

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

THE SOCIETY OF MARY:
THE STUDY OF A DEVOTIONAL GROUPING IN
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

Since the 17th century there have been in the Anglican Communion groupings of laity and clergy dedicated to prayer, personal holiness, and a desire to enrich the Church and society through charitable works and mission. These groupings, called "Devotional Societies," emerged out of the late 19th century Oxford Movement or Catholic Revival (1833-1860), and sought to bring into the Church "the fullness of Catholic Faith and Practice," by bearing witness to particular doctrines regarded as neglected or misunderstood. The Society of Mary was one such grouping. It has emphasized the dogma of the Incarnation and has sought to honor the Mother of the Lord. The American Region of this Society, established in 1962, is one of several devotional societies which has enriched the doctrinal, liturgical, and spiritual life of The Episcopal Church by prayer and witness. This dissertation is an historical study and analysis of its activities from 1962 to 1987.

PREFACE

The Church is always affected by many movements and causes, and church people have banded together in various associations and organizations to promote particular ideas and practices. The Anglican Communion is a world-wide family of regional or national churches in communion with the See of Canterbury and with each other. The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is a member of this Communion.

The Anglican tradition contains a rich diversity of groups and organizations, some designed to deal with societal issues, some designed to enhance and promote the mission of the Church and some to promote particular positions within the life and ministry of the Church. Others seek to enrich and enliven the spirituality and liturgical life of the Church. Some groups are political, either ecclesially or socially, such as the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, or the National Organization of Episcopalians for Life (NOEL), which is opposed to abortion. The Episcopal Woman's Caucus, speaks for the rights of women and promotes feminist issues, while the Episcopal Urban Caucus supports the Church's peculiar and unique mission and ministry in cities. There are many groups generally linked together under the umbrella of "Renewal" groups.

some of these very much a part of the recent "charismatic movement."

In the midst of this great mixture are groupings called "Devotional Societies," which seek to enrich the doctrinal, spiritual, and liturgical life of the Church. The emphasis in these groups is the power of prayer and worship, with some teaching and witness. In the Gospels, Jesus used the metaphors of salt, leaven, and light to indicate the essential influence and effect of discipleship both within the Church and in the world. Devotional societies are examples of small groupings of Christians trying to be leaven in the lump, bearing witness to particular doctrines and/or practices, which have a profound effect on the spiritual and liturgical life of the Church. These devotional groups often point to doctrines and practices hitherto neglected or abused. The Order of St. Luke for Healing restored to the Church its distinctive vocation to heal the sick by prayer and by recovering of the Sacrament of Unction. The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer seeks to reinvigorate the spirit and practice of prayer in an international network of persons and groups. The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament bears witness to the centrality of the Eucharist and to the eucharistic doctrines of the Real Presence and

Sacrifice, as well as the practice of reservation of the Sacrament for administration to the sick and for devotion.

The Society of Mary seeks to honor the Blessed Virgin Mother of the Lord, while bearing witness to His holy Incarnation. It is difficult to measure the effect of prayer, yet so many of the things with which devotional societies have been concerned have become evident in the doctrinal, liturgical, and spiritual life of The Episcopal Church. The on-going life and witness of such ecclesial groups is so dependent upon particular factors, such as their appeal, or the enthusiasm and work of particular persons. Mary has a place in the spirituality of many Anglican Christians, especially in the current Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal of The Episcopal Church, and this marks the degree of success of those who bear her witness. But insofar as Mary is still neglected and misunderstood and the doctrine of the Incarnation distorted, such a Society may continue to exert some influence, not only by prayer, but also by teaching and witness. After twenty-five years of development, the Society of Mary is now an established grouping within the life of The Episcopal Church.

INTRODUCTION

The Anglican Communion is like a rich tapestry of interwoven traditions, whose histories can be traced from the early Church and the early Church Fathers through the Reformation period and into the twentieth century. The Anglican tradition is a distinct ecclesial body of Christians in communion with the see of Canterbury and with each other. It emerged from the sixteenth century Reformation, but it is organically and continuously linked with the earliest days of Christianity in the British Isles. Anglicanism has always seen itself as a part of the same fabric as Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, sharing the same fundamentals of faith, order, and practice, yet at the same time, containing an Evangelical tradition and sharing many things in common with the Lutheran and Reformed traditions.

Two significant revivals in the history of Anglicanism serve to underscore and express the tensions which are the bane and blessing of Anglicanism: the Evangelical Revival of the late 18th century, and the Catholic Revival of the late 19th century. It was from the Catholic Revival of the 19th century, also known as the

Tractarian Movement, that Devotional Societies emerged. However, given the characteristics of such ecclesial organizations, to be outlined below, there is evidence that similar groups existed earlier, and that early Methodism, as a movement within the Church of England, was a kind of "devotional" society. John and Charles Wesley, though responsible for the Evangelical Revival, were in fact within the "high church" tradition of the Church of England.

A devotional society is one which emphasizes a particular doctrine or teaching, follows a Rule of Life, which includes particular practices and devotions, and seeks to enrich and influence the spirituality and mission of the Church by prayer and witness. A devotional grouping usually bears witness to a teaching and practice, which is regarded as an integral part of Christian spirituality and doctrine but which has been widely neglected. Thus devotional groupings seek to enrich and enliven the Church by restoring whatever is deemed missing or unappreciated.

The following are some characteristics of groupings known generally as devotional societies:

1. They are founded to promote particular doctrines heretofore neglected or misunderstood and to promote such by particular practices and observances.

2. Each society promotes the basic spirituality of the Church as contained in the Book of Common Prayer, i.e., the Daily Offices, the Eucharist on the Lord's Day and Holy Days, daily prayer, meditation, intercession and Bible study, and acts of charity and stewardship.

3. Each society enriches that Rule with its own "Rule" (or pattern) to promote growth in holiness of life, and with attention to the particular purpose of the group.

4. Members of the societies usually join as individuals, but encouragement is given to local groupings variously called wards, chapters, cells, etc., thus permitting common worship, devotion, and witness.

5. All societies publish intercessory lists, newsletters or journals.

6. Most societies provide insignia for members to wear.

7. All societies provide for an annual general meeting, which includes a festive celebration of the Eucharist or some other public event.

8. Most societies are open to international membership.

Examples of such societies include the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Guild of All Souls, the Society of Mary, the Living Rosary of Our Lady

and St. Dominic, the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, the Society of the Holy Cross, the International Fellowship of St. Luke the Physician, the Society of Christ the King, the Society of King Charles the Martyr, and the associates of religious communities (i.e., the Third Order Franciscans, the Confraternity of St. Benedict, and the Associates of the Order of the Holy Cross, etc.)

Among the oldest of these societies are the Society of the Holy Cross (1855), the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament (1862), and the Guild of All Souls (1875). The earliest Marian society was founded in 1880. We shall look at two of these societies.

The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament promotes the centrality of the Eucharist, bears witness to the eucharistic doctrines of the Holy Sacrifice and the Real Presence, (1) encourages frequent communions with proper preparation before and thanksgiving afterwards, and it is concerned with the reverent celebration of the Eucharist, proper reservation of the Sacrament, and proper disposal of the Sacrament after Divine Service. The Confraternity has supplied eucharistic vestments and wares to missions throughout the world, and its members pray daily for its intentions contained in an Intercession paper, published

thrice yearly. The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament is not a liturgical organization, yet its concern for eucharistic teaching and practice has certainly influenced liturgical developments within the Church.

The Guild of All Souls was established to promote appropriate burial practices in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer, to bear witness to the doctrines of the resurrection, the communion of saints, and the Church's teaching about the intermediate state or purgatory, (2) and to pray for the repose of the souls of the departed. The Guild encouraged the celebration of the Eucharist as an integral part of the burial liturgy, and the celebration of requiem eucharists. It may be argued that the restoration of full and traditional burial liturgies, together with appropriate liturgical propers (collects, psalms, lessons, and proper prefaces), was due in part to the prayers and witness of the Guild.

Devotional societies of the kind described above appear to be unique to the Anglican tradition. (3) It is not the purpose of this study to explore every devotional grouping, but to deal specifically with one grouping, the Society of Mary (American Region), while exploring the place of Mary in the spirituality and liturgical life of The Episcopal Church, and the influence of the Society of

Mary in Anglican spirituality, liturgy, and devotion.

Chapter One will provide a theological overview of the significance of Mary as expressed in The Book of Common Prayer (1979) and The Hymnal 1982. Anglican theology is liturgical, expressed by the maxim, "lex orandi, lex credendi" (the law of praying (is the) law of believing), or "legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi" (the way of praying determines the way of believing). If it were to be asked, "What does The Episcopal Church believe about the blessed Virgin Mary?" the most appropriate place to look for an answer would be in its Book of Common Prayer and its official hymnal.

Chapter Two will review the relevant literature available on this subject, written mostly by Anglican scholars.

Chapter Three will review the historical background from the 17th century "religious societies," which appear to be direct descendants of devotional societies, to the year 1960. There will be a brief description of the history of the Society of Mary in the Church of England.

Chapter Four will trace the history of the American Region of the Society of Mary from 1960 to 1980 in the context of the many changes which took place within the life of The Episcopal Church. There were factors both

within and without, which could account for the interest in and growth of the Society of Mary. Devotional societies characteristically have refused to become a political force in the life of the Church, choosing rather to make their witness by prayer, teaching and witness.

