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REPORT ON THE WASHINGTON, D.C. CONVENTION

In order to share more meaningfully in the spirit of the Bicentennial Year of our beloved Country, the Mariological Society of America fittingly celebrated its twenty-seventh annual convention in our Nation's Capital. While those in attendance were not particularly numerous—their number fluctuated between sixty and seventy—nevertheless, the quality of their participation was very much in evidence.

All the sessions were held in the spacious auditorium of the Oblate College, courtesy of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Father George F. Kirwin, superior of the community and president of our Society, extended a warm welcome to the delegates and then introduced His Excellency the Most Reverend William W. Baum, Archbishop of Washington. In his brief address, the Archbishop pointed out that the work of the Mariological Society was very important indeed, and that it had already been of no little assistance to the American Hierarchy. On behalf of his brothers in the episcopate he thanked our group for its valuable contributions in the past and wished us well in our future endeavors. He also called attention to the fact that Mariology throws much light on Christology, on Ecclesiology, on the meaning of justification; it also has a lot to contribute to the field of ecumenism.

Following the Archbishop at the podium, Father Kirwin read his presidential address which was entitled *Mary and Secularity*. He began by distinguishing between secularity and secularism. Secularity, he said, is a commitment to the secular to the degree that the secular represents a human experience common to all men. He referred to David Tracy's call for a critical reflection on what he calls the two principal sources of theology: Chris-

tian texts and common human experience and language. The task of every theologian is to explicate Christian revelation in such a way as to help his fellowman understand it and embrace it. Father Kirwin underlined the necessity to correlate in a critical way our human experiences and the Christian texts. He then applied Tracy's ideas to the field of Mariology, showing how meaningful Marian dogmas can become if viewed from the proper perspective.

After the presidential address, Fr. Avery Dulles, S.J. introduced the Very Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P., Prior of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. and keynote speaker. Fr. Jelly's essay dealt with Marian dogmas within the context of Vatican II's well-known statement concerning the "hierarchy of truths." The first section of his paper discussed the various interpretations given to the teaching of the council on this matter. In the second section he stressed its significance for the Christocentric and ecclesiotypical character of the four Marian dogmas. In the last section he touched on its ecumenical implications in connection with the problem of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption as requisite for a unity of faith in the one Church of Christ. It was here that he discussed Fr. Dulles' suggestion that the anathemas attached to the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption be lifted. Fr. Jelly had no quarrel with that suggestion from a juridical viewpoint, but he did not believe that these dogmas are, as Fr. Dulles had said, "obscure and remote from the heart of the Christian faith." He pointed out that the conciliar teaching of the "hierarchy of truths" can have a double effect ecumenically: one, positive, in making our beliefs more intelligible to our separated brethren; the other, apparently negative, when a peripheral dogma assumes a new importance in the "hierarchy" precisely because it may be necessary for the proper understanding of the central mystery.

During the discussion which followed, Fr. Dulles expressed once again (as he had done a couple of years before) his con-

cern that the anathemas attached to the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption would continue to antagonize non-Catholics unnecessarily. Fr. Juniper Carol, O.F.M. pointed out, however, that this concern was unfounded, since the anathemas were directed, not to non-Catholics, but exclusively to those within the fold.

At 12 noon the delegates were treated to a delightful *preprandium*, followed by an exquisite luncheon in the dining room of the Oblate College.

The matter of electing new members to the Board of Directors took place at 2 P.M. with the following slate submitted by Fr. Ladislaus F. Pelczynski, M.I.C. on behalf of the Nominating Committee: *President*: Very Rev. Frederick M. Jelly, O.P. *Vice President*: Rev. Msgr. Albert W. Low. *Secretary*: Rev. Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. *Treasurer*: Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M. *Non-Officers*: Rev. Bernard Przewozny, O.F.M.Conv. (to replace Msgr. Austin Vaughan); Dr. William H. Marshner (to replace Rev. Matthew Morry, O.P.); Very Rev. Kilian Healy, O.Carm. (to replace Msgr. Low); and Rev. Bernard Lazor, O.S.A. (to replace Rev. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M.). The slate submitted was unanimously approved by the delegates by a voice vote.

Immediately after the election, Dr. William H. Marshner, of the University of Dallas, Texas, introduced the next speaker, Father Donald Dietz, O.M.I., professor of systematic theology at the Oblate College in Washington, D.C., whose topic was: the hierarchy of Marian truths. After an introductory section on the hierarchy of truths in itself, Fr. Dietz made some pertinent reflections on its relation to Marian doctrines in general, and then to the image of Mary in the New Testament. According to him, the New Testament portrait of Our Lady is, basically, that of a graced woman who, as Mother of the Savior, believes in Him and follows Him. Somehow, Mary is likewise the "woman" foretold in *Gen.* 3:15; the "woman" of *Apoc.* 12:1; the virgin mother of *Is.* 7:14; the Daughter of Zion

referred to in Zephaniah. The last section of the paper was devoted to Our Lady's prominent position in the liturgical life of the Church.

