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REPORT ON THE DAYTON CONVENTION

For the second time in the relatively short history of the Mariological Society of America, the Marianists played host to our group by inviting us to hold our 19th annual convention at their magnificent and recently-inaugurated John XXIII Center for Christian Renewal. The two-day ecumenical affair took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, January 2 and 3, 1968, and the attendance was surprisingly good, considering the inclement weather. The warm and friendly atmosphere evident among the delegates of various faiths contrasted sharply with the unpleasant below-zero-temperature outside.

The meeting opened at 10 o'clock in the morning with a prayer by Fr. Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M., our vice-president, who also introduced the Rev. George B. Barrett, S.M., Director of the Center. The speaker explained briefly the origin, purpose, and activities of the new institution, and then extended a warm welcome to the delegates, not failing to point out the fittingness of our meeting being hosted by a Congregation whose entire spirituality is thoroughly permeated by their Venerable Founder's teaching on filial piety to the Mother of God.

Following Fr. Barrett's introductory remarks, the Rev. William G. Most, of Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa, proceeded to deliver his presidential address which dealt primarily with one of the most heatedly controverted topics of the day, namely, academic freedom and loyalty to the magisterium of the Church. With his characteristic competence, the speaker endeavored to show that there need not be any clash between the two *if* our writers, teachers and theologians adhere faithfully to the methodology proper to a Catholic in scientific investigation. He gave a few concrete examples of Catholic authors who have recently shocked their readers and ecclesiastical superiors by espousing rather unorthodox views precisely

because they ignored this indispensable requisite. His most timely reminder, we thought, was a quotation from the recent Vatican Council to the effect that the interpretation of the deposit of faith had been entrusted *exclusively* to the magisterium of the Church; and that does *not* include—according to the same Council—Catholic writers and theologians, regardless of their admitted scholarship and wide popularity.

The presidential address was immediately followed by a paper on *Mary in the Earliest Western Liturgy* by Fr. Ambrose Agius, O.S.B., of Newark, N.J. Unfortunately, the genial Benedictine was unable to attend the meeting, owing to a very serious accident occurred on November 22 of last year. The manuscript was handed over to Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., of Washington, D.C. who, after paying well-deserved tribute to the author's learning and painstaking research, proceeded to deliver the address with as much skill and self-assurance as if he himself had written it.

The afternoon session began at 3:30 with the election of new officers and members of the Board of Directors. The following candidates, submitted by Fr. Philip C. Hoelle, S.M., on behalf of the Nominating Committee, were unanimously elected: Fr. Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M., of Washington, D.C., *President*; Fr. Cletus J. Wessels, O.P., of Dubuque, Iowa, *Vice-President*; Fr. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., of Tampa, Florida, *Secretary*; Fr. James Forgac, O.S.B., of Cleveland, Ohio, *Treasurer*. To the Board of Directors: Very Rev. Ladislaus F. Pelczynski, M.I.C., of Stockbridge, Mass.; Fr. Charles W. Neumann, S.M., of San Antonio, Texas; and Fr. Francis P. Tomai, S.M.M., of Bay Shore, N.Y., to fill out Fr. Wessel's unexpired term. Upon assuming his new office as president, Fr. Maguire conveyed the sincere gratitude of the membership particularly to Fr. Most and Fr. Robichaud, outgoing president and treasurer, respectively, for their long and valuable services to the Society.

Following the election, the new president submitted to the delegates a request by Fr. Most in the form of a resolution to

petition the American hierarchy to restore the Marian titles of "Mother of God" and "ever-Virgin" (as well as the words "imprimis") to the newly-approved English canon of the Mass. (The request, incidentally, had originated in a letter to the delegates by Fr. Dominic J. Unger, O.F.M.Cap.) Various opinions were expressed on the touchy subject. Fr. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., favored the petition on the ground that the new canon is not a "translation" but a distortion of the original, against the express wishes of the Holy See. Fr. William J. Cole, S.M., on the contrary, moved that the resolution be tabled. Msgr. Austin B. Vaughan and Fr. Cletus J. Wessels, O.P., suggested that, since the new canon is only tentative anyway, the Bishops could be requested to make the indicated corrections in a future printing. For his part, Fr. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M., raised the question of the propriety of submitting such a petition to the hierarchy without consulting absent members. To which Fr. Most countered that the group had at various times in the past formulated resolutions without canvassing the entire membership. In any case, when the president asked for a vote by a showing of hands, the vast majority endorsed the procedure suggested by Fr. Robichaud—Fr. Most and Fr. Carol being about the only ones disagreeing.

The matter of the resolution being disposed of, the delegates were regaled with a delightful lecture on the *Profile of Marian Devotion on the Parochial Level* by the nationally-known Redemptorist, Fr. Joseph E. Manton, of Boston, Mass. His contribution, though the least "technical" of those offered, turned out to be, in a sense, the highlight of the entire convention. In his inimitable and sparkling style, the speaker analyzed the various causes leading to the so-called downgrading of Marian cult and devotion among the laity and laid the blame (at least partially) where it really belongs: the irresponsible antics of some of our "activists" and "New Breeders." The Very Rev. Thomas E. Tobin, C.SS.R., of Liguori, Mo., who served in the capacity of discussion leader, added some rather revealing and

informative statistics of his own to those already offered by his confrere.