Chapter Five will complete the historical survey of the Society of Mary, indicating its maturity as an organization.

Chapter Six will provide an analysis of some of the factors which contributed to the growth and development of the Society of Mary, such as leadership, membership, publicity and communication, and structures and finance.

Chapter Seven will give a general overview of the impact of the Society of Mary in the life of The Episcopal Church in its essential ministry of prayer and faithful witness. It will bring together those factors identified as significant, and suggest the future mission and ministry of the Society of Mary in the context of what appears to be the general Anglican approach to Marian teaching and devotion.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The doctrine of the Real Presence affirms that Christ is really and truly present in the eucharistic community and in the Bread and the Wine which become truly His Body and His Blood. The Holy Sacrifice or eucharistic sacrifice, is the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, or its anamnesis, in which we are united to his one offering of himself.
- 2 The term "purgatory" means the place or the process of cleansing or purgation. It is regarded as that inter mediate state between earth and heaven, where the soul is purified and made ready for heaven.
- 3 After much searching of the literature for writings on devotional societies, it appears that little or no study has been made of them as unique organizations, either in the Anglican Communion or in other traditions. There is much literature about "prayer groups" in the Protestant traditions, but these are not the same as Anglican devotional societies. Within the Roman Catholic tradition, "sodalities" are similar to devotional societies, but they do not need the doctrinal emphasis typical and characteristic of Anglican devotional groupings. Anglican historians mention in passing many societies, but little attention is paid to their uniqueness.

CHAPTER I

MARY IN THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 1979
AND THE HYMNAL 1982

The Book of Common Prayer is more than a manual for worship. It contains and expresses the basic theology of the Church as professed of The Episcopal Church. It is the authoritative and statutory book of worship, a guide to private prayer, and a primary source of the theology of the Church. Anglican theology is liturgical theology. What the Episcopal Church teaches about the blessed Virgin Mary can be discerned from the study of its Book of Common Prayer.

But the Book of Common Prayer is not The Episcopal Church's only vehicle of doctrine. Hymnody in The Episcopal Church is official and authorized to ensure orthodoxy, and The Hymnal 1982 is regarded as a companion volume of hymns to the Book of Common Prayer 1979. In a book of essays on Mary, it was written, "Within Anglicanism Marian devotion is often subtle and understated, profoundly biblical and expressed more often in hymns and poems ... than in statements and doctrines and treatises." (1) Anglicans express their theology and devotion more often through prayer and song than in doctrinal statements. That

being the case, it is appropriate to study the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal for Marian teaching.

The Liturgy of the Church is that of the Holy Eucharist, the centerpiece of the Church's life, the context of other Sacraments, the gathering into Christ of all things, and the setting forth of the Gospel of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Here is seen, in the words of the Creed, "the communion of saints," the fellowship of both holy things and holy people, united in the Christ by Whom all things were made. Divine worship is that of the whole people of God on earth and in heaven, entering into the glory of God in praise and thanksgiving.

The Anglican tradition has shared with Protestantism a nervousness about Marian doctrine and devotion, yet at the same time, it has maintained several festivals of Mary in the liturgical calendar. The first Book of Common Prayer (1549) retained inclusion of Mary within the context of the Communion of Saints in the Liturgy, in the "Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church," a part of the eucharistic canon. The Second Book of Common Prayer (1552), and subsequent books of Common Prayer, dropped all mention of Mary in liturgical texts, but retained Marian festivals, except the Assumption. The

Conception of the Virgin was included in the calendar, but without propers (collect and lessons) for its observance.

The Anglican Divines of the 17th and 18th centuries had a strong doctrine of the Communion of Saints, including basic teachings about Mary, but there were no outward devotions until the Catholic Revival of the late 19th century Oxford or Tractarian Movement. This revival included a strong doctrine of the Church Catholic, together with an emphasis on the Communion of Saints and the place of Mary. There was a greater desire to express belief in action by enriching worship with appropriate symbols and ceremonies. A recovery of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints and of the role of Mary sought expression in an enrichment of the liturgical calendar, in liturgical reform and in the restoration of Marian shrines in cathedrals and parish churches, and of Marian devotions, such as the "Hail Mary," the Rosary, and various litanies and offices of Mary. From earlier centuries, Marian hymns were translated and new hymns were composed, such as "Ave Maria!, thou whose name all but adoring love may claim." (2)

The Caroline Divines, (English scholars of the late 16th and early 17th centuries), included Mary and the

Communion of Saints in their writings, poems, and sermons, yet they maintained the typically Anglican sense of reserve. George Herbert and Thomas Ken wrote poems and hymns which expressed love for the blessed Virgin Mary and her place in the economy of salvation, such as "Her Virgin eyes saw God incarnate born ..." (3)

The famous statue of the Virgin Mary over the main entrance of the University Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Oxford, England, erected in the 17th century, makes a statement more articulate than prose. The Catholic revival of the 19th century is linked with the restoration of Marian devotion as expressed in art, architecture, and music. Earlier in this 20th century, the renowned shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and many other medieval shrines were restored. Today they stand as places of pilgrimage and devotion.

A consideration of Mary in the Book of Common Prayer and Anglican Hymnody is thus appropriate within the historical Anglican expressions found in liturgical arts (stained glass, sculpture, icons, statues) and music, as well as in shrines and "Lady Chapels."

THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

The Book of Common Prayer has always observed the Annunciation (March 25), and the Purification (February 2nd). The present American Prayer Book also contains the feast of the Visitation (May 31) and the traditional 15th of August observance called simply, "Saint Mary the Virgin." These are all major feasts, sometimes called "red-letter days," as opposed to lesser observances of saints, known as "black-letter" days. Related to these holy days are the feast of St. Joseph (March 19), ranked as a major holy day, and the feast of the Parents of the Virgin Mary (July 26), listed with the lesser holy days. Though the feast of the Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary (December 8) had appeared in the calendar of English Prayer Books (1549, 1552, 1559, 1662), it was dropped from the American Prayer Book (1789, 1892, 1928), and a decision was made not to restore it or the feast of the Nativity of the blessed Virgin Mary (September 8) to the present Book.

Though we refer to these holy days as Marian festivals, they are really linked with feasts of our Lord, except for the 15th of August. Like all other saints' days, this day celebrates Mary's new birth, or entrance into

heaven, whether it is called the Assumption, or Dormition, or Falling Asleep, or simply, "Saint Mary the Virgin, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Annunciation of our Lord Jesus Christ to the blessed Virgin Mary is linked with the Christmas cycle of the Church's year. It is the feast of the Incarnation, the day when "the Word became flesh ..." (4) Nine months later, Mary gives birth to her Divine Son on the liturgical birthday, December 25th. The gospel lection is Luke's account of the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary and her response, "be it unto me according to your word." (Luke 1:26-38) The Old Testament reading from Isaiah is a prophecy that a "virgin shall conceive and bear a son." (Isaiah 7:10-14). The New Testament reading from the Hebrews declares that when Christ came into the world "a body hast thou prepared for me." (Hebrews 10:5-1:10).

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 31st) commemorates the visit of Mary to her pregnant cousin Elizabeth, who is bearing the harbinger of the Messiah, John the Baptist. The gospel reading tells us of the visit and the response of the infants to each other from the womb. Mary sings her song, "Magnificat". (Luke 1: 39-49). The Old Testament reading from Zephaniah says,

"Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion. The Lord your God is in your midst. He will rejoice over you with gladness ..."
 (Zephaniah 3:14-18). As the Word dwells in Mary, so in the New Testament reading, Paul bids Christians, "let the word of Christ dwell in you. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."
 (Colossians 3:12-17)

The feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary) (February 2nd) occurs exactly forty days after Christmas day, in accordance with Jewish custom. It is primarily a feast of our Lord. The gospel tells us of the parents of Jesus in the Temple, and the response of the aged Simeon in the words of the familiar Nunc dimittis, that this Child is a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of the people of Israel. The law is fulfilled. Jesus is presented, and His Virgin Mother is purified.

(Luke 2:22-40). The Old Testament reading from Malachi tells that "the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple."

(Malachi 3:1-4) The New Testament reading from the Hebrews reminds us of Christ's partaking of our human nature, and of his sharing all things with us "that he might become a merciful and faithful high

priest." (Hebrews 2:14-18)

The principal feast of Mary on August 15 celebrates her entrance into glory, as the first of the redeemed, who bore the eternal Word made flesh, and now shares in His resurrection. It celebrates the end of her earthly pilgrimage and mission and her maternal care. The feast is variously called, the Falling Asleep, the Dormition, the Assumption, or Our Lady in Glory. The gospel lection is Mary's Song, the Magnificat. Her soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, her spirit rejoices in God her Savior, and all generations will call her blessed.

