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Laetitia Rhatigan

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**THE MARIAN SPIRITUALITY OF
SERVANT OF GOD
FATHER PATRICK PEYTON,
C.S.C. (1909-1992)**

*Laetitia Rhatigan, S.T.D.**

Introduction

The purpose of my dissertation on Servant of God Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., was the identification, selection and analysis of some of his published and unpublished writings as they reflected his Marian Spirituality. The criteria for Marian Spirituality were taken from the works and writings of Father Johann Roten, S.M. His paper entitled "How Can Spirituality Be Marian?" was presented at the 52nd annual meeting of the Mariological Society of America in May 2001, and also appeared in *Marian Studies* 52 (2001). He stated that Marian Spirituality is essentially a spirituality that leads to intercession, imitation and evangelization. The parameters of Marian Spirituality indicate that it is essentially an ecclesial spirituality, founded on theology; it is experiential and challenges the whole person.

This presentation will introduce Patrick Peyton and give some understanding and appreciation of his ministry. Included here will be an examination and consideration of the Marian aspects of some highlights of his life and ministry. For the most part these reflections will be given in his own words.

*Laetitia Rhatigan works for Holy Cross Family Ministries as Mission Director of Family Rosary Albany, New York. She received her doctorate from the International Marian Research Institute in 2012.

I. Father Peyton's Life and Ministry

A. "Morning of My Life" (1902-28)

As the DVD presentation¹ bore witness, Father Peyton had great love for his family. Poor as they were in material wealth, they were equally rich in faith. He referred to his nineteen years in Ireland as the "Morning of My Life." One of Patrick's most memorable experiences was the family together praying the Rosary. These early years were significant because they were the impressionable years in which he was introduced to his faith. The faith practiced within his Irish family and wider culture was real and concrete, allowing Patrick to develop a spirituality based on relationships and intimacy. Within this foundational faith he gained knowledge of Mary and experienced devotion and imitation of her. These early years engraved in Patrick's mind and heart the importance and value of family prayer. He had an exceptional memory and there is not a time in which he does not recall the early memories of his Irish home and faith. His recall of these experiences inspired and energized him throughout his life. In a documentary on his life he said:

Family prayer was an institution in our house, just as the evening meal . . . There was harmony, there was everything that a little child would want in order to grow and mature. And so is it any wonder that I knelt down beside them and prayed along with them and learned with them to love my God, to realize that He was real to me. All my heart and energy focused upon Him so that he became a part of me, that all the time I was aware of Him. This is what my family gave me; this is what I got from the practice of family prayer in my home. And so when I left at 19 years to stand on my own, I carried away with me the love of God, the awareness of His reality, the awareness of His love, His strength to protect me. That I was surrounded by the God that for all the years my father and mother and older sisters and brothers helped me to realize . . .²

¹ At the MSA Meeting of 2012, this presentation began with a 12-minute DVD, "Servant of God, Fr. Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.," produced by the Holy Cross Family Ministries, Family Rosary Office in the Philippines, 2004.

² Peyton Documentary, Archives Holy Cross Family Ministries (AHC FM), 09-02-76.

At this time in his life he perceived Mary as present, real, and efficacious. He wrote of his early understanding of Mary in his life:

There, best of all, most of all I encountered Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. It's in that school, in that sanctuary, in that holy home of the Rosary, that I discovered Mary! And in discovering Mary, I discovered a protector. I found a friend. I found a Mother that would never die. I found a Mother filled with affection for me, filled with concern for my welfare, lavishing upon me her strength, her prayers, her guidance, her protection. I'm speaking to you of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. And thanks to the family rosary, this is the greatest fruit that it gave me.³

These were also the years in which he contemplated his vocation to the priesthood. When he was eight years old the idea of becoming a priest had been suggested to him. His experience serving Mass and meeting the parish priest and the missionaries who regularly came for a parish mission deepened his vocational desire. His ambition was to become a missionary. He wrote:

