

1-14-1975

## Report on the Atlanta Convention

J. B. Carol

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian\\_studies](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies)



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Carol, J. B. (1975) "Report on the Atlanta Convention," *Marian Studies*: Vol. 26, Article 4, Pages 5-8.  
Available at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian\\_studies/vol26/iss1/4](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol26/iss1/4)

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the Marian Library Publications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marian Studies by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact [mschlangen1@udayton.edu](mailto:mschlangen1@udayton.edu), [ecommons@udayton.edu](mailto:ecommons@udayton.edu).

## **REPORT ON THE ATLANTA CONVENTION**

The twenty-sixth annual convention of The Mariological Society of America was held at the Sheraton-Biltmore Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, on Thursday and Friday, January 2 and 3, 1975, under the gracious auspices of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Thomas A. Donnellan, D.D., Archbishop of Atlanta.

The first general assembly opened at 10 o'clock in the morning with a warm welcome by Archbishop Donnellan. His Excellency quoted a few basic texts from the magisterium concerning what the attitude of theologians should be toward Mary, and he said he was gratified that The Mariological Society of America scrupulously adhered to such important guidelines. For this reason, he added, he was delighted to welcome us to his Archdiocese.

In his presidential address Fr. George F. Kirwin, O.M.I. stressed the need on the part of professional mariologists to show the relevance of Mary to the modern world and its problems. He also referred to the ecumenical dimensions of Mariology, and in this context he mentioned the recent statement of Fr. Avery Dulles, S.J. advocating the lift of the ban of excommunication from those who would not accept the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Fr. Kirwin suggested that, rather than hurl additional anathemas against Dulles, the theologian ought to contribute to the discovery of new insights into these Marian dogmas.

The keynote speaker of the convention was Fr. Manuel Miguens, O.F.M., professor of Sacred Scripture at the Cluster of Theological Schools in Washington, D.C. He delivered a masterful dissertation on the alleged silence of the New Testament concerning Mary's virginal conception of Christ. The

authors' avowed purpose was to re-examine the doubts and difficulties recently publicized by Fr. Raymond Brown, SS. and Joseph Fitzmyer, S.J. and to throw new light on the subject. With a profusion of biblical data at his disposal, Fr. Miguens showed that neither Paul, nor Mark, nor John knew anything about Christ having a human father, but only a divine Father and a human mother. It is only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that Joseph is referred to as Christ's "father." But this must be understood of a juridical paternity only, since it is precisely these two evangelists who explicitly testify, in their infancy narratives, that Christ was conceived virginally. In view of this, if one denies the virginal conception, the only alternative is to admit that the N.T. writers were trying to cover up an illegitimate situation. Fr. Miguens had a great deal to say about the several difficulties raised by some biblical scholars (e.g., concerning the literary genre, historicity, the theologoumenon theory, etc.), but his treatment of the subject is so vast and exhaustive that it simply defies summarizing. The text must be carefully read and re-read in its entirety to gain an in-depth grasp of the problems involved and the plausible solutions proposed.

After the scholarly exchange of views on Fr. Miguens' paper, the delegates were treated to refreshments and an excellent luncheon in the Alabama Room of the Hotel.

Departing from the printed program, the Board of Directors held its private meeting at 2 o'clock to discuss mainly the topics and speakers for the 1976 convention.

The election of new members to the Board of Directors took place at 3:30 p.m. Fr. Daniel Hickey, C. Ss.R., chairman of the nominating committee, submitted the following candidates: Fr. Manuel Miguens, O.F.M. to replace Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.; and Fr. J. Armand Robichaud, S.M. to replace Fr. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M. A voice vote was taken and the slate was unanimously approved by the delegates present.



The afternoon speaker was supposed to be Fr. Bertrand de Margerie, S.J. Since he was unable to attend the convention, his paper was read by Fr. Roger M. Charest, S.M.M., managing editor of *Queen of All Hearts* magazine. The lecture was divided into four sections dealing with prayer *for* Mary, *of* Mary, *with* Mary and *to* Mary, noting under each heading, the ecumenical dimensions involved. Perhaps the most striking and original was the first section. The author recalls that many Eastern Churches actually pray *for* Mary in their Liturgy. The meaning of this practice, according to Fr. de Margerie, is this: At each Mass Christ offers Himself to the Father for the objective and subjective redemption of Mary. The Church, by entering into communion with such an oblation, contributes to Mary's subjective redemption. Hence, in the supratemporal plan of God, the eternal salvation of the first members of mankind may well be conditioned by the sacrifice of their descendants joined to the sacrifice of Christ. The author believes that if the Latin rite incorporates this prayer *for* Mary in the Mass, it would facilitate the acceptance, by Protestant communities, of the invocation and recourse to Mary.

The second day of the convention began with a paper on *Mariology as an Ecumenical Problem* given by the well-known Episcopalian writer, Dr. Ross Mackenzie, professor of theology at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va. The speaker admitted that the separation of Mary from Protestant theology and spirituality which began in the sixteenth century has become almost total in the twentieth century. The reasons for this are: a) that Mary belongs to the "Catholic" heritage and amounts to "Romish popery"; b) the sterile biblicism which interprets the Bible by the Bible alone; c) that Mary does not figure largely in the N.T.; d) that Protestantism has inculcated an androcentric and aggressively masculine society; e) the repudiation of celibacy and virginity by Protestants. As a means to a productive dialogue, Dr. Mackenzie suggests these areas of concern: liberation, faith, communion, and

eschatology. Mary is the sign of our liberation, the *anawim* who has none to trust but God. Her faith in God, as portrayed by the evangelists, is a powerful example to us all. In Acts 1:14 we find Mary engaged in communion of prayer with the infant Church. Protestants must ask themselves whether Mary's response to God has a redemptive significance now. In his apocalyptic drama St. John presents Mary as a sign. She is the "Kind Woman" in heaven. At the end, as at the beginning, we have a sign that in Jesus the whole created world is being brought to its fulfillment.

Dr. Mackenzie was followed at the podium by Fr. Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm., professor of theology at the Catholic University of America. As in years past, Fr. Carroll gave us a rapid review of the more important mariological publication since his last survey. The announced discussion leader, Fr. Theodore A. Koehler, S.M., phoned his inability to attend because of illness, and expressed his best wishes to the delegates present.

After a brief financial report, Fr. Kirwin announced that the next convention of the Society would be held (pending the Ordinary's approval) in Washington, D.C. on Monday and Tuesday, January 5 and 6, 1976. He then proceeded to read the citation of The Cardinal Wright Award (see text elsewhere in this volume), following which the Rev. Manuel Miguens, O.F.M., winner of the award, was presented by Archbishop Donnellan with a beautiful scroll and a check in amount of \$200.00. The president then thanked those who had contributed to the success of the meeting, especially Archbishop Donnellan, Cardinal Wright, Fr. Stanley Matuszewski, M.S., Fr. Jerry Hardy (who made the arrangements for the celebration of Holy Mass in the Hotel), the various speakers and their reactors. The meeting closed with a prayer at 12 noon.

FR. J. B. CAROL, O.F.M.  
*Editor, MARIAN STUDIES*