(Luke 1:46-55). The Old Testament lesson is also a song of praise in the God who "will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." (Isaiah 61:10-11) The New Testament lesson from Galatians tells that when "the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman." (Galatians 4:4-7)

St. Joseph has been restored to the Church's calendar. He is the spouse of the Virgin. His festival occurs a week before the Annunciation. The liturgical gospel speaks of the Holy Family visiting the temple, and of Jesus being missed on their journey homeward. They find him in the temple where he indicates, "I must be in my

Father's house." (Luke 2:41-52) The lessons emphasize fatherhood, as in II Samuel, "I will raise up your offspring ... and I will establish his kingdom. I will be his father, and he shall be my son." (2 Samuel 7:4,8-16) The New Testament reading from Romans speaks of the promise to Abraham and the faith of Abraham who is "father of us all." (Romans 4:13-18)

Though little is recorded in the scriptures about the parents of Mary, in the second century someone sought to provide an account of Mary's birth and childhood. These included stories of her parents Anne and Joachim. Anne was especially popular in the East since the 6th century, but Anne's feast was not observed in the West until the 12th century. In the Book of Common Prayer, as in the Roman Catholic calendar, Anne and Joachim are celebrated together on the 26th July.

THE CHURCH'S TEACHING

What the Church teaches can best be seen by examining the Prayer Book collects and the hymns. The collect is the prayer of the day. That is, it sets forth the motif, or theme of the particular intention or celebration, and encapsulates some theological understanding of it. The collect gives focus and particularity to the liturgical observance. It occurs at the beginning of the Rite as a conclusion to the entrance rite.

Though popular piety celebrates the Presentation, the Annunciation, and the Visitation as Marian festivals, the Prayer Book lists them as "Other feasts of our Lord." The point is that Anglican theology mainly sees Mary in the context of her relation to Christ. She does not stand alone. Mary is the human vehicle or instrument through whom God brought about the Incarnation. The emphasis on Mary's essential relationship to Christ is seen in the collect for the Visitation:

Father in heaven, by your grace the
virgin mother of your incarnate Son
was blessed in bearing him, but still
more blessed in keeping your word:
Grant us who honor the exaltation of
her lowliness to follow the example
of her devotion to your will; through
Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Her exaltation is dependent upon her role as "mother of your incarnate Son," and upon her faithful obedience to God's will. Mary is thus the model, and Christians are bidden to follow her example. Mary is both Mother and Disciple, both in scripture and as expressed in this collect. She is the pre-eminent disciple, as one who hears the Word and keeps it. Though she is close to Christ as mother, she is closer to him as disciple, as one who hears and obeys.

In this collect as in the collect for Christmas, the virginity and the purity of Mary are underscored. It is a constant theme throughout Christian history.

In the collect for the Visitation, she is "Virgin Mother." Though the collect for the Presentation (Purification) makes no explicit reference to Mary, the prayer that "we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord" points to the purity of Mary as expressed in the Christmas collect, and points to our new birth "by adoption and grace" in baptism. As Mary is "full of grace" and "overshadowed by Holy Spirit," so we, being "regenerate and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit."

An Anglican monk, the Reverend Roland Ford Palmer,

SSJE, wrote the lovely hymn "Sing of Mary, pure and lowly." (6)

"Sing of Mary, pure and lowly,
virgin-mother, undefiled;
sing of God's own Son most holy,
who became her little child.
Fairest child of fairest mother,
God the Lord who came to earth,
Word made flesh, our very brother,
takes our nature by his birth."

There is an affirmation of Mary's purity and virginity. Jesus is the Word incarnate who receives from Mary our human nature.

"By the Creator, Joseph was appointed spouse
of the Virgin, guardian of the Incarnate;
he by his caring ministered to Jesus,
source of salvation.

The Architect's high miracles he saw,
and what was done, the Virgin's
spouse, the guardian of great David's
greater Son." (7)

The primacy of the Incarnation is the context of the role of Mary. She is the theotokos, the bearer of God incarnate. Except for her own feast day, other Marian commemorations are linked with the Christmas cycle of the liturgical year, which is inaugurated as much by the feast of the Annunciation as by the Advent season. The collect for the Annunciation clearly articulates the importance of the Incarnation as the context of Mary's role in salvation

history and of her place in the theology and devotion of the Anglican tradition.

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord,
that we who have known the incarnation
of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by
an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his
cross and passion be brought to the
glory of his resurrection; who lives and
reigns with you, in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. (8)

This collect points both to the incarnation, and to the atonement. Our salvation begins at the child-bearing of the Virgin, but we are saved by Christ's passion and death. Thus we enter into the glory of His resurrection. Mary is not only an agent in the redemption, but she is herself a partaker of that redemption, the first of the redeemed. This is expressed in the collect for her own festival (August 15) which makes clear that upon her death the mother of the Lord is taken to God. This is articulated in the Roman Catholic tradition as the Assumption and in the Eastern Orthodox tradition as the Dormition. (9)

O God, you have taken to yourself
the Blessed Virgin Mary ...

To "take to oneself" is one of the definitions of the word "assumption." The collect shows that Mary is "mother of your incarnate Son." Mary is a model for

Christians, who pray:

Grant that we, who have been
redeemed by his blood, may
share with her the glory of
your eternal kingdom... (10)

What God did in and with Mary, He seeks to do in
and with all believers. She is the woman and virgin mother
in whom God's will and purpose was fulfilled in sending
his Son, "that whoever believes in him should not perish
but have eternal life." (11)

The collects are further theological sources of
what the Church believes and teaches about the place and
role of Mary in Christian piety and devotion. She is above
all an instrument in the Incarnation. She is a model for
Christians, a prototype of the Church, and an example of
virtue and obedience.

HYMNODY

A constant theme in Anglican hymnody is Mary's
leading the Church in earth and heaven in the praises of
God. She is seen with angels and saints in worship and
praise. And the earthly church is bidden to join that
chorus. It can be said that Mary has a distinct liturgical
role in Anglican thought and devotion.

"From the heart of blessed Mary
 from all saints the song ascends,
 and the Church the strain re-echoes
 unto earth's remotest ends." (12)

In the hymn, "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy One's," (13)
 the doxological emphasis is expressed.

"O higher than the cherubim, more glorious
 than the seraphim, lead their praises,
 Alleluia!
 Thou bearer of the eternal Word, most
 gracious magnify the Lord, Alleluia!"

She is surely the exalted one, because she bore the
 eternal Word, and now abides in glory, the glory of her
 Son.

Mary's glory is expressed in a hymn composed by
 George B. Timms (formerly Archdeacon of Hackney, London),
 which alludes to the mysteries of the rosary. The use
 of the rosary is not unknown within the Anglican
 tradition, and several recent books have commended the
 devotion, one written by a British Methodist and another
 by an Anglican evangelical. (14)

"Sing we of the blessed Mother
 who received the angel's word,
 and obedient to the summons bore
 in love the infant Lord;
 sing we of the joys of Mary
 at whose breast the Child was fed
 Who is Son of God eternal
 and the everlasting Bread.

Sing we, too of Mary's sorrows,
 of the sword that pierced her through,
 when beneath the Cross of Jesus
 she his weight of suffering knew,
 looked upon her Son and Savior
 reigning from the awful tree,
 saw the price of our redemption
 paid to set the sinner free.

Sing again the joys of Mary
 when she saw the risen Lord,
 and in prayer with Christ's apostles,
 waited on his promised word;
 from on high the blazing glory
 of the Spirit's presence came,
 heavenly breath of God's own being,
 manifest in wind and flame.

Sing the chieftest joy of Mary
 when on earth her work was done,
 and the Lord of all creation
 brought her to his heavenly home;
 where, raised high with saints and angels,
 in Jerusalem above,
 she beholds her Son and Savior
 reigning as the Lord of love." (15)

Mary is model of the Church whose task it is to worship God. She is the prototype of the Church, a Church which is to be faithful and obedient as she was faithful and obedient.

Anglican hymnody on Mary is Christo-centric. The image is always of Mary, pure and lowly, with her Child.

Anglican hymnody reinforces the place of Mary in the Prayer Book, in the Incarnation, as mother of the Faithful, mother of the church, her Son's people, and her role with saints and angels, as leader of the praises of God.

MARY AND THE EUCHARIST

It was the distinguished liturgical scholar, Dr. Massey Shepherd, who once remarked that, insofar as Mary was omitted from the Prayer Book, the book was impoverished. We have noted her place in the calendar, the Church's understanding of her role as expressed in the collects and some hymns, as well as the scripture lections appointed for her feasts.

Within the eucharistic rites, Mary is seen as an integral part of the Communion of Saints. In the Prayers of the People, form V (16), and in the Litany for Ordinations (17), she is specifically mentioned:

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the
ever blessed Virgin Mary ... and all
the saints

In the Prayer of the People, forms I and II (18), and in the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church (19), there is a blank, permitting the inclusion of Mary, and/or another particular saint. This would allow for her inclusion at all times, or not at all. Such is the freedom and flexibility permitted within the liturgy of The Episcopal Church. As the Prayer Book allows for greater inclusion of Mary, it also allows for her exclusion.

In the Book of Common Prayer (1549), the intercessions were included within the eucharistic canon, and Mary was included in the paragraph on the Communion of Saints. Subsequent books of Common Prayer removed the intercessions from the Canon, and though they retained a commemoration of saints, they omitted any reference to Mary.

Two of the Eucharistic Canons (The Great Thanksgiving) make specific mention of Mary. Canon B (20) says, "For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary ...", and at the end of the Prayer, where the Church prays for our entrance into heaven, a place is made for the mentioning of a particular saint, " ... and bring us to that heavenly country where, with (_____ and), all your saints, we ..." For those who so desire, Mary could be included at every celebration, in addition to the saint being commemorated. But again, the same provision is allowed for her omission.