Soon I was not content to serve one Mass on Sunday. I would go to the early Mass, then stay on in the church to pray, or drop behind the others on the road home and sometimes return to serve the second and final Mass. The unspoken conventions in our society were rigid, and high on the list was the prescription that nobody should do anything out of the ordinary. I knew the others made fun of me behind my back and sometimes even in my presence made me the butt of sly jokes about my excessive piety. But I could not help it. I had not only become enraptured by my job as Mass-server, but I had developed the secret ambition to become a priest. Soon it was occupying all my thoughts. I took less part in the conversation and games of the others. I was happy when I was sent to mind the cows, which meant that I was to confine them to grazing in one part of the field when the other part was planted to potatoes, oats, or hay. Then I could indulge my dream without fear of interruption, and I would think of God and His Blessed Mother and the beauty of heaven, and I would pray for the realization of my great ambition.⁴

³ Patrick Peyton, *Rally in Spain, Rosary Sunday 1954*, AHCFM, 02-04-03-68.

⁴ Patrick Peyton, *All for Her: The Autobiography of Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C.* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 29.

At fifteen Patrick's formal years of education abruptly ended, and he spent more time assisting with the chores on the homestead and helping his ailing father with his work of repairing the country roads. He was able to find a few jobs that would help support the family, but realized that he would need to follow his sisters to America to find work and a better means of contributing financially to the support of the family.

B. America and the Evolution of Peyton's Marian Identity (1928-41: Significant Events)

1. Emigration, Vocation, Illness

At the age of nineteen, Patrick, with his brother Thomas, left Ireland for America. Their sister Nellie worked at the Cathedral in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and, knowing of Patrick's interest in the priesthood, she "plotted" and was able to get him work as a sexton at the Cathedral. His brother Thomas secured work in the Pennsylvania coal mines. Nellie's plan became reality when Patrick met the Holy Cross priests who were giving a mission at the Cathedral. He and Thomas both applied to enter the Congregation of Holy Cross at Notre Dame, Indiana, and, in 1929, they formally became postulants in the Congregation. In the Fall of 1937, they entered the major seminary in Washington, D.C. Patrick was specifically preparing for the missions. During his studies, in October of 1938, his health took a radical turn; he was diagnosed with advanced tuberculosis and was ultimately transferred to the infirmary at Notre Dame. The prognosis for any cure was not good. However, through the faith and prayers of many, by November 1939, he was cured of tuberculosis.

2. Holy Cross Congregation

Patrick described his early religious family experience and the deepening of his relationship with Mary in this way:

The Holy Cross Fathers accepted me into their family. Their minor and major seminaries were located at Notre Dame. Two lakes, St. Mary's and St. Joseph, have made a picturesque setting for the jewel of the University, the Golden Dome, from which an image of Our Lady could be seen for miles around. . . . I spent nine of those noontime years . . . one in the infirmary where I was stricken with a severe attack of tuberculosis. In

that infirmary, away from my classmates, I reached the depths of discouragement and hopelessness. But it was there too that I really found Mary. In finding her, I found what Christ wished her to be for me, a tender, loving Mother. In my darkest hour I turned to her for help. She responded in love.⁵

3. The Intervention of Father Hagerty

When Patrick was discouraged over his sickness, Father Cornelius Hagerty, a Holy Cross Priest, encouraged him to call upon the faith of his childhood and his Irish heritage. Peyton wrote of this:

I will not say that I really saw Mary for the first time while he talked, but I know I saw her with new clarity and intensity, so that I could say in my heart: "Mother, I believe that you are alive, that you are real, that you are a woman, that you have eyes, a face, a smile, a memory, an intelligence, a heart. You have a mother and a father of your own. You have a son, who is truly God, who loves you, who will deny you nothing you ask."⁶

He wrote that he realized that he now had a strong position in dealing with Mary and now he knew what he had to do, he would put his trust in God and approach him "through his Mother and mine."

