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REPORT FROM THE NEW YORK CITY CONVENTION

For its 21st annual convention the Mariological Society returned to New York City, meeting at the Penn-Garden Hotel, January 2 and 3, 1970. Approximately 60 members and guests were in attendance. Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M., opened proceedings at 10 a.m., Friday, January 2, with the presidential address. "The five years since *Lumen gentium* seem like a century and the memory of what took place may become a little blurred," he said, and then suggested that official ecumenical dialogue about the Mother of God began with Vatican II. Rather than lament the current Marian malaise—uneasiness about our Lady's place in doctrine and devotion—we should pursue with industry and joy the biblical and patristic resources for "a reappraisal of the Mother of God." The convention theme of Mary's virginal conception of Jesus demands an understanding not merely of magisterial pronouncements, but of the temper and difficulties of modern man. The traditional "conceived of the Virgin Mary" runs counter to neo-Docetism and an obsessive preoccupation with sexuality. To get through to his contemporaries the defender of the faith must realize that the acceptance of the truth of Mary's virginity requires a particular form of commitment to Christ himself, for "the Virgin Birth reveals in the first place that He who came into the world to communicate His life to us is God."

The first major paper came next, "The Gospel Witness to Mary's 'ante partum' Virginity," by John F. Craghan, C.S.S.R., whose S.T.D. thesis was recently published: *Mary the Virginal Wife and the Married Virgin: The Problematic of Mary's Vow of Virginity* (Rome, 1967). New Testament scholar Craghan provided the following summary of his own paper: "The exegete cannot produce the type of objective evidence re-

quired by the modern historiographical method. To attempt to meet such demands is to afflict an injustice on the very nature of the Gospels. The sane critical approach is to accept the Gospel testimony within its own framework and in view of its own theological goals. Matthew and Luke represent different channels or traditions of the one doctrine; both make it unmistakably clear that Joseph did not father Jesus. This unity in diversity is good biblical evidence for the reliability of the sources they used. Another element to be stressed is the indirect, non-apologetical nature of their presentation. Furthermore the Virgin Birth posed a problem for the author of the First Gospel when he undertook the task of showing that Jesus really belonged to the line of David. Real paternity rather than legal paternity would have made his work easier, but Matthew adapted the 'obstacles' of the pre-redactional core and by a clever literary technique retained Jesus as the son of David through Joseph but the son of Mary by the Holy Spirit. Similarly Luke does not set out to propose a defense of Mary's virginity. In fact, according to the annunciation literary genre it is her faith, not her chastity that is extolled. Like Matthew Luke states the fact of Christ's birth of a virgin in a straightforward and unargumentative way." Fr. Stephen Rowe, O.F.M. Cap., was leader of the lively discussion stimulated by Father Craghan's lucid, balanced presentation.

Following the convention luncheon with its opportunity for pre-prandial conversation the session resumed at 3 p.m. First item was the election of officers and board members. To succeed retiring president Alban A. Maguire, O.F.M., the nominating committee proposed Very Rev. Austin B. Vaughan; for new vice-president, Rev. George F. Kirwin, O.M.I.; for new board members, Very Rev. William F. Hogan, Rev. Matthew F. Morry, O.P., and Rev. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., replacing his confrere, Father Francis P. Tomai, S.M.M., who died within the year. By voice vote the assembled members voted in favor of these nominations, as also for the continuation in their posi-

tions of the Secretary of the Society, founding Father Juniper B. Carol, O F M., and the treasurer, Rev. James Forgac, O.S.B.

