St. Benedict, Oregon, May 23-26, 2012. Founded in 1884, Mount Angel Abbey sponsors the Guest House (where our meeting occurred) as well as Mount Angel Seminary, which comprises a college and theologate with over two hundred students. We were grateful for the many advance preparations for the meeting made by Elizabeth and Jerry Farley.

The 2012 program was the second of two programs devoted to the history of Marian devotion in the United States and Canada. (The articles from the first program are in *Marian Studies* 62 (2011). The presentations this year covered a spectrum of movements and individuals which were part of the Marian landscape of the twentieth century—Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, Father Peyton and the Rosary crusades, the establishment of the Legion of Mary in the United States, the Sodality and Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., the first (and only) Marian Congress in the United States, the Army of Mary (Quebec), the messages delivered to Sister Mary Ephrem Neuzil, the early foundations of the missionary Dominican Sisters, and others who have influenced Marian devotion and American Catholicism.

The opening presentation was given by Fr. Andrew Apostoli, C.F.R., who knew Bishop Sheen and is now the vice-postulator for the cause of his canonization. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen left a deep impression on American Catholicism. He was a philosopher who was also a gifted and enormously popular preacher. From 1951 to 1957, he hosted the highly acclaimed television series "Life is Worth Living," on which he occasionally recited "Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue." His book *The World's First Love* (for which he received the Marian Library Medal in 1953) revealed the bishop's love of and devotion to the Blessed Mother, as well as his positive approach to religious

questions. "Everyone," he wrote, "wants something to live for; everyone is seeking God through the pursuit of life, knowledge, and love."

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, international congresses centered on the Eucharist and on the Virgin Mary were major events in the life of local churches: they brought thousands of people together for several days to attend lectures, devotions, processions. Fr. Conrad Borntrager, O.S.M., reported on the first and only international Marian congress held in the United States (1934); it was organized by Fr. Ambrose Mayer, O.S.M., founder of the Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother (Portland, Oregon). The papal legate to the congress was the noted Servite Mariologist, Cardinal Alexis-Henri-Marie Lépiciér, who gave the final address. Among the presentations was one by G. K. Chesterton, entitled "Mary and the Convert."

The Marian spirituality of Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. (1909-1992), was the topic of a presentation by Dr. Laetitia Rhatigan. Originally from Catholic Ireland, young Patrick came to the United States, joined the congregation of the Holy Cross, and received a miraculous cure from tuberculosis. He dedicated the rest of his life to "bringing back the family rosary and family prayer." He sponsored national radio broadcasts, family rosary crusades, international family crusades, major films portraying the mysteries of the rosary. He died June 9, 1992, and his work is continued through the Holy Cross Family Ministries' Apostolate for Family Rosary.

The Legion of Mary was founded by Frank Duff in Dublin in 1921. Today it is the largest Catholic lay organization, with over three million active members and many auxiliary members. The *Handbook* outlines its structure and organization; integral to the Legion's Marian spirituality are "good works," the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Dr. Gloria Dodd's article describes the dedicated services of the men and women, especially the Irish envoys sent to America, who were responsible for the establishment of the twelve centers of the Legion in the United States.

Fr. Dwight Campbell reported on the heavenly messages received from 1938 to 1984 by Sister Mary Ephrem (later Sister Mildred) Neuzil, 1916-2000. These messages were from the Virgin Mary, and also some from St. Joseph. They were centered on two major themes: first, a call for sanctification of the family through purity, with special recourse to Mary's Immaculate Heart and to St. Joseph as a model for fathers and protector of purity in the home; and second, a renewed emphasis on the reality of the divine indwelling in individuals sanctified by God's grace, and on the Virgin Mary herself as the model *par excellence* of this indwelling. In these private revelations the Blessed Virgin identified herself as "Our Lady of America."

The history of the Army of Mary, a term associated with the followers of Marie-Paule Giguère in Quebec, Canada, was given by Dr. Robert Fastiggi. From 1958 to 1980, Marie Paule, following the directives of her spiritual director, wrote *Vie d'Amour* (2nd edition, 15 volumes, 2001), a series of private revelations which included warnings of diabolical influences in the world. A prayer group devoted to her writings was recognized as a "pious association" (1975), and, in 1981, the Family of the Sons and Daughters of Mary was established, consisting of seven branches of membership. References in the writings which spoke of Mary's incarnation and participation in the divine nature caused the intervention of the Canadian bishops; some members were excommunicated. In 2007, the group known as the "Community of Our Lady of All Nations" was formed.

Bro. Lawrence Scrivani, S.M., outlined the development of the Marian movement in San Francisco for the half-century 1961 to 2011, beginning with Fr. Peyton's Rosary Crusade in 1961, which drew 500,000 people. The study describes the ways in which the directives of Vatican II and *Marialis Cultus* were interpreted and implemented in San Francisco. Some thought the directives implied a rejection of past Marian devotions—which may be an explanation for the "Marian silence" of the era. Some critics of the old forms proposed reinterpreting Mary according to feminist and liberationist images, which they claimed would bring Marian expression into conformity



with “gospel Mariology.” Other developments which also influenced Marian devotion of the San Francisco area during the period were the charismatic revival, the reports of Marian visions, and traditional Hispanic Marian devotion.

My work on the Sodality and Catholic Action is based on the observation that in many parts of the contemporary Church there is a chasm between the movements associated with peace and justice, which have a social dimension, and Marian devotion in which the horizontal dimension is concealed or lacking. However, the Marian sodalities, both those conducted by Marianists and Jesuits, were known at one time both for their Marian devotion and apostolic activity. A “test case” was the Sodality’s response to the insistent papal call, from the 1930s to the 1950s, that Catholic Action should be integral to the Sodality of Our Lady.

Previously (*Marian Studies* 60 [2009]), Sr. Donna Maria Moses, O.P., wrote of the history of the Marian devotion in Dominican congregations of women in Europe; here, she continues the story, this time focused on the foundations in the United States. The first congregations of apostolic Dominican women in the United States, with constitutions approved by the local bishops, were in Springfield, Kentucky (1822); Sinsinawa, Wisconsin (1844); and Memphis, Tennessee (1846). Within these congregations, Marian devotion was sustained by many traditions—the Scapular, the Dominican blessings, processions, the rosary, the Seven Sorrows of Mary—as the members continued their lives of dedication in an active apostolic ministry.

Michael O’Neill, *aka* “the MiracleHunter” ([www.miraclehunter.com](http://www.miraclehunter.com)), presents a well-organized account of miraculous messages and the individuals who have claimed to receive them. His is a balanced account, avoiding both credulity or a closed rationalism, always with knowledgeable and sensitive attention to the Church’s directives. One testimonial on his work from Seán Cardinal O’Malley reads: “Thanks for sending me to your site. It’s excellent.”

Finally, the “International Academic Marian Bibliography 2011-2012” includes references not only as found in available research resources, but also from the European Mariological

societies and journals whose articles usually do not find their way into the larger databases. A perusal of the articles will show the various accents in Marian studies present in different theological cultures.

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