4. Ordination to the Priesthood

Through no formal request of his own, a special indult came from the Vatican one month before his brother Tom and his other classmates were to be ordained; it stated that "special dispensations are granted for the immediate ordination to the priesthood of seminarian Patrick Peyton."⁷ He was ordained with his brother Thomas and classmates on June 15, 1941.

Peyton wrote of his feelings at the time of his ordination, he expressed that his past life welled up in a single vision before his eyes:

It was a terrifying experience but a supremely salutary one. For when the vision passed, what remained was that I was now by ordination another

⁵ Patrick Peyton, "My Story," Patrick Peyton Papers, 1984, Philippines, AHCFM, 06-11.

⁶ Peyton, *All for Her*, 76.

⁷ Peyton, *All for Her*, 84.

Christ and that consequently Christ's Mother was, more than ever before, my mother. If in the past she had behaved with such delicacy toward me, what could I not now expect from her, now that I was another Christ, the very fruit of her womb? The thought filled me with consolation and exaltation beyond all describing. If I had the heavens in my hand at that moment, I'd have given them right to her. At Notre Dame that day, I gave my heart and soul in love to Mary. I promised her all the merit of my priesthood until death. The merit and the glory of every action I would ever perform would be hers and hers alone.⁸

5. Death of His Mother and Sister Nellie

While Father Peyton was regaining his strength, he learned from his brother that their mother had died on December 3, 1939. Some five months after his mother's death, his dear sister Nellie died (May 5, 1940). The circumstances surrounding their deaths, namely their desire to sacrifice their lives for Patrick's health and ordination, all became part of his passion to repay a debt to Mary. He wrote this regarding Nellie's death:

I realized more clearly than ever before how important a contribution Nellie had made and would continue to make to my own life. I was permanently obligated to her because of the vow she had voluntarily made and gladly fulfilled to give herself, even her life, for my spiritual and temporal welfare. The least I could do in return was to lead a life which, in its intensity of love for God and His Blessed Mother and in the totality of its concentration on the work of God, would not only justify my own existence but would leave a surplus to equal all the good Nellie would have radiated around her, had she lived the normal human span.⁹

6. Decision for Mission: Payment of Debt

Peyton wrote that he was "in the highest heaven" regarding his ordination, and that he was even relieved of his worries as to how he would repay the debt to Mary. He wrote:

I was not even worried about the enormous debt I owed Our Blessed Mother for having given me this gift. I knew she would in her own time

⁸ Peyton, *All for Her*, 85.

⁹ Peyton, *All for Her*, 83.

and way tell me how to make a small return. Still the debt was never far from my thoughts, for I had definitely committed myself in my own mind to do nothing else in my entire life but work at paying it off.¹⁰

At this time (1942), World War II had spread from Europe and Africa to the Pacific. Peyton wrote: "The thought of the carnage and the slaughter was constantly on my mind. So was my debt to Mary. How it grieved her, I thought, to see so many of her children killing each other, filling their minds with hatred of fellow children of God, destroying the earth instead of building it up."¹¹

C. Peyton's Universal Mission (1942-50)

1. The Family Rosary

Shortly after ordination, he wrote about his decision to begin a prayer ministry:

In January 1942, a few months after my ordination, on Sunday morning in Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C., I made a resolution that amounts to this: to spend myself until death to bring the Family Rosary back to 10,000,000 homes in America, and not to one less than that, and to bring the Family Rosary back to home life not for the month of May or October or Lent, but for always, and to bring it about that families will not consider God as their debtor because they wish to kneel down nightly together for the Rosary of Our Lady.¹²

This decision involved many very busy and productive years for Father Peyton. With the thought of giving him an assignment that would allow him to slowly recuperate from his illness, his superiors sent him to Albany, New York, to be the chaplain to the Holy Cross Brothers who staffed a school there. Peyton was convinced that, during this period of World War II when families were in crisis, the best way to repay his debt to Mary was to get families to pray together the Family Rosary.

¹⁰ Peyton, *All for Her*, 87.