The afternoon paper was read by Father Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., "Mary's Virginity in the Symbols and Councils," with Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M., moderating the discussion. Fr. Jelly traced the post-biblical development of the doctrine of Mary's virginity, concentrating on the early creeds and eventual conciliar formulations. Under "Mary's virginity in conception," he sought out the remote roots of the credal "conceived of the Virgin Mary," alluding to comparable statements from Justin, Irenaeus and other early Fathers up to Rufinus. "Mary's virginity in parturition" led to a lively debate in the discussion period about the degree to which the Church's teaching has specified the precise object of this mystery. The interchange showed opinions ranging from non-miracle (Mary is 'virgo in partu' in the sense she gives birth to the new Adam) to miracle (whether preservation from labor pains or physical integrity). Fr. Jelly held for a miraculous child-bearing. The new editor of *Marian Studies* argued for the possibility of a 'non-miraculous' understanding of this aspect of Mary's virginity, recalling points raised at a paper of the New Orleans convention (see *MS* 13 (1962) 129-135). "Mary's perpetual virginity" was the final section of Fr. Jelly's paper—especially the open profession of this truth by the time of Saints Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome.

The first paper on January 3 was Msgr. Austin B. Vaughan, "Interpreting the Ordinary Magisterium on Mary's Virginity." This paper is regrettably missing from the present volume of *Marian Studies*. The newly-elected President of our Society, professor at Dunwoodie Seminary, New York, and past-president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, pursued a theme to which he has devoted a series of studies in recent years. Recent events concerning Mary's virginity have posed the question: "how far must we demythologize revealed doctrine and the Church's teaching?" A.

Mitterer raised questions about virginity *in partu* eighteen years ago; many Christians deny the virginity *post partum*; and even some Catholic theologians, e.g., P. Schoonenberg, have publicly challenged a physical understanding of the virginal conception of Jesus. The *Humane vitae* controversy has exacerbated the whole question of the magisterium, ordinary as well as extraordinary. A Vaughan suggested that the ordinary magisterium be regarded not simply as a somewhat weaker exercise of the solemn authority but rather as the preaching of the gospel in terms of local needs and problems. Conscious of their prophetic role, the ordinary magisterium brings all elements into contact with the living situation of the faithful. The witness of the whole Christian community remains the standard, and since the second century it has been an office of the hierarchy to compare local preaching with universal belief. Even for definitions of the past the current ordinary magisterium is a criterion for their permanent validity; the ordinary magisterium is the ordinary means for applying revelation to current life. The hierarchy remains the ultimate criterion of judging, but is not necessarily the source for all or even for most of the insights the Church experiences. There is no doubt that the Church continues to profess Mary's virginity. The Virgin Mary of the Scriptures is a woman of faith, dedication and fruitful virginity. She shows in her own life that Jesus is unique and profoundly immanent to our lives. God's intervention does not substitute for human effort but it does illustrate the limitations of man's efforts to achieve love and peace. After the paper the other convention speakers reacted to it, and their remarks triggered further discussion from the floor.

At 11 a.m. on January 3 Father William J. Cole, S.M., of the University of Dayton, read his paper, "Was Luther a Marian Devotee?" Fresh from a year's study abroad Father Cole offered a thorough analysis of the question of Luther's own devotion to our Lady. He started with two examples—one a Catholic comment that made Luther a life-long and strong partisan of

Marian devotion, the other a Lutheran comment that made him a consistent adversary of all forms of Marian devotion. Lacunae still remain indeed, but the evidence shows that Luther underwent a certain falling-off of devotion to the Mother of Jesus as he grew older, shown by the abandonment of her feasts, as also by his severe warnings against the danger of compromise of confidence in Christ the one Mediator. W. Cole's extensive paper investigated Luther's life before and after his break with Rome, his position with respect to various doctrines about Mary, and finally, in detail, his attitudes towards devotion to Mary at various periods of his life. Categories treated are: respect and honor to Mary, her virtues as worthy of imitation, especially humility and faith; intercession and invocation, in great detail, because of its crucial character, and the Reformed prohibition of invoking the saints, including Saint Mary. Cole shares Stakemeier's judgment, "gradually Luther came to deny the intercession of Mary and dissuaded or excluded her invocation." A summary of the controversy between John Eck, Melancthon and Luther on the intercession and invocation of Mary is followed by a consideration of Trent's teaching. Msgr Wm. F. Hogan of Darlington led the discussion.