The Great Thanksgiving D (21), which is of Eastern origin, provides for intercessions, including a paragraph on the Communion of Saints, where Mary is specifically mentioned:

And grant that we may find our inheritance
with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs,
prophets, apostles, and martyrs, (with____)
and all the saints who have found favor with
you in ages past. We praise you in union with
them and give you glory through your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

As the liturgical year has two foci, Christmas and
Easter, Incarnation and Atonement, so does the Church's
teaching about Mary. She is always linked with the
Incarnation, and she is always within the Communion of
Saints. She is the vehicle of our salvation, and the sign
of our redemption. Her life and witness are the patterns
of our pilgrimage, as expressed in the familiar Marian
devotion of the rosary, the constant thread of which is
joy. That is, life in Christ moves from joy through sorrow
to glory.

THE DIVINE OFFICE, THE LITANY, AND
THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

The pattern of devotion in The Episcopal Church is
focused in the daily recitation of the Offices of Morning
and Evening Prayer. Thus the observance of Marian
festivals includes special psalms and readings appropriate
to particular holy days, together with the festival
canticles, which in Morning Prayer are the Benedictus,

and the Te Deum Laudamus. The Te Deum is the Church's great hymn of praise, which contains "when you became man to set us free, you did not shun the Virgin's womb." This is again another reference to the Incarnation. Evening Prayer usually includes the recitation of Mary's Song, the Magnificat almost daily, and always on Sundays and on holy days. The name of Mary may be inserted in Suffrages B. (22)

The Great Litany makes provision for including Mary in the petition which reads, "that it may please thee to grant that, in the fellowship of (_____ and) all the saints, we may attain to thy heavenly kingdom." (23)

In the liturgy for the Burial of the Dead, constant mention is made of our incorporation into the Communion of Saints, for that is our destiny. In the prayers in Rite One (24), provision is made for inclusion of Mary and/or any other saint. And in both Rite One and Rite Two is found a prayer (25) which draws out the full implications of the Church's teaching on the Communion of Saints, which includes the blessed Virgin Mary. The saints continue to manifest the Paschal mystery. We share in their fellowship, benefit from their prayers, and are encouraged by their examples:

O God, the King of Saints, we praise and glorify your holy Name for all your servants who have finished their course in your faith and fear: for the blessed Virgin Mary; for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs; and for all your other righteous servants, known to us and unknown; and we pray, that, encouraged by their examples, aided by their prayers, and strengthened by their fellowship, we also may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; through the merits of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (26)

Provision for liturgical devotion to Mary has been restored to Anglican worship through The Book of Common Prayer 1979 and to The Hymnal 1982. It is clear that the blessed Virgin Mary is understood always and only in relation to her Son Jesus Christ our Lord. As Michael Ramsey (100th Archbishop of Canterbury) has said, "Great as her role is, it is the role of one who is creature and a role which filled with celestial glory, is always a reflection of, and never a substitute for, the unique glory of Christ the Divine Son." (27)

The Book of Common Prayer strikes the essential notes necessary for sound Marian teaching and devotion, but allows flexibility in the range and quality of its expression.

ENDNOTES

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- 3 Thomas Ken, "Her Virgin Eyes Saw God Incarnate Born," in The English Hymnal (London: Oxford University Press), Hymn 217.
- 4 John 1:13 (RSV).
- 5 Luke 1:37 (RSV).
- 6 Roland Ford Palmer, "Sing of Mary", in The Hymnal 1982 (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1982), Hymn 277.
- 7 Hieronius Casanate, "By the Creator", in The Hymnal 1982 (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1982), Hymn 261.
- 8 The Book of Common Prayer (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation and the Seabury Press, 1979), p. 240.
- 9 This is not an official Anglican doctrine.
- 10 BCP, p. 243
- 11 John 3:16 (RSV).
- 12 R. F. Palmer, "Sing of Mary," verse 3
- 13 John Athelstan Riley, "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones" in The Hymnal 1982, Hymn 618
- 14 Neville Ward, Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy (London: Epworth Press, 1968), and John de Satge, Mary and the Christian Gospel (London: SPCK, 1976).

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- 16 BCP 1979, p. 389.
- 17 BCP 1979, p. 548.
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- 19 BCP 1979, p. 328.
- 20 BCP 1979, p. 367.
- 21 BCP 1979, p. 372.
- 22 BCP 1979, pp. 68 and 122.
- 23 BCP 1979, 148.
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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Devotional societies emerged in the Anglican tradition to promote holiness of life through a Rule (or pattern) of life. This normally included daily prayer and meditation, frequent participation in the Eucharist, acts of charity, and the promotion of witness to particular doctrines and/or practices of the Christian Faith. Whenever in history the Church neglected or misunderstood particular teachings and practices, some group emerged to restore what many authors continued to refer to as "the fullness of the Catholic Faith."

In his history of the Guild of All Souls, Richard K. Cowes writes of parishes "where the full Catholic Faith is taught ..." (1) The Guild of All Souls was founded to promote proper Christian burials and uphold the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and "to restore the true implications of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints to the Church of England and to the Churches throughout the world who are in communion with her." (2) This would include restoring the celebration of eucharists for the departed, as well as intercessory prayer for the departed.

The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament was established to promote the centrality of the Holy Eucharist, orthodox and catholic eucharistic teaching, and to encourage reverent expression of the faith in worship and devotion. Again, the author of its history in America writes of maintaining "the fullness of the Catholic Faith." (3)

Each devotional grouping makes a deliberate attempt to contribute to what is understood as fullness, or wholeness, or completeness, of the Catholic faith. There is little if anything discovered in the literature about "Devotional Societies" in general, other than passing references to their existence, and few records of the most familiar ones, other than the aforementioned. A search for books and dissertations has led me to a tentative conclusion that such a study has not been done before, and that devotional societies as such, are unique to the Anglican tradition, extending back to the "Religious Societies" of the late 17th century. Further, no attention has been given to the Society of Mary in the United States since its establishment in 1962. Some books on the history of The Episcopal Church mention the existence of devotional societies, and the semi-official

Church Annual (published yearly by Morehouse-Barlow, New York) lists particular groups under the heading "Devotional Societies".

Thus this project is dependent upon a study of the minutes of the Annual General Meetings of the Society of Mary, the minutes of its national Council, its official correspondence, and the contents of the thrice yearly publication Ave.

The Society of Mary was established in England in 1931, being an amalgamation of several other Marian societies, the first of which was founded in 1880. A brief history is given in several brochures, the English version written by the former Chaplain General, the Reverend Dr. John Milburn, (4) who has included some historical notes in the magazine Ave.

Though one would not wish to compare the vast amount of material on the Blessed Virgin Mary published by Roman Catholics with that in other traditions, it ought to be said that there is a significant amount of literature on Mary written by Anglican scholars and other non-Roman Catholic scholars. In 1905, A. Theodore Wirgman wrote a seminal book, The Blessed Virgin and All the Company of Heaven, in which he indicated that the "fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation is preserved in two

thoughts" which maintain the true faith - "right belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and right belief in the position of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God." (5) To this day, these represent the positions of the two largest and oldest of devotional societies within the Anglican Communion, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Society of Mary.

A study of the Society of Mary in The Episcopal Church raises the question of the place of Mary within the Anglican tradition. Dr. Wirgman was not only concerned with Anglicans, but his study was in the cause of Christian unity. "All who hold the Catholic Faith believe and know that the Eternal Word took human nature upon Him, and willed to be born of a Virgin Mother. This being so, that Mother by God's will, must hold a position of unique pre-eminence and so the whole Church has decreed." (6) He acknowledges that Rome tends to exaggerate her prerogatives, and Anglicans fail in proper recognition of her. It is thus the mission of the Society of Mary to restore that proper and biblical recognition, in both doctrinal and devotional terms.

Dr. John Milburn in a learned paper prepared for the International Mariological Society pointed out that

the Anglican divines of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries "wrote of the Blessed Virgin Mary in terms generally acceptable to Catholic and Orthodox opinion, nevertheless, until the middle of the 19th century, there was hardly any outward expression of the devotion and piety which should have been born of this expressed belief." (7) He indicates that one reason for this may be that religion was formal, political, "of the head but not of the heart." Within Anglicanism, the Incarnation is the true basis of veneration for the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints.

Most Anglicans always see Mary in the context of the Communion of Saints, as do several Reformed scholars, such as Max Thurian. (8) In understanding Mary's place in the Anglican tradition, Evangelical scholars, such as John deSatge, not only serve the cause within the Anglican tradition, but seek to build bridges in an ecumenical spirit to Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and to the Protestant traditions on the other. His book, Mary and the Christ Gospel (9) develops a fresh approach in three steps. He begins first with Mary and Her Son, the biblical evidence, and a basic Christology. His second step is Mary and her Son's people, where she is described as a model disciple, redeemed through her Son from initial justification to final glory. This leads thirdly to Mary, Mother of

of her Son's people, in which he concludes that a conscious relationship with the Lord's mother is not only permissible but theologically desirable.