The second day of the meeting featured a lengthy and scholarly dissertation by the Rev. Dr. Arthur C. Cochrane, professor of systematic theology at Dubuque (Protestant) Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. Taking as his theme *The Theological Basis of Liturgical Devotion to Mary Re-examined*, the speaker undertook to establish a rather striking comparison between the pertinent postures of Karl Rahner, S.J., and Karl Barth; and he endeavored to show that, in the christological system of the latter, the cult of Our Blessed Lady becomes somewhat meaningless and certainly superfluous. Some interesting observations were made by the reactors: Dr. Donald Gorrell, professor of Church History at the United Theological Seminary of Dayton, Ohio, and by Fr. Robert Maloy, S.M., of the University of Dayton. The Rev. Philemon Payiatis, who was expected to contribute a third critique of Dr. Cochrane's paper from the Orthodox point of view, was unable to attend the meeting.

The next speaker on the program was Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., professor of theology at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. As at various times in the past, Fr. Carroll brought us up to date on recent literature in the field of Mariology, a subject he always handles with characteristic competence and erudition.

The afternoon session, which began shortly after the luncheon recess, featured a talk on *Mary in the Early Eastern Liturgy* by the Rt. Rev. Alexander Schmemmann, dean of theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Tuckahoe, N.Y. In rather condensed fashion the well-known speaker pointed out that, while Orthodox scholars have not contributed much (quantitatively) to the elaboration of Marian theology, nevertheless, the pervasive presence of Our Blessed Lady in their liturgical worship is more than sufficient to show the highly influential place she occupies in Orthodox devotional life. It

was rather unfortunate that the author's heavy schedule and multiple activities did not allow him to spell out more concretely his general observations. The all-too-brief lecture only whetted our desire to hear more from him in the future. Something similar might be said concerning the sketchy, but thoughtful remarks contributed by Fr. Polycarp Sherwood, O.S.B., in his evaluation of Schmemann's paper.

The business meeting—last item on the program—was given over mainly to the traditional presentation of the annual award, the following citation being read by our President, Fr. Maguire:

THE MARIOLOGICAL AWARD FOR 1968

Citation

The recipient of this year's Mariological Award is a member of our Society who has deserved well of Marian theology in this post-conciliar and ecumenical age. Born in Iowa, he received his elementary and secondary education in the parochial and public schools of his native state, and then attended Loras College, Dubuque, for two years. In 1950 he entered the Dominican novitiate and was ordained to the priesthood in 1957. His academic training is reflected in his degrees, e.g., B.A. and M.A. from The Aquinas Institute, River Forest, Ill., S.T.L. from the Angelicum in Rome, and finally the S.T.D. from the University of Ottawa in 1963. His doctoral dissertation, published in 1964, was *The Mother of God—Her Physical Maternity: a Re-appraisal*.

The theological interests of the award-winner range over a wide field of current Christian concerns. At present he is assistant dean and professor of systematic theology at The Aquinas Institute in Dubuque, Iowa. He is on the executive committee of the Midwest Association of Theological Schools. He belongs to The Catholic Theological Society of America. He is on the steering committee for curriculum of the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, and is similarly engaged in the Task Force for Curriculum Involvement set up by the American Association of Theological Schools.

In the December, 1967 issue of *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review* he published the article, *Ecumenism at Work*, concerning the Asso-

ciation of Theological Faculties in Iowa. Three institutions belong to the association together with the School of Religion of the State University of Iowa, including 70 professors and 600 students, with a variety of degree programs. The Aquinas Institute is a member along with the Presbyterian Dubuque Theological Seminary and the Lutheran Wartburg Theological Seminary. What did not appear in the article in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review* was the author's own great share in this pioneering project. But it will not surprise the members of our Mariological Society who may not have yet seen the above-mentioned article to learn that it was written by the energetic and alert theologian who was yesterday elected vice-president of our Society, this year's recipient of the Society's highest honor: Father Cletus J. Wessels, of the Order of Preachers.

After the reading of the above citation, Fr. Wessels approached the rostrum, addressed a few words of sincere gratitude for the honor bestowed on him, and voiced the assurance that the award would unquestionably prove a powerful stimulus to pursue his studies and activities in the field of Marian theology. Whereupon the president proceeded to bring the meeting to a close by thanking the good Marianists for their splendid hospitality; His Excellency, Bishop Wright of Pittsburgh, for his valuable support of the Society; the Very Rev. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S., for his generous donations; and the distinguished speakers and discussion leaders for their scholarly contributions and honest exchange of views. The meeting then adjourned with an appropriate prayer of thanksgiving to Our Blessed Mother.