¹¹ Peyton, *All for Her*, 87-88.

¹² Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., Sermon, 1946, Family Theater papers, AHCFM, 09-17.

He often spoke of the support that he received in accomplishing his dream. His statements reflect his understanding of the role which Mary held in the overall Redemption. Especially interesting is his statement regarding her relationship with the Blessed Trinity:

I would never do what I am doing if I had only the authority of those great saints to support me. But the authority I have to justify my claims is none other than a person so close to the Blessed Trinity that it is too staggering to think how close she is to the Blessed Trinity, the most beloved Daughter of God the Father, the Mother of God the Son, and the Spouse of God the Holy Ghost.

Because of this position alone she is aware that every action, suggestion, and move she makes must carry weight and consequence. The faithful, she knows, would cling to every suggestion she makes, to every word that she utters, and so she will not act on impulse.¹³

2. National Radio Broadcasts

On Mother's Day, May 1945, the Mutual Broadcasting Company aired on the radio Peyton's first broadcast. Included in this broadcast of the Rosary were the Sullivan family, who had recently lost five sons on the *USS Juneau* which sank in the Pacific; President Truman; Bing Crosby; the choir from St. Patrick's Cathedral; and then-Archbishop Francis Spellman. Peyton, in expressing his elation over the success of the broadcast, wrote:

We have prayed, we have worked, we have sought aid. Wherefore, if Our Blessed Mother, in whose name we strive to disseminate her devotion, is pleased with what we have done, no force on earth shall prevent our reaching the good we set out to reach. But Mary has been with us every inch and every prayer of the way, and it would be base ingratitude to harbor even a doubt that she will forsake us now.¹⁴

If Peyton's radio broadcasts were to continue and he was to broadcast the rosary, he was told that he must engage nationally known personalities. Toward this effort he, in 1945,

¹³ Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., Family Rosary Papers, 1947, AHCFM, 01-28.3.

¹⁴ Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., to Thomas Steiner, C.S.C., April 6, 1944. Steiner Papers, Archives Holy Cross Fathers Indiana (AHCFI), 08-07.

went to Hollywood, California, to enlist the “stars.” By July 1947, Family Theater of the Air was carried by over 300 Mutual stations in the United States, 16 shortwave stations across the Atlantic and Pacific, and over the Armed Forces Radio Services. By October 1948, Family Theater was carried by over 400 stations in the U.S. and was given “the distinction of being the largest sustaining program on any network in the world.”¹⁵ With the successful evangelization through radio broadcasts, Peyton began to dream of a visualization of the mysteries of the Rosary. Family Theater entered the electronic medium of television with its first television film in May 1949. He wrote of his venture into this medium:

Now that was grand, but it was only the start of the new enrichment of the Crusade. I sat in my room the first evening and listened to the story of the Annunciation coming through the air by means of the great miracle of the radio, and I knew that the same miracle was being re-enacted in a thousand and a hundred thousand homes, that people all over the area were hearing the good news of God’s announcement through His angel to the humble maid of Nazareth that the promised time had been fulfilled and that His own Son waited only on her agreement . . . Yet this great happiness did not entirely fill my mind. On the contrary, each day another thought intruded itself with mounting force.” There is one thing still missing.” I kept repeating to myself, “They should be able to see as well as hear.”¹⁶

In 1949, Family Theater presented its first television film, a short entitled “The Road to Peace,” produced by Twentieth Century Fox; it suggested that the evils of the world could be cured through prayer. With the two ministries of Family Rosary and Family Theater established coast-to-coast, Peyton was in a position to expand his operations in the 1950s when American Catholicism was approaching a peak in its growth and development.¹⁷

¹⁵ Dorothy Klock, “More Things Are Wrought,” *Sign* 28 (October 1948): 47.

¹⁶ Peyton, *All for Her*, 166-67.

¹⁷ Richard Gribble, C.S.C., *American Apostle of the Family Rosary: The Life of Patrick J. Peyton, CSC* (New York: Crossroad Publ. Co, 2005), 73.