In 1963 Dr. E. L. Mascall and Dr. H. S. Box published a book of essays, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Essays by Anglicans, (10) which represents that diversity for which the Anglican tradition is best known. These authors agree that the blessed Virgin has been neglected, and their common work seeks to correct that condition. There is this common thread towards fullness, fullness of the Catholic faith, which includes a restoration of Mary's proper role within Anglican and devotion. This comes not only from Catholics and Evangelicals within the tradition, but from studies without, such as Mary in the New Testament, a study by Protestant, Roman Catholic and Anglican scholars, who reach substantial agreement on Mary's role in God's plan of salvation. (11)

Dr. John Macquarrie in his Principles of Christian Theology again places Mary in the context of the Church and the Communion of Saints. He emphasizes her role as "Mother of the Church," a title introduced by Pope Paul VI, but a title which Macquarrie argues is truly ecumenical, (12)

Dr. Macquarrie acknowledges Mary's indispensable part in the Christian drama of Incarnation and salvation. He quotes John Keble, who said that the church accords her "all but adoring love." She is the prototype of the Church, and what one says of Mary one can say also about the Church. In the early 1900's, Dr. A. C. Hall gave a series of retreat addresses published as The Virgin Mother in which he suggested that she is the figure and pattern of all the faithful. (13)

There runs through most of the authors this thread of agreement, that Mary can be a source of unity among Christians, if rightly understood, and that the vocation of Mary and that of the church are one and the same. Kenneth Leech in True Prayer says, "Mary is the Christian prototype of all little people," and that her virginity stands for the impossible, and her example of God's vindication of the poor and oppressed. (14)

Dr. A. M. Allchin in The Kingdom of Love and Knowledge refers to her as type and representative of us all. (15) She is the first among the redeemed community and the New Eve. He develops these themes in The Joy of All Creation. (16)

A sign of Mary as cause of Christian unity is the existence in Great Britain and the United States of the

Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Anglicans have been an integral part of the work of the Society and have contributed to its many international conferences, the papers from which have been published in Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue and in Mary and the Churches, both edited by Alberic Stacpole. (17)

Scholarship is very important, and the Society of Mary (American Region) has published a series of books of essays Studies and Commentaries (I. 1982; II, 1984; III 1987) as an expression of the Society's concern "with sound Biblical and Catholic teaching." (18) However, the Society also seeks to promote devotion, and the evidence for that has been the restoration of most of the historic shrines of Mary in the British provinces, and the existence of Lady chapels, shrines, icons, and statues in a vast number of churches and cathedrals in the United States. The principal shrine, that of Our Lady of Walsingham (Norfolk, England), is to Anglicans what Lourdes is to Roman Catholics, and both increasingly express efforts towards Christian unity by joint pilgrimages and liturgies. The story of Walsingham is told in Walsingham by Claude Fisher, in England's Nazareth (publication of the shrine), and in Colin Stephenson's Walsingham Way. (19)

Horace Keast has written a book published by the English Society entitled, Our Lady in England, which is a brief history of shrines, and an up-to-date record of restorations, including the ecumenical Shrine of Our Lady of Haddington, located near Edinburgh, Scotland within the Kirk (Church of Scotland), but located in a side Chapel owned by the Anglican Earl of Lauderdale.

The Lutheran scholar, Jaroslav Pelikan captures the glory of Mary in art in a book entitled Mary, a volume to be appreciated by Anglicans who would rather celebrate Mary through the visual arts, than make doctrinal statements about her. (20)

The Society of Mary's official publication Ave contains not only numerous articles and essays, but it is a source of documentation for the American Region's growth and development and influence within The Episcopal Church over the past twenty-five years.

ENDNOTES

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- 17 Alberic Stacpole, Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue (New York: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982), and
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CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 1678 TO 1960

The emergence of devotional societies in the late 19th century, as one of the fruits of the Oxford Movement (Catholic Revival), flows from a tradition which can be traced from 17th century England. The central thrust and purpose of these religious groups has historically been holiness of life, a quest for righteousness, and a desire to improve the living conditions in society. Those societies, founded within the Catholic tradition from the Catholic Revival, also had a doctrinal center.

The earliest of "religious societies" began about 1678 in London, formed by a group of young men who met for "prayer, reading the Scriptures, the cultivation of religious life, frequent communion, aid to the poor, soldiers and prisoners, and encouragement of preaching."

(1) By the year 1700, over a hundred such religious societies were organized, mostly about London, but many existed in other parts of England and even in Ireland. Stephen Neill says, "Nor must we forget the tradition of the 'societies,' small groups formed for the reformation of manners or the propagation of pure Christian zeal, each with its own rules, which were popular at the end of the

17th century ..." (2) These religious societies were sometimes called 'clubs.' Each club usually chose a priest as its director. Samuel Wesley, the father of John and Charles, was a strong supporter religious societies. These groups not only met regularly for prayer, discussion frequent Communion, but they became increasingly interested in the work of the Church overseas.

Dr. Thomas Bray became interested in providing religious literature to the churches abroad as well as to parishes in Britain. Out of this interest emerged the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) founded in 1698 by a small group of religious laymen. Three years later, he founded a new society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), a missionary society.

Religious societies were deeply concerned for the poor and expressed interest in prison reform and the foundation of hospitals. "Societies for the Reformation of Manners also grew up in an attempt to raise the standards of morals and decency ... these societies showed a creditable concern for the welfare of the people in an age which could often be coarse and brutal." (3)

The "religious societies" were an integral part of the church, and they sought to enhance the spiritual life of the Church and its mission. Samuel Wesley formed one

such society while he was Rector of Epworth in 1702. In many ways the Epworth groups resembled Spener's "collegia pietatis," (4) being a group of like-minded people, gathered for Bible study, prayer, and the discussion of Sunday sermons. The group aimed to deepen the individual spiritual life. It was from the name of this group that the term "pietism" is derived.

By 1710, many of the clergy regarded the societies as somewhat fanatical, and the societies began to decline. It was not surprising, however, that John Wesley would express the growing Evangelical Revival in terms of what would emerge as Methodism. John Wesley became the leader of this group in Oxford, one originally formed by his brother Charles and two others in 1729. The club was founded to encourage the members in their studies, but soon its members engaged in reading helpful books and in frequent Communion. By 1730, members began to visit prisoners in the Oxford jail, practicing fasting and other high church ideals. They were called the "holy Club," and very soon, the "Methodists." "As matters then were, they more resembled the Anglo-Catholic movement of the 19th century than the Methodism of history." (5)

The church contained many "religious societies," and John Wesley regarded his "societies" as very much a

part of the Church of England. However, as the Methodist "societies" grew, there was increased pressure within them for authority and order, which Wesley himself exercised. As the societies' preachers increased, need arose for them to have authority to administer sacraments. This movement within the church, which contained only a few ordained men, expanded rapidly after the death of John Wesley. Thus it became an ecclesial body apart from the established Church of England. The Evangelical Movement surged through the church, with its emphasis on conversion, confident faith, and active good works for others. It became a party within the church, and several Methodist church bodies grew outside of the established church. In the United States, Methodism became a vehicle for what was known as the Great Awakening in the latter part of the 18th century. It was in the United States that Methodism first became a distinct ecclesial tradition before the inevitable break in England.

As we have seen, religious groupings or societies were very much a part of the Church of England. In the 18th century, there were many evangelical groups, the most famous formed at Clapham, under its rector John Venn. The 'Clapham Sect' consisted of many

distinguished laymen devoted to religious and philanthropic work. These were men of means and influence, who used their wealth, their influence, and their abilities in support of missionary initiatives and works of charity. William Wilberforce was a well-known member of the Clapham Sect, and he became better known as a leader of the anti-slavery movement. Evangelicalism had been essentially a personal affair, appealing to individuals to come to repentance and emphasizing justification by faith in Jesus Christ. It was concerned with conversion. But this quest for personal holiness was also linked with a sense of social responsibility and missionary zeal. The Oxford Movement (or the Catholic Revival) engaged in concerns for order, authority, and sacraments. So the character of religious groups, coming out of the Catholic Revival, focused upon doctrinal matters and their sacramental and liturgical expressions. They were also concerned with matters of holiness and social responsibility.

Once again, Oxford was the scene of the 19th century Catholic Movement. This movement traced its beginnings from John Keble's Assize Sermon at Oxford in 1833, a sermon provoked by the passing of the Irish Church Bill

by Parliament. This bill suppressed a number of dioceses in the Church of Ireland. This raised the question of the nature and authority of the church in contrast to the state. Keble maintained that the church was not a department of the state, but a divine institution, and its bishops were "Successors of the Apostles." The sermon triggered a religious movement led by Oxford scholars John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, Edward Bouverie Pusey, and John Henry Newman. Unlike the early Methodists, these men did not found a religious society. They did, however, meet and they agreed to publish a series of tracts. The "Tracts for the Times" were used in a campaign to rally church people and infuse new life into the church. They dealt with such subjects as the apostolic succession, priesthood, the catholic church, the liturgy, and fasting. The tracts became increasingly learned and included extracts from the early Church Fathers, and the Anglican Divines of the 17th century. The Tracts were clarion calls to the Church of England to recover its tradition. They saw the Church of England as the catholic church of the land. The ideas contained in the tracts would transform the whole face of the Anglican Communion. Soon ideas and concepts were translated into action. Changes appeared

within churches and in worship. Holiness of life was sought by clergy and laity alike. Clergy were encouraged to greater devotion to the duties of daily prayer and unflagging pastoral care. The eucharist was celebrated with greater frequency and more ceremonial. The practice of sacramental confession was restored, and many books, such as The Priest's Prayer and The Priest in Absolution, circulated. New life and vitality was everywhere evident, including in evangelistic missions.

