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## Report on the Tampa Convention

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## REPORT FROM THE TAMPA CONVENTION

With the current issue of *MARIAN STUDIES* our Mariological Society reaches a modest, though not insignificant, landmark: two decades of concerted endeavor on the part of our contributors to elucidate Our Blessed Lady's unique prerogatives, to show her relevance to modern times, and thus to make her better known and loved. By their very nature, our National Conventions are but a means to further these goals. In the pages that follow we would like to offer our readers a brief chronicle of our latest such reunion, held at the Sheraton Hotel in old, historic Tampa on January 2 and 3, 1969.

The meeting opened at 10 o'clock in the morning with an appropriate invocation by His Excellency, the Most Reverend Charles B. McLaughlin, Bishop of St. Petersburg. We are particularly happy to print below (pp. 22-23). His Excellency's cordial words of welcome to our delegates in order to give our readers a taste of that traditional "Southern hospitality."

Following the Bishop's gracious greetings, and after the usual announcements by the Secretary, the delegates were privileged to hear the formal presidential address by Father Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M. Among other things, the President noted that, contrary to rumors in our communications media, Vatican II had not downgraded the role of Our Blessed Lady, but had actually enhanced her position in the Church; that a good deal had been accomplished by Mariologists in the past, but that new problems do present new challenges; that these challenges must be met objectively, dispassionately, and in a manner suited to our changing times. Nothing less, he emphasized, should be expected of serious theologians.

Father Maguire was followed at the lectern by the keynote speaker of the convention, Sister Catherine Sean, O.S.F., of Fort Myers, Fla., the first member of the "fair sex" ever to

address our group. Briefly summarized, here is what Sister had to say. One of woman's highest activities is that of response. It belongs to her nature to love, to give of herself, to strengthen others. Woman is the unitive force of the universe. While the times and society in which Mary lived were quite different from ours, and no strict comparison is possible, nevertheless, her behavior does constitute a striking model for modern woman. Mary exemplified in herself what every mature woman ought to be. Her response to God took the form of a deep, abiding faith in the divine message, though sometimes the latter was unintelligible to her. In times of trial, difficulties and uncertainties, we see in Mary always the mature woman—accepting, giving of herself, serving as a stabilizing, calming influence on those around her. It is Mary who teaches every Christian woman her essential mission: a total dedication to God in a love whose impact is radiated to the whole world.

Sister Rosanne Jones, O S F, who served as discussion leader, delighted her audience with some feminine insights of her own—not all of them in harmony with those of her religious colleague.

The first item on the afternoon agenda was the election of two new members to the Board of Directors. Upon a recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the assembled guests voted in favor of Father Bernard Lazor, O S A, of Washington, D C, and Father Francis P. Tomai, S.M.M., of Bay Shore, N.Y.

Unlike previous years, two papers were read during the afternoon session—one by Father Paul Hinnebusch, O P, of Winona, Minn., and the other by Father Matthew F. Morry, O P, of Providence, R.I. The former, well-known author of many books and articles on spirituality, spoke on *Mary and Salvation in the Twentieth Century*. He began by stating that the teaching of Vatican II on Mary may be summed up in one word: openness—openness to God, receptivity of salvation. Modern man, on the contrary, may be summed up in one word: closedness, alienation. Our Blessed Lady's openness to salvation was the openness of one acting fully as a person, in understanding

and love, in free acceptance of responsibility. These are qualities much needed today. In subsequent paragraphs, Fr. Hinnebusch studied the Immaculate Conception, the virginity, the spiritual motherhood, Mary's faith, Mary and the theology of hope, and Mary as the Temple of God. Under each of these headings Mary's openness to salvation is forcefully presented as a striking model for the People of God in our own times—times characterized by inertness, lack of commitment, shirking of responsibility, half-consciousness, and the incessant bombardment of the senses by exciting "happenings."

The reactor to Father Hinnebusch's paper was Father Frank M. Butler, Rector of St. David's Episcopal Church in Cocoa Beach, Fla. The now-fashionable touch of ecumenism could not have been provided by a more qualified man, for Dr. Butler happens to be the Chairman of the Division of Ecumenical Relations for the diocese of South Florida. His gracious and sympathetic stand on matters mariological brought considerable gladness to his audience, as was evidenced by the warm, heartfelt applause he received.