3. Family Rosary Crusades

The first diocesan-wide Family Crusade was held in London, Ontario, Canada, October 11, 1948. Over seven thousand lay volunteers were recruited to prepare and work on that Crusade. Father Peyton spoke at each parish in the diocese. He addressed three parishes a day over a thirty-day period. In the Fall of 1949, Peyton was invited to conduct his first diocesan-wide Family Crusade in the United States, to be held in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The American Family Crusade went to the Midwest in October 1950, when thirty-five thousand people filled the Notre Dame football stadium to hear Peyton speak.¹⁸

D. Peyton and Evangelization through Marian Prayer (1950-60)

1. International Crusades for Family Prayer

During this period Father Peyton expanded his vision further, through the development of the Diocesan Crusade for Family Prayer which brought him to five continents of the world. This ministry, begun in 1948, had reached thousands throughout the 1960s and continued through 1983. Between September 1959 and October 1965, Crusades were conducted in forty-two dioceses, for a total of twenty-eight million people.¹⁹ Peyton's Marian spirituality, his inclusion of all peoples in these Crusades—regardless of religion, gives testimony to his ecumenical vision with regard to Mary.

During some of the Crusades, Peyton would visit the prisons. In Manila, Philippines, in 1959, Peyton wrote in his diary about a Rosary Rally that was conducted for Communist prisoners, both men and women. He described the experience as follows:

At the woman's prison, it was a great spiritual uplift to see the tears falling from their eyes as they expressed so sincerely their wish that God would

¹⁸ Gribble, *American Apostle of the Family Rosary*, 116-17.

¹⁹ Joseph Quinn, C.S.C., to Richard Sullivan, C.S.C., October 19, 1965, 428 (FR), 14; "Popular Mission in South America," n.d. [1966], 428 (FR) 13, Archives Holy Cross Generalate (AHCG).

bless the work of the Family Crusade. The number one Communist woman leader, a girl of between 20 and 30, remained in her cell. She expressed the wish that I would come to her cell, and there, too, was a manifestation of God's great grace and joy and Our Blessed Mother's delicacy and love for that unfortunate girl. She knelt beside me from the moment I entered the cell and kept on her knees along with her companions during the Memorare, and, I think, until I actually left, which would be some 10 minutes. The men prisoners, too, inspired me as they sang the Lourdes' hymn and responded to the Hail Mary and with their souls said, "yes" to the love God was giving them. Some of them also gathered in a group every day to say the Rosary.²⁰

He also wrote of his experience in the predominantly Moslem Sudan, and of the importance of the Islamic understanding of Mary and their placing her in high regard.

My experience both in the Sudan and in other Moslem regions in which I have worked convinces me that our common devotion to Mary is our most logical and promising starting point for an approach to the members of a religious body which through the centuries has proved extraordinarily resistant to the teachings of our faith.²¹

2. Production of the Fifteen Films on the Mysteries of the Rosary

Realizing the great need for evangelization in Latin America, Peyton sought to bring his Crusade to this part of the world. He knew that something new was needed to attract attention and to reach a large audience in a limited time frame. He accomplished this dream by creating fifteen films on the Mysteries of the Rosary (1955-56). In the 1960s and 1970s, the showing of these films on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary became the basic tools for evangelization in Latin America. More than twenty-three million people attended the showing of the films.

Fr. Peyton was able to present the films at the Vatican Pavilion of the World's Fair in Brussels. The first public exhibition

²⁰ Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., Report of the Crusade Rally in Manila, Philippines, 1959, AHCFM.