The concluding paper was Eamon R. Carroll's fourth annual survey of recent Mariology. Father Carroll chose four areas, with the major example in each from a writer not a Roman Catholic. a) Scripture—Raisanen, Lutheran from Finland, a study on Mary in the Gospels, b) the Fathers—Lutheran J. Pelikan of Yale on St Athanasius; c) Orthodoxy—represented by A. Kniazeff, published in an American journal, *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*; d) American Presbyterianism—Herbert W. Richardson reflects on 'Mother of the Church' as an ecumenically productive title in its use by Pope Paul. Discussion leader for Fr. Carroll was a gracious guest of the convention—Father Theodore Koehler, Marianist from France, member of the Mariological Society of France, and contributor to such theological publications as *Études mariales* and du Manoir's *Maria*,

études sur la sainte Vierge, visiting the United States as acting director-curator of the Marian Library of the University of Dayton. Fr. Koehler told us something about recent meetings of the French Mariological Society, which is giving three years to "Mary and the Holy Spirit," 1968-1970.

Final item on the convention agenda was the business meeting at 2:30 p.m. The treasurer, J. Forgac, O.S.B., gave his report, which will be found at the end of this volume of *Marian Studies*. Next came the Secretary's report, which follows:

I believe this is the first opportunity we have to express our corporate congratulations to our Episcopal Chairman on his recent elevation to the Sacred College of Cardinals, and we do so, of course, sincerely, gratefully and enthusiastically. I feel I interpret correctly the sentiments of all our members if I say that we were all delighted with our Holy Father's choice of Bishop Wright to occupy so important an office in the government of the Church. In a very true sense, the Mariological Society, with which he has been so closely identified from the beginning, is also highly honored by that choice.

It may interest you to know that, in the course of a chat I had with him in Rome after the Consistory, I asked His Eminence if he would like to continue in his capacity as Episcopal Chairman of our Society, assuming a request by our Board of Directors to that effect. His Eminence answered without hesitation, "I'll be delighted to continue, if they'll have me." I may now add that at a meeting of the Board held last night, it was unanimously decided to keep the Cardinal as our Episcopal Chairman. The Board decided likewise to dedicate the next volume of *Marian Studies* to His Eminence.

Speaking of our Proceedings, I would like to announce also that, at my request, the Board of Directors has chosen Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., to succeed yours truly as Editor for *Marian Studies*. I am, of course, deeply grateful to Fr. Carroll for his willingness to accept this extra burden. You may rest assured that, in the future, the editing of our Proceedings will be handled infinitely better than during the past twenty years.

After the secretary, Father Juniper B. Carol, whose long-

time editorship of *Marian Studies* has set a record for on-time performance and accuracy the new editor has little hope of equalling, much less surpassing, the President reported as follows:

1. At last night's meeting, the Board of Directors decided that our next Annual Convention would be held in St. Petersburg, Florida, Monday and Tuesday, January 4 and 5, 1971.
2. We note with some concern that attendance at our annual meetings has been steadily decreasing in recent years. We sincerely hope that this does not reflect a lack of interest on the part of our members. Whatever the reason, this means unfavorable publicity for the Society. We sincerely 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 would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the following.
 - a) First and foremost, to His Eminence, Terence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, for having invited us to hold this meeting in his archdiocese.
 - b) To the Very Rev. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S., Editor of *Our Lady's Digest*, and to the Very Rev. Ladislaus F. Pelczynski, M.I.C., Provincial of the Marian Fathers, for their generous donations to our Society,
 - c) To Father Frank Boyle of St. Joseph's Seminary, for making it possible for our delegates to say Holy Mass here in the Hotel;
 - d) To our distinguished speakers and reactors for their scholarly papers and thought-provoking discussions,
 - e) To Father Alban Maguire, the out-going president; and to Fr. Juniper Carol, editor of *Marian Studies* for the past twenty years.

There was no further business, so a motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. The President closed with a prayer of thanksgiving.

REV. EAMON R. CARROLL, O.C.A.R.M.
Editor