The second speaker, Father Morry, undertook to develop the intriguing topic: *Mary and the Crisis of Faith*. With a profusion of biblical references at his fingertips, the learned sociologist offered a rather detailed analysis of what faith really is; of the various types of crises faced by believers; and of the specific manner in which Our Blessed Lady responded to the divine message. Against this background, he was able to explore the extent of Mary's striking exemplarity *vis-à-vis* the faith-struggles of modern man. The exchange of views elicited by Father Morry's presentation was led by the Very Rev. Msgr. Austin B. Vaughan, distinguished President of The Catholic Theological Society of America, substituting for the Very Rev. Canon LeRoy Lawson, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in St. Petersburg, whose sudden illness prevented him from attending the meeting.

The second day of the convention featured a morning lecture on *Mary's Virginity in Secular Culture* by Father Reginald

Masterson, high-ranking Dominican scholar of The Aquinas Institute of Theology in Dubuque, Iowa. After a rather lengthy introduction on theological methodology (a veritable masterpiece!), and on the historical development of secular culture, the speaker proceeded to describe our present secular age as exhibiting these three characteristics: 1) its loss of the idea of transcendence, 2) its overemphasis on human autonomy; and 3) its obsession with the here and now. Father Masterson then endeavored to show the relevancy of Our Lady's virginity to our secular age from the above-mentioned perspective: 1) Mary's virginity unquestionably points to the *divinity* of her Son, and is thus a sign of something transcendent, 2) Mary accepted her virginal motherhood with a sense of total submission to the divine Will, even though, in the darkness of faith, she did not fathom the "why" and the "how" of God's universal design; 3) The eschatological dimensions of Christian mysteries should be an answer to the meaninglessness which has entrapped modern man. Specifically, the bond between Mary's virginity and her Assumption comes into play here. In the glory she possesses in Heaven, Mary continues her role of intercession within the framework of the here and now; she is a sign of sure hope and solace for the pilgrim People of God. What demands further exploration, according to the author, is the meaning of Mary's virginal commitment to Christ as part of the present "end-time."

Selected as reactor to Father Masterson's remarkable dissertation was Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., himself a recognized authority on the subject of Our Lady's virginity and related themes.

If Mary's virginal integrity has of late been the target of thoughtless disparagement as being irrelevant, it is beginning to look as though her Immaculate Conception, too, will soon be dismissed by some as utterly meaningless. This is, at any rate, the disturbing impression one gathers from the next paper on the program. Its author, admittedly one of the most talented theologians on the American scene, is Father Edward D. O'Con-

nor, C S C, of Notre Dame University. He undertakes an elaborate analysis of some modern theories on original sin and, with devastating logic, demonstrates their incompatibility with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He examines, specifically, the opinions recently voiced by Piet Schoonenberg and G. Gutwenger. According to Schoonenberg, original sin is a situation resulting from the bad example of others—the accumulation of all mankind's sins—plus our failure to mediate grace to others. This view, O'Connor points out, is incompatible with the dogma of the Immaculate Conception because in the first instant of her existence Mary could not have been affected by the situation in question, and hence not preserved from it. According to Gutwenger, original sin is the incompleteness of man who has not yet made an act of faith in Christ. The incompatibility of this view with the Catholic dogma results from the fact that Mary could not have made an act of faith in the first instant of her conception; hence she remained an incomplete being, and so in original sin.

The spirited and all-too-brief discussion of Father O'Connor's learned disquisition was led by Father Alban A. Maguire, O F M, President of the Society.

To inject a personal note at this juncture: from this chronicler's viewpoint, perhaps the most impressive feature of Father O'Connor's masterful essay was his sound methodology; specifically, his insistence on the necessity of always regarding the authentic ecclesiastical *magisterium* as the final criterion on which to settle the validity or non-validity of current theological postures. In this day and age when the mere mention of the word "*magisterium*" causes some of our so-called theologians to squirm and sputter, we find it supremely refreshing and heartening to hear a scholar of O'Connor's standing lay so much stress on loyalty to the *Ecclesia docens*.