The late 19th century saw the birth of many new societies of all kinds. With this concern for vitality and new life through evangelistic missions, one of the earliest Religious communities for men was founded in 1875 by E. W. Benson, "A Society of Mission Priests." In 1882, a young clergyman, Wilson Carlisle, founded the Church Army. Parish life underwent many changes, and the vehicles for these changes were societies, such as the Mother's Union, and the Girls' Friendly Society. There were organizations for men, and for children, fellowships, and guilds. Many were concerned with upbuilding the parishes, with missions, and with social needs. Outside the parochial system Religious Orders were founded, many of which began by working among the poor, by setting up schools, and by founding homes for orphans, homes for the aged, and

soup kitchens, Religious communities for women preceded communities for men. By the end of the 19th century, the Religious Life had been firmly restored in the Anglican Communion. With the tradition of "religious societies" and the specific concerns of the Catholic Revival, it is not suprising that what is now known as "devotional societies" should develop. As we have already noted, most religious groupings emphasized personal holiness, high moral standards, and social responsibility.

It was not suprising therefore that many groupings developed from the middle of the 19th century. One emphasized the priesthood (the Society of the Holy Cross, 1862); another emphasized the Eucharist (the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, 1862); yet another prayed for the departed, while promoting higher standards of burial practices (the Guild of All Souls, 1875). The first Marian society was founded in 1880, another facet of this 19th century development. The principal concern of the Oxford Movement and the subsequent Catholic revival was the recovery of the whole tradition of what is constantly referred to as "the fullness of Catholic Faith." This fullness was rooted and grounded in the dogma of the Incarnation. Thus these devotional groupings continued to bear witness to the Incarnation.

THE SOCIETY OF MARY

The Society of Mary in England, as now constituted, is the amalgamation of two organizations, the Confraternity of Our Lady, founded in 1885 from a group originally known as the "Confraternity of the Children of Mary" dating from 1880, and the League of Our Lady, dating from 1904. Little is known of the original group except from a Manual which gives the date 1880, and the name of the printers, P. S. D'Rosalia and Co. in Calcutta.

By the time the Society of Mary was formed in 1931, other devotional societies were well established in the United States. It is understood that there may have been American members of some English Marian societies. There were certainly American members of the Society of Mary, but only one Ward of the Society was organized at the Church of St. Clement, Philadelphia. The headquarters of the Society were in England. In the latter part of the 1950's, the English secretary reported that there were nearly ten thousand members of the Society in England, organized into local wards, each with a ward superior and secretary. The Society was governed by a council of clergy and laity elected by the membership, and in the 1950's the Abbot of Nashdom was its Superior.

The Society was dedicated "to the glory of God, under the invocation of Our Lady, Help of Christians. (6)

The objects of the Society were:

- a. To love and honor Mary
- b. To spread devotion to her in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian unity.
- c. To take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family life.

Upon joining the Society members received a copy of the manual, a silver medal usually worn on a blue cord, and the then quarterly publication Ave, which, after World War II, had been reduced from a full-scale magazine to a six page "three-fold" copy. In the 1950's there were nearly one hundred American members of the Society of Mary. Though membership was scattered through the country, the largest concentration of members was on the East coast, especially in the Philadelphia area. There the only Ward was led by the Revd Dr. Franklin Joiner.

In 1958, at a great Eucharistic Congress in London, attended by Anglicans from all over the world, a special issue of Ave was produced in the hope of gaining membership for the Society and establishing more wards. It was in October of 1960 that a young American priest, the

rector of St. Stephen's Church, Florence, New Jersey, the Rev'd J. Duncan Kenna, began corresponding with the secretary of the English Society, Mr. Ronald A. Capps, regarding establishing a new ward. Thus began the history of the Society of Mary in The Episcopal Church.

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CHAPTER IV
HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY
1960 to 1980
AMERICAN REGION

A general resurgence of religious fervor seemed to characterize the 1950's in the United States. Membership in various Anglican devotional societies flourished, and celebrations and festivals were well attended, especially among Anglo-Catholics.

In the world Western nations were recovering from the devastations of the Second World War, Europe was rebuilding, and a sense of peace settled over the nations. The World Council of Churches had been organized, and its first Assembly was held in Amsterdam in 1948. The Second Assembly was held in Evanston, Illinois in 1952. With the emergence of many ecumenical organizations and activities, ecumenism was on the move.

The Second Anglican Congress was held in Minneapolis, in 1952. This meeting brought together Anglicans from all over the world.

The 1950's was a time of aggressive church building. New parishes, new schools, and new seminaries were founded. The Roman Catholic Church seemed to anticipate a splendid future by building on the grand scale. It is no wonder that ecclesial organizations would also grow and

flourish, and new groups were formed to express new concerns and needs. Concern for civil rights and justice began in earnest with particular focus on the Southern United States. The drive to end racial segregation and injustices increased in momentum. The General Convention of The Episcopal Church of 1952 declared that the teaching of Christ was incompatible with every form of discrimination based on color or race. At the end of the 1950's the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity was organized. These acts all preceded and laid the foundations for the civil rights movement of the 1960's.

Within the Church, a liturgical movement gathered momentum with the publication of Prayer Book Studies, twenty-nine booklets, which eventually led to the the revision of the Book of Common Prayer in the 1970's. Unofficially, the work of such liturgical societies as the Alcuin Club and the Parish and People Movement in Britain and Associated Parish in the United States, produced further liturgical research and experimentation. Liturgical developments were of special concern to devotional societies within the Church because of the close link between spirituality and devotion, and liturgical rites and ceremonies.

Tract racks in many churches were filled with

pamphlets, tracts, holy cards, and magazines. Much of this liturgical and devotional material was from the Church of England.

Mr. Capps, the English secretary responded to Fr. Kenna's inquiry about establishing a ward with enthusiasm, even suggesting that the requirement of the minimum of twelve members might be waived, with the understanding that that number would soon be obtained. As was then required, the newly formed forming ward selected its title from the "Litany of Our Lady," (1) elected a ward superior and secretary, and submitted the necessary forms and resolutions to the English Council for its formal consent. The Ward of "Our Lady, Queen of Peace" was approved by the English Council early in 1961, with Father Kenna as Ward Superior. By the summer of 1961, there were twenty-five members, enjoying well-planned and well attended programs.

Meanwhile, across the Delaware river in Philadelphia, the ward in St. Clement's Church floundered without strong leadership, but continued valiantly to exist through the efforts of its secretary, Miss Tacey Hurst. Mr. Capps expressed the hope that the new ward in New Jersey would spur the old one into greater activity.

Fr. Kenna took a strong lead and suggested to the rector of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, and to the new rector of St. Clement's, Philadelphia, that they meet to "discuss the Society and its possibilities in the United States." (2)

He further suggested that they join together in sponsoring advertisements in various church publications, similar to those of other devotional societies. Fr. Kenna approached the Reverend Grieg Taber because he assumed that the premier parish of the Anglo-Catholic tradition, under the title of the Virgin Mary, would surely have a ward of the Society of Mary with its rector, as a member. It must have been a surprise to Fr. Kenna when Fr. Taber wrote, "I can't seem to discover that there ever was a Ward of the Society of Mary here at St. Mary's." (3) Furthermore that Fr. Taber had not himself joined the Society. Fr. Taber also expressed some anxiety about establishing a ward because "it might run into rivalry with St. Mary's ward of the Living Rosary of Our Lady and St. Dominic." (4)

However, Fr. Taber expressed some displeasure with the methods of that organization, and wrote, "sooner than you think we may want to consider forming a ward of the Society of Mary." (5)

Fr. Kenna was undaunted. Not only did he pursue the advertisement for the Society of Mary, but he suggested to Ronald Capps that there ought to be an autonomous region of the Society in the United States. This was a bold move, what with one ward which seemed never to have existed, and another declared "dead." Tacey Hurst kept some semblance of life going at St. Clement's ward, and the status of New York was clarified when Capps wrote, "with regard to New York, I fear that has ceased to function - if it ever started!" (6) (There is evidence that a Mr. O'Connor had attempted unsuccessfully to form a ward.)

In response to the question of the issue of American autonomy, Capps wrote, "I should be happy to fall in with this idea and to recommend its acceptance in principle to the General Council." (7) He then asked for further information, but made it quite clear that the granting of autonomy should include the good will of the Philadelphia ward. He admitted, "If the Society of Mary is to forge ahead in the USA somebody has got to be responsible out there." (8) The secret of devotional societies is indeed that, "Somebody has got to be responsible." Ronald Capps inquired as to who would be the person to take the lead in the United States. He was answered not by

suggestions, but by the obvious eagerness of one person, J. Duncan Kenna. The idea of an American Region was suggested in January, 1962, but by the middle of February, the Secretary General in England was astounded, for he wrote,

When you wrote to me at the beginning of the year on this matter I asked you for suggestions as to the best method of implementing your desire. I had no idea that I should be presented with a fait accompli! I am sending you a copy of the Constitution of the Society under separate cover as this must govern the setting up of any separate Regional Council. Please understand that I am not opposed to this idea which is, I feel, a logical development, but it must be done constitutionally, otherwise difficulty and chaos ensue. (9)

Fr. Lathrop P. Utley, as secretary of the South Jersey Ward, received a full response from Mr. Capps, which contained all the provisions for Regional structures and expressed concerns, including details of membership lists, and financial responsibilities towards England, if any.