²¹ Peyton, *All for Her*, 190.

was held on May 1, 1958. Auxiliary Bishop Léon Joseph (later Cardinal) Suenens of Brussels was one of the many bishops who viewed the films. He liked the films but did not give Peyton an automatic endorsement. He invited Peyton to his home, and there grilled him on his activities. Peyton reported on the visit with Bishop Suenens:

Bishop Suenens had obviously heard different versions of my activities and he wanted to determine for himself if he was dealing with a fanatic or a crazy man. Under his cross-examination I formulated for the first time the distinction between the will of Our Lady and her personal honor. As far as the Family Rosary Crusade is concerned, I said, the personal honor, recognition, and advancement of Our Blessed Mother are secondary. What is primary is the execution of her will, which is to get men to recognize her Son and to draw close to Him. When I said this, I was thinking of the emphatic affirmation by Father John Maloney of London, Ontario, that Our Lady did not keep for herself those who loved her, but that she led them to her Son. So while I confessed to Bishop Suenens my own deep and unshakable love for Mary as a living mother, I assured him that my labors and sacrifices were to advance her holy will regarding the family and its worship of her Son.²²

E. Peyton and Global Evangelization (1960-70)

1. *Vatican Council II*

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was, of course, a highlight of the 1960s for the Universal Church. The Family Rosary Crusade and Fr. Peyton's entire ministry of prayer to families was greatly affected by the spirit and documents that came from the Council. From the Crusades in South America, Peyton would travel back and forth to Rome, lobbying with bishops for the inclusion of the domestic church and family prayer in the Council's deliberations and documents.

Peyton was well aware of the Marian devotion of Pope John XXIII. He believed that the Council would reflect the Pope's spirit and expressed his optimism regarding this:

I know quite a number of people who were afraid that this might spell the end of the Family Rosary Crusade. They thought or perhaps feared that the spirit of renewal and updating breathed into the Church by Pope

²² Peyton, *All for Her*, 206-07.

John and formalized in the Council decrees was going to bring to the surface new attitudes which would make the Rosary cease to be significant for many and possibly most Catholics. I never had such qualms. I knew Pope John. His love for Our Lady and his devotion to her Rosary contributed an essential element to his spiritual growth and stature.²³

He also expressed his faith in the Church and the teaching magisterium with these words: "But if the Church in Council should decide that the changed times and manners had made the Rosary obsolete as a form of devotion for Catholics, it wouldn't cause me to lose a single night's sleep." He wrote to Cardinal Cicognani:

I am now coming to your Eminence to lay before your heart and mind and love for consideration, a proposal to win the Council when and if it focuses its attention on Family Life Today, to recommend family prayer as one of the greatest means for the solution of the problems of the families of today. In this proposal I have no intention of having any reference made to the Family Rosary Crusade, but only to that ancient, tried and proved formula of our ancestors through the centuries by which they maintained family love . . . family unity . . . family prayer.²⁴

Peyton's efforts to have the family and family prayer included in the Council documents proved successful. He was pleased with the inclusion of the importance of the "domestic church" in the documents.²⁵ He also wrote about his reaction to the bishops' decision on the place of Mary in the Church. He expressed his pleasure regarding Section II of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "The Function of the Blessed Virgin in the Plan of Salvation".²⁶

I was not surprised but I was delighted by these statements and by the entire framework of theological evaluation of Mary's unique place in

²³ Peyton, *All for Her*, 244.

²⁴ Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., "Letter to His Eminence Amleto Cardinal Cicognani," January 21, 1963, AHCFCM, 08-04.

²⁵ Peyton, *All for Her*, 245.

²⁶ Vatican II, Chapter VIII ("Our Lady") of the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November, 1964," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975), Section II, "The Function of the Blessed Virgin in the Plan of Salvation," 415 (nos. 55-59).

the Church in which they were presented. It seemed to me that Pope Paul's decision, announced in the same speech in which he promulgated this decree, to proclaim Our Lady as Mother of the Church was a logical outflow from the Council's own action. It clarified that Mary is the Mother of the family of God, the Mother of the members of Christ, the Mother of the Mystical Body.²⁷

Through the work of the Council, Peyton gained new motivation to create in the communication industry. He wrote of the Council's influence on his ministry, quoting from the Decree on the Means of Social Communications²⁸: "On the contrary, the Council inspired me to new effort. 'Let effective backing be given to decent radio and television productions,' it urged in the Decree on the Instruments of Social Communications, 'particularly those which are proper family fare.'"