The last speaker on the program was Father Eamon R. Carroll, O Carm, former president of our organization, and for several years professor of theology at the Catholic University of America. He has a well-earned reputation as a prodigious col-

lector of bibliographical materials on things mariological. His *Survey of Recent Mariology*, however, was far from being a tedious recitation of names and titles; it was rather a judicious selection of the more important recent publications in the field, invariably presented with a laconic resumé of their contents, and followed occasionally by some pertinent observations and critiques. An exceptionally informative contribution indeed! (It may interest our readers to know that Father Carroll is now in the process of publishing a book of his own, covering the entire field of Mariology, and representing the seasoned fruit of many years of research.) The Rev. Charles W. Neumann, S.M., scheduled to serve as reactor to Father Carroll's paper, was regrettably absent owing to illness.

The business meeting—last item on the agenda—began promptly at 2:30 P.M. with the following report read by Father Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., Secretary of the Society:

At our Dayton Convention last January a motion was made and seconded directing the Secretary to survey all the members of our Society on the question of restoring to the English Canon of the Mass certain words found in the original Latin and omitted in the translation (cf. *MARIAN STUDIES*, 19 [1968] 15-16). That survey was undertaken shortly after the meeting, and I am sure you would like to know the results. Out of 292 members contacted, I received 186 replies. Of these, 136 were favorable to the proposed restoration, while 50 were unfavorable.

On April 9 I submitted this information to Bishop Wright, Episcopal Chairman of this Society, requesting that he bring up this matter at the meeting of the American Hierarchy in St. Louis later that month. On April 30 Bishop Wright answered that he and other bishops, notably Archbishop Carberry, had indeed brought up the same question at their meeting. After that date, I heard no further official word on the subject. Now, however, I see that the original English Canon has been revised on orders from the Holy See, and that the omitted words in question *have* been restored to the text, just as the majority of us had requested. I welcome this opportunity to thank those who took the trouble to answer my cir-

cular, and especially those whose replies were in complete harmony with the demands of the Holy See.

Thank you.

Following the secretary at the podium, Father Alban A. Maguire, O F M, President of the Society, made the following announcements and comments

- 1 At last night's meeting, the Board of Directors decided to hold our next Annual Convention on Friday and Saturday, January 2 and 3, 1970 in New York City. It is understood that the selection of the city is subject to the approval of the Ordinary of that archdiocese Msgr Austin B Vaughan, of St Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N Y, has kindly offered his services to make the necessary arrangements for the celebration of Holy Mass at the hotel
- 2 We note with some concern that attendance at our annual meetings has been steadily decreasing in recent years We sincerely hope this does not reflect a lack of interest on the part of our members Whatever the reason, this means unfavorable publicity for our Society We trust that each one of you will not only honor us with your presence at future meetings, but will make a special effort to get others interested in attending
- 3 Before bringing this Convention to a close, we feel it is our duty to express our heartfelt gratitude to the following
  - a) First and foremost, to His Excellency the Most Rev. Charles B. McLaughlin, Bishop of St Petersburg, for inviting us to hold this meeting in his diocese, and for his warm words of welcome to our guests,
  - b) to His Excellency, the Most Rev John J Wright, Bishop of Pittsburgh and Episcopal Chairman of our Society, for his continued support of our various undertakings (Incidentally, Bishop Wright has recently been appointed President of International Mariological and Marian Congresses, and we would like to take this opportunity to convey to him our sincerest congratulations )
  - c) We extend our gratitude also to the Very Rev. Stanley Matus-



zewski, M S, Editor of *Our Lady's Digest*, for his generous donations to our Society,

- d) to Fr John X Linnehan, Pastor of Holy Redeemer Church, Miss Jane Quinn of *The Florida Catholic*, and Dr Moncrief of *The Tampa Tribune*, for their generous cooperation in giving extensive coverage to our meeting in the press;
- e) and finally, to our distinguished speakers and reactors for their scholarly papers and thought-provoking discussions.

At this time, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting, and the President closed with the customary prayer of thanksgiving for a fruitful and very successful Convention

REV JUNIPER B CAROL, O F.M  
*Secretary*