Ronald Capps was now under great pressure as the Americans were pressing for "instant" autonomy, and the English General Council was not due to meet until the summer of 1962. If England was looking for an American to be responsible, they were now getting a taste of Americans

aggressiveness and impatience, and their penchant for bypassing rules and procedures. Until this movement towards autonomy, American members were listed in England, and received the then quarterly magazine Ave, in addition to the medal and manual of the Society. These items would be sent directly to members, who would in turn, send their annual dues to England. In the case of those belonging to wards, items might be sent to the ward secretary for distribution.

In March 1962, Fr. Utley received from England a complete list of American members. There were about one hundred and fifty names, perhaps about half living in the Philadelphia - South New Jersey area, and the rest scattered all over the country. A questionnaire was sent to all of the members, containing eight proposals. The response plus pertinent resolutions were to be presented in July by Mr. Capps to the General Council. By these means approval was sought for the recognition of an autonomous American Region.

Meanwhile, in New York, Fr. Taber was experiencing some difficulties with the Society of the Living Rosary of Our Lady and St. Dominic, and he wrote for materials about the Society of Mary with the intention of urging members

of the parish to join the Society. Fr. Kenna delayed in responding to Fr. Taber, as he awaited word from the General Council in England. The Council met on the 11th of July. Mr. Capps wrote to Fr. Kenna on the 25th, "I have delayed replying to you as I have had to refer the appointment of the Regional Superior to the Lord Abbot of Nashdom. I am glad to tell you that the Council has approved the suggestion for the establishment of a Region to govern the Society in the USA ... further, the Abbot has approved the appointment of Fr. Lathrop P. Utley as Regional Superior." (10) Fr. Kenna was appointed Regional Secretary, and all inquiries from the United States would now be directed to the American secretary. In less than a year, indeed in a matter of months, the idea of regional autonomy had come to fruition.

The first Regional Council meeting was held in St. Mary's Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Among those asked to serve on the Regional Council was the rector of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Fr. Taber, as well as the Rector of St. Clement's, Fr. William Elwell. Miss Tacey Hurst, who for many years received and distributed Ave accepted membership on the Council, as did Dr. George Byrne of Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania. The effort to

become a truly national society was expressed by the first Regional Council meeting, which began immediate plans to prepare and publish information about the Society. Such information would explain the rule for membership, the objects of the Society, and the Society's Rule of Life.

As Fr. Kenna would explain in a letter to a friend, "Even though the Society is one of the three largest devotional organizations within the Anglican Communion, its principles and work are little known throughout the American Church." He then expressed the essential goal of the Society, to "further our work of proclaiming the proper place of Our Blessed Mother in the life of the Church." (11)

On behalf of the General Council, Mr. Capps expressed delight in the autonomy of the Americans, but was anxious lest this new status should mean estrangement of the English and American Regions. England supplied copies of Ave and medals to America, but the English region desired constant communications from the American region for inclusions in Ave. Mr. Capps hoped to visit America and suggested that an American version of the manual be published. At the end of 1962, the secretary of the American region was able to report progress in member-

ship and a Regional Council of sixteen members. The first Council meeting set forth definite programs for the development of the American Region. These included the preparation of an application form, a brochure, and a revised American membership manual. The date of the first Annual General Meeting was set for May 25th, 1963, at St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia. Even before the first annual meeting, the hope of an American edition of Ave was expressed: "... it will be quite some time before we are able to undertake our own publication of Ave." (11) Obviously Fr. Kenna had given some thought to this future possibility, but in the meantime he requested more copies of the magazine from England for the increasing membership.

In his first report the idea that every member be assigned to a ward was articulated. Fr. Kenna said, "... to accomplish this the first stage of our development in the USA is the worthy goal of at least one Ward in each State." (13) It was decided that members would receive a rosary along with the medal and membership manual and that members of Religious Communities would be exempt from dues

It was agreed that the Council would meet four times a year on the Saturday closest to mid-April, to July

2nd (feast of the Visitation), to September 8th (feast of the Nativity of the blessed Virgin), and to December 8th (feast of the Conception of the blessed Virgin).

We have noted the hopes of Fr. Kenna and the members of the first Council, those of a national organization with at least one ward in each State and a national magazine. Another example of an ambitious vision for the Society was the idea of a national shrine of Mary. A motion was made by Dr. Byrne that the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, in Washington, D. C., widely known as the "National Cathedral," should be approached to house this shrine. That, plus the idea of a national pilgrimage, was tabled. Also tabled, was the idea of an organization for children, called Crusaders for Mary. It can be said that the first Regional Council meeting was filled with vision and hope, perhaps in retrospect too ambitious. But without the vision and the enthusiasm, where would the Society of Mary be today?

By the end of 1962, almost exactly one year from the beginning of serious correspondence between Fr. Kenna and Mr. Capps, the American Region of the Society of Mary was firmly established. There was the need, however, for clarity of the relationship between England and the United States. Mr. Capps, on behalf of the English Council,

conceded that the American Region must be run "as you feel best suits the local conditions." But he also expressed some anxiety that the Americans "are running a separate organization." (14)

In the wider church, 1962 had been the year of the Second Vatican Council, and that Council paved the way for future Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues. It was also the year that Anglican-Orthodox consultations began. Thus the same year that the Society of Mary was established in The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion began serious dialogue with those other Christian Communions among whom Mary was deeply honored.

The year 1963 is best remembered among Anglicans as the year of the Third Anglican Congress in Toronto, which produced the document "Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence." This document called Anglicans to greater service and mission to others. In the United States, 1963 was the year of the famous "March on Washington," the centerpiece of the civil rights movement for justice and the end to segregation. It was also a sad year, for the architect of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII died and the President of the United

States, John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The nation was called to justice and freedom, while a war was escalating in Southeast Asia. Churches were generally filled on Sundays. Their institutions were relatively successful. There were in the air possibilities of newness, new rites and new rights, but the worst was yet to come. A heavy price would be paid for basic human rights, especially in the South, and a heavy price would be paid for what was perceived as a cause for freedom in Vietnam.

The nation and the Church experienced the birth pangs of newness with convulsions, as students and the nation protested the war in Vietnam and the injustices in society. Flower children bloomed to challenge and overturn cherished institutions and structures. The protests, marches, and demonstrations signaled freedom not only for blacks, but for other minorities, and also for women.

The Church soon shared in the convulsions and what seemed like revolutions. In the midst of all this Christians were called upon to pray, "to keep the faith," and the Society of Mary began and grew, even while other groups declined.

Fr. Kenna had learned of a few Society members in Canada, and he was quite prepared to cast his nets north of the border. He indicated early in 1963, in a letter to Mr. Capps, that the Society would "plan a display and representation at the Anglican Congress" in August 1963, in Toronto, Canada.(15) Fr. Kenna had received the name of a Dr. Gerald Guest of Toronto and began correspondence with him, not only about Canadian membership, but about the witness of the Society of Mary at the Anglican Congress. Thousands of Anglicans from all over the world were expected to attend that conference.

In the meantime, Fr. Kenna exerted extraordinary energy in the cause of the American Region. If it is true, that the success of devotional societies in general is dependent upon the enthusiasm and dynamic work of particular persons, then Fr. Kenna was that person. He wrote to all of the Religious Communities in the Episcopal Church, but he was generally disappointed in their response. It might be assumed that monks and nuns, of all people, would have a love and devotion to the Mother of the Lord. But not so. He wrote,

Our only sincere regret is that we have not received the response we had hoped from our Religious Orders. Particularly, we were disappointed in

the cool response we received from the American Benedictines (a daughter of Nashdom) and the same response from the Order of the Holy Cross (our largest male American Order). Also, none of the American Sisterhood(s) have offered support. (16)

Fr. Kenna did not give up easily. In fact, he wrote, "we are not daunted, but the work would progress so much easily with the support and 'evangelization' of the Religious." (17)

Fr. Kenna always used the term "evangelize" as he urged inquirers to consider new members and new wards. In his correspondence, he mentions various "projects" of the Society. It is obvious that these projects were first his own ideas, before they were adopted, rejected, or tabled by the Council. One of his ideas was to create a series of slides, featuring various shrines of Mary within the American Church.

The first Annual General meeting was held at St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia, preceded by Solemn High Mass at which the Rev'd Grieg Taber, rector of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, was the preacher. He spoke of the appropriateness and urgency of promoting

the place of Mary. Another ward of the Society from New Jersey was recognized, and it was announced that the Supreme Bishop of the Phillipine Independent Catholic Church had become a member of the Society, and that he sought to promote the Society both within his own Communion and that of the Episcopal Church in the Phillipines. From the earliest days of the Society, its influence was not confined to the United States.

In keeping with Fr. Kenna's keen sense of publicity, notice of the annual meeting had been placed in The Living Church, and a brief article was published about the meeting. The advertisement produced a flurry of inquiries and new members.

