Greetings and Welcome

John J. Krol
GREETINGS AND WELCOME

by

His Excellency, The Most Rev. John J. Krol

Archbishop of Philadelphia

It is my pleasant duty and privilege, as Archbishop of Philadelphia, to greet you, the participants in this XVI Annual Convention, and to reaffirm the cordial welcome which was extended to the American Mariological Society.

Philadelphia is honored by your presence, and eagerly tenders a warm hospitality, in grateful appreciation of your important apostolate in promoting the knowledge of, and devotion to the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church. I sincerely trust that our facilities will help make this XVIth Annual Convention spiritually profitable, and your visit to Philadelphia, a memorably pleasant one.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has as its Patroness, Our Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without sin. In 1952, my saintly predecessor, solemnly consecrated the Archdiocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at the Fatima Shrine in Portugal. Philadelphia is blessed with the presence of the National Shrines of the Miraculous Medal and of Our Lady of Czestochowa in our Country. Scores of parishes are dedicated to Our Blessed Lady, and a large number of religious communities of men and women working in the Archdiocese, are dedicated to the Blessed Mother.

It is a pleasure to welcome your Society to this center of Marian devotions, because you are one of the outstanding theological societies in the United States. You are dedicated to the cause of promoting "an exchange of views on Marian doctrines and to further studies and research in Mariology." We are grateful because you have pursued this objective in a
true spirit of theological research, and also because you shared your findings with others couched in a true pastoral approach.

Your annual convention is being held between the third and fourth sessions of the II Vatican Council. I am sure that you were thrilled when at the close of the Second Session, His Holiness, Pope Paul VI expressed the hope that the Council Fathers would find a means of honoring the Mother of God with the title of “Mater Ecclesiae, to her glory and our benefit.”

I am confident that you shared our joy in reading in the Constitution De Ecclesia, the words:

“She is the mother of the members of Christ... having cooperated by charity that faithful might be born in the Church, who are members of that Head. Wherefore, she is hailed as a preeminent and singular member of the Church, and as its type and excellent exemplar in faith and charity. The Catholic Church, taught by the Holy Spirit, honors her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved Mother.”

I am confident that you were thrilled, when at the close of the III Session, Our Holy Father, invoking his supreme authority, declared Mary, the “Mother of the Church.” The spontaneous reaction of the Council Fathers, the prolonged applause, bears eloquent witness to their wholehearted approval of the action of His Holiness. They were equally gratified when the Holy Father emphasized the universality of the devotion to Mary by concelebrating Mass with the Ordinaries of the famed Shrines of Mary throughout the world, at the closing session of the Council.

Your theme: “The Mother of Christ and Salvation History” is a most fitting one. Your very theme brings out the fact that devotion to Mary cannot be separated from that we pay to her Divine Son; that the devotion to Mary would lose its reason for existence were it to be disassociated from devotion to Christ, and that our expression of homage to Mary in no way makes her equal to Christ.
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Your theme also brings out the fact, that while Mary is a most powerful intercessor, Christ is the one Mediator; the one font of grace; the one source of all goodness. Your theme also indicates that our devotion to Mary must be sanctioned and guided by sound theology—by truth, rather than by mere sentiment; that our devotion to Mary must be based on the overall harmony of the truths and realities that our religion presents.

May Mary, the Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, obtain for you guidance in all your deliberations.