2. *Marialis Cultus*

After the Council, the emphasis on the superiority of the liturgy over popular practices of Marian devotion encouraged some to request that the Rosary be placed in the category of a liturgical prayer. In May 1971, Father Peyton wrote an impassioned letter to Pope Paul VI, requesting that the Family Rosary be declared a liturgical prayer.

My heart cries out for a papal document which would take the form of an encyclical. May I beseech Your Holiness to enhance, enrich and raise to a higher level of efficacy the Family Rosary by proclaiming it a liturgical prayer.

This and other requests persuaded Paul VI to address the Church on the subject of the Rosary. Ultimately the Congregation for Divine Worship requested Ignacio Calabuig, O.S.M., to draft a document that would be the papal letter on the Rosary. The apostolic exhortation "For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary" was issued

²⁷ Peyton, *All for Her*, 246.

²⁸ See "Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: America Press, 1966), 327 (no.14).

February 2, 1974, with the Latin title *Marialis Cultus* (Devotion to the Virgin Mary).²⁹ Part Three of this document treated two Marian exercises at length: the Angelus and the Rosary. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter on the Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, issued 16 October 2002, was a complement to this earlier document.

II. Father Peyton and Mary: In Summary

Father Peyton's understanding of Mary went beyond Marian devotion to Marian Spirituality. In a talk he gave in the Holy Land, at Nazareth, in May 1971, he declared:

Mary is for me a great strength; she is my spirituality, she is my peace, she is my prayer; she is my purity; she is my sureness; she is my defense, my protector. From her heart and from her arms and with her strength I respond to the most Blessed Trinity and to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to my fellow-man; her strengths are mine, my feeble strengths become strong in Hers.³⁰

Without a doubt, Father Peyton's Marian Spirituality led him to the intercession and imitation of Mary and Jesus. Peyton's relationship with Mary led him to works of evangelization—drawing individuals and their families to her Son. His spirituality was certainly ecclesial and founded on sound theology; it was experiential and challenged his whole person in ways that he met with great faith and fidelity to his grace and vocation.

III. Epilogue

Patrick Peyton died on June 9, 1992. He is buried in North Easton, Massachusetts, in the cemetery of the Congregation of Holy Cross. In 2001, his case for possible canonization was

²⁹ Thomas A. Thompson, S.M., "Vatican II and Beyond," in Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, with a new chapter covering Vatican II and beyond (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 2009), 417-18.

³⁰ Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., Talk at Nazareth, May 24, 1971, at 5:30 p.m., AHC FM, 01-07-06.

opened by the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In 2008, the investigation of the Cause for Beatification was officially moved to the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The inquiry phase into the life and works of Servant of God Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., officially ended. The Archbishop of Baltimore, Edwin F. O'Brien, celebrated the closing of the archdiocesan inquiry with a Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore on July 20, 2010. This was the result of a nine-year, over-16,000-page investigation which included collecting oral testimonies from around the world and the study of historical and theological documents associated with Father Peyton and his ministry. The comprehensive report was sent to the Congregation for Causes of Saints at the Vatican for their review to determine if Father Peyton lived a life of holiness and heroic virtue which, if confirmed, would result in the Church declaring him Venerable.

Presently, hundreds of testimonies to Father Peyton's holiness of life have been recorded. Tens of thousands of prayers seeking a favor through Father Peyton's intercession are in circulation. Hundreds of favors have been reported.³¹ On June 28, 2011, His Excellency, Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany, New York, presided at the closing liturgy for the Tribunal formed for the review of a possible miracle attributed to the intercession of Servant of God, Patrick Peyton. Now we wait and pray.

³¹ John Phalen, C.S.C., "The Cause Progresses," *Family Link* [a newsletter published by the Office of Development of Holy Cross Family Ministries for the donors and friends of the organization], 17, no. 3 (Fall 2010).