The Society of Mary was not without witness at the Third Anglican Congress in Toronto, August 1963. Dr. Guest had become the person responsible for "evangelization and propagation" in Canada. He arranged a display, a large poster of the emblem, which appears on the medal, in blue and white. On the blue draped table were brochures and samples of the medal, manuals and blue rosaries, and a statue of Mary. Dr. Guest became the Society's "agent" in Canada. One of the results of this witness at the Anglican Congress was the establishment of the first Canadian ward, Our Lady of Walsingham, centered at All

Hallows Church, Toronto.

Fr. Kenna was never without ideas, and he presented to the September Council meeting in 1963 the plan that a special American Region insert be placed in Ave. The first insert appear in 1964. Many of his ideas did not materialize immediately, nor on the schedule he would have liked. But many of the seeds he sowed in the 1960's came to fruition in the 1980's. His enthusiasm and vision were further expressed in his grand use of terms and phrases, such as referring to the secretary as "national secretariat." His language was often an expression of an anticipated reality, which would lead one to believe that the Society was much larger than it was and more influential than it could possibly be.

The Council decided that May, being the "Month of Mary" and the month for the annual Eucharist and annual general meeting, would also be the month for an annual appeal for members to renew their membership and give generously to the growth and development of the American Region. The Society was officially incorporated as a tax-exempt corporation of the state of Delaware in March 1964. In the same year the Council agreed to establish a lending library, containing not only a collection of books on Mary but a wider collection designed to further the

Catholic faith. Over one hundred volumes were collected and housed with the secretary until they were later moved to St. Alban's Church, Olney, Philadelphia. The library, though used somewhat, was another example of Fr. Kenna's far-reaching dreams, for it presumed a permanent center and office and a person responsible for mailing. The books are at present in the custody of the Regional Superior.

There have been three Regional Superiors since the founding of the American Region of the Society. Fr. Utley was succeeded in 1965 by the Rev'd Edward Hendricks. In 1967, the Rev'd Richard Cornish Martin was elected Regional Superior.

The Society of Mary was established and growing, but its life and future were rather fragile. It was so dependent upon persons, though one should never doubt that the prayers and devotion of its faithful members were crucial. The Society in Canada had begun to grow, but with the departure from its midst of Dr. George Guest the problem in Canada became one of leadership.

Fr. Kenna's term as regional secretary expired in 1967, and he was succeeded by Miss Tacey Hurst. Fr. Kenna soon left the Anglican Communion to join one of the branches of Eastern Orthodoxy. The Society, however, con-

tinued to grow and develop. One of its projects, to which members gave generously, was the furnishing of the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Child, Manila, the Philippines. The Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Church was most grateful and continued to support the Society until his death in 1970. Dr. de los Reyes was the first person to be made an honorary member of the Council. Since his death, no further development of the Society has occurred in the Philippines. This is undoubtedly another example of how crucial a personality is to the development of a devotional society.

The Regional Council in 1967 thought it a good idea for the Society of Mary to make a witness at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, either by having its own booth, or by inviting other devotional societies to join in common witness. It was, however, not until 1985 that that idea became a reality.

It was also at the Annual Meeting of 1967 that the revised membership manual became available, and the treasurer announced the good news that the Society was financially solvent. The importance of advertising was again underscored, for after every Annual Meeting inquiries poured in to the secretary.

The Society of Mary existed and grew because of the drive and determination of Fr. Kenna. It was Miss Hurst, assisted by Miss Virginia Bald, who kept the Society moving through her constant correspondence with England and with inquirers from the United States. She was also responsible for the distribution of Ave. She remained a member of Council until her death. Her own ward also depended upon her steady devotion for its continual survival.

Ronald Capps, who had been so supportive of the American Region, never fulfilled his hope to visit the United States. He died in 1969 and was succeeded by Harry Warrington, who did visit the United States and met with the Council to make sure the links were strong between the two Regions. Though the American Region had grown in numbers, there were still only four wards by 1970. The number of copies of Ave requested from England was nearly five hundred. The notice from the English Council that medals could no longer be supplied got a swift response from the American Council, which agreed not only to finance the production of more medals but promptly ordered two hundred and fifty.

The year 1971 was the 40th anniversary of the Society of Mary, and the American Region was represented

officially by the Superior, Fr. Richard C. Martin, who participated in the liturgies of the celebration and delivered greetings from the United States. His visit to England further strengthened the ties between the two Regions as both the Secretary, Mr. Warrington, and the Chaplain General, Fr. John Milburn, expressed continuing support.

At the 1971 Annual Meeting it was announced that the Superior General of the English Region, The Right Reverend Wilfrid Westall, Bishop of Crediton, would be visiting the United States in the fall. It was in October of 1961 that Fr. Kenna first corresponded with England, an act which resulted in the establishment of the American Region. It seemed appropriate to begin the 10th anniversary celebrations of the American Region therefore with the presence of Dr. Westall. That celebration took place at St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia in November 1971. The 10th anniversary Annual Meeting was held in St. Paul's Parish, Washington, D. C. in May of 1972.

The next eight or so years would be a period of growth, but not without strains and struggles. Fr. George C.. McCormick served as Secretary from 1970 to 1972. He sought to tighten the organization of the

Society, especially the orderly election of members of Council according to classes. Members would serve for three years, but would be eligible for re-election. Fr. McCormick began the custom of including in copies of Ave the "Society of Mary Notes" to keep members abreast of activities. As always, finances were a problem, and the Council sought ways of maintaining membership and yearly dues. By now the yearly appeal was not enough.

No human organization, no matter how pious in intent and purpose, is without conflicts, misunderstandings, and problems. Sometimes conflicts are signs of growth, but often they occur because human beings can be very human. The conflicts centered about the issue of the Society of Mary being truly a national society, versus a "small, elite Philadelphia - New York City - Washington group." Making the Society truly national would be a continuing struggle. For the Society to be known and grow, it would need to advertise. This required an increase in the yearly dues and more attention to finances.

1972 was a year of further growth, and with a slight increase in revenue and the receipt of several legacies, the treasurer asked the Council to endorse the investment of some of the Society's funds. It is evident that the Society benefitted by the generosity of George

Byrne, who made personal contributions to keep the Society solvent. The increase in numbers and correspondence meant that in 1975 the secretariat had to be re-organized. John Rosso had succeeded Fr. McCormick, and it was decided that Mr. Rosso would continue as Recording Secretary, while the duties of secretary would be shared by Mr. Everett Courtland Martin, of Alexandria, Virginia, and Mr. David B. Chase, of Brunswick, Maryland. One would handle correspondence, and the other would handle posting. Their proximity to Washington D. C. resulted in easier and more frequent communication and consultation with the Superior.

Though the Society of Mary depended solely upon volunteers, members demanded that their letters and inquiries be answered, that their checks deposited immediately, and that their copies of Ave be received within weeks of its publication.

Communications were both a continuing problem and an opportunity. 1975 marked the beginning of the American Region Newsletter. It was stated in the first issue, "We hope and pray that this is the beginning of better communication within the American (and Canadian) Region of the Society of Mary. Some day we might have our own magazine or journal." (18) The new secretarial

arrangement was expected to facilitate greatly the growth and witness of the Society.

Within the Episcopal Church, the 1970's were a period of internal change. One issue was that of the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. The process of revising the Prayer Book involved the whole church in testing proposed rites. The principle of "trial use" had been employed, and the church was invited to "try" the proposals contained in a green colored book, Services for Trial Use. After three years with the "Green Book," the General Convention issued another volume called Authorized Services. This period of trial usage ended at the General Convention of 1976, when the proposed Book of Common Prayer was approved. The Society of Mary did not take any position on the revised Book, though many of its members were encouraged to share their opinions and observations with the Standing Liturgical Commission. The Society, though not a liturgical group, was certainly concerned with the place of Mary in the proposed rites. Naturally, the Society would be interested in Marian festivals, in whether or not Mary was included in the Prayers, and in what doctrines would be expressed in a book, which set the standards for faith and order in Anglicanism. A few

members of the Society were also members of the Episcopal Church's Standing Liturgical Commission, and a few others were consultants to that Commission. In the first edition of The American Newsletter, the Superior wrote an article about the proposed Book. In this he stated, "The proposed Book of Common Prayer is not afraid to include the Mother of the Lord, nor to celebrate those festivals in which she plays so important a role. We rejoice in this enrichment to the Common Prayer of God's people in the Episcopal Church." (20)

The other issue which vexed the church was that of the ordination of women to the presbyterate and episcopate. The resolution to admit women to these two Holy Orders was defeated at the General Convention of 1973, but was approved by a narrow margin at the General Convention of 1976. Once again, as a devotional grouping, the Society of Mary took no stand on the ordination issue. Thus the church was now convulsed in controversy over its official book of worship, and over the subject of ordination.

1976 was also the Bi-centennial year of the United States of America. It was decided to hold the annual meeting and festival Eucharist in the Lady Chapel of the National Cathedral. To commemorate the occasion the Society of Mary presented the Cathedral with the gift

of blue eucharistic vestments for use in the Lady Chapel. That gift took time to be designed and executed and was finally presented to the Cathedral in 1980.

Efforts to involve the Society of Mary in ecclesial controversies was firmly resisted. In a sermon to the Society preached at the Annual Meeting in 1975, the Superior reminded the members that,

We are primarily a devotional Society, a community of Christians whose task it is to honor the Theotokos, the Mother of the Lord, and to bear witness to his holy Incarnation, and her role in the scheme of salvation. It is thus a Society of prayer and witness.

He acknowledged the tumult and agony in the world and in the