At 5:15 P.M. the delegates gathered in the crypt of the neighboring National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for a con-celebrated Holy Mass, with Fr. Jelly as homilist. Dinner fol-lowed at 6 P.M. at the Oblate College. The evening was de-voted to the annual meeting of the Board of Directors, whose main chore was to outline the program for the 1977 convention. Some of the decisions taken would be disclosed later by the president at the closing session of the convention.

On Tuesday, January 6, the general assembly heard the Rev. Bernard Theall, O.S.B., of St. Anselm's Abbey in Washington, D.C., read a paper on the theology of Marian pilgrimages. The first part of his essay was mostly a summary of the vast bib-liography on the subject; the second part was given over to some reflections on Henry Adams' work relative to the famous Marian cathedral of Chartres. Fr. Arthur Weiler, C.S.B., who served as discussion leader, contributed a few witty notes on his own eventful "pilgrimage" from Windsor (Canada) to Washington, and then, in a more serious vein, made an ex-tended plea for a more intensive Marian apostolate to those in need (the hospitalized, the elderly, etc.).

After a ten-minute intermission, the delegates were treated to a scholarly dissertation on biblical Mariology by the Rev. Peter J. Kearney, professor of Sacred Scripture at the Catholic University of America. He chose as his theme: *Gen. 3:15 and Johannine Theology*. After showing the royal background of Gen. 2-3, he noted that the "woman" of the Protoevangelium naturally leads to a discussion of the "queen-mother" in mon-archic Israel. Later on she becomes the symbol of the commu-nity (as in Apoc. 12), but in the Fourth Gospel she is "his-torized" in the person of Mary, the Mother of the Lord. Ac-cording to Fr. Kearney, it would not be untrue to the thought of the evangelist to say that Mary on Calvary became the moth-

er of all Christians, insofar as she expresses in her own historical person the truth that the eschatological community (symbolized by her) has already become a historical reality.—After the paper, there was a fruitful discussion from the floor, ably led by Father Charles H. Miller, S.M., Scripture scholar from St. Louis University.

The afternoon session, which began promptly at 1:30, featured a *Survey of Recent Mariology* by Father Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., professor of Mariology at the Catholic University of America. Besides giving us a comprehensive view of numerous Marian publications during the past year, the speaker devoted particular attention to such important books as Fr. John McHugh's *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*, and Fr. Cándido Pozo's *María en la obra de la salvación*. Fr. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M., director of the Marian Library in Dayton, Ohio, served as reactor.

The last item on the program was the business meeting. Fr. James Forgac, O.S.B., outgoing treasurer, gave a brief financial report, and then Fr. Jelly, the newly-elected president, made the following announcements:

- 1) The next annual convention of the Society will be held at Our Lady of Florida (Passionist Retreat House) in North Palm Beach, Florida, on Monday and Tuesday, January 3 and 4, 1977.
- 2) Beginning in 1977, annual dues for active members will be \$8; for associate members, \$5.
- 3) The Dominicans plan to hold a symposium on the Rosary in Rome in the near future. The delegates are asked to make suggestions that may prove valuable for the better handling of the meeting.
- 4) Fr. Jelly called the attention of the delegates to the fact that the printing of MARIAN STUDIES was getting more expensive each year, while our membership was dwindling. In this connection, he urged those present, first, to pay their annual dues promptly as soon as they receive their dues card from the

treasurer, and second, to endeavor to recruit new members for our Society.

The president said that, before bringing the meeting to a close, he wished to express the sincerest thanks of all to His Excellency, the Most Reverend William W. Baum, Archbishop of Washington, for inviting our group to his Archdiocese and for taking an active part in our meeting. The heartfelt gratitude of the Society, he said, should go also to His Eminence, John J. Cardinal Wright, our Episcopal Chairman; to the Very Rev. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S., editor of *Our Lady's Digest*; and to Fr. Ladislaus F. Pelczynski, M.I.C., for their generous donations; to Fr. George F. Kirwin, O.M.I. and the members of his community at the Oblate College for their exceptionally warm hospitality; and finally, to the various speakers and discussion leaders for their valuable contributions.

When Fr. Jelly asked if there were any other matters to be discussed, Fr. John Harvey, O.S.F.S. suggested that the Society contact all seminary rectors in the U.S. to see if something could be done to restore the teaching of Mariology, as a separate tract, for the benefit of our seminarians. Dr. William Marshner enthusiastically seconded the idea. Fr. Jelly answered that the suggestion was worth looking into and that the matter would be explored by the Board of Directors. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 P.M.

REV. J. B. CAROL, O.F.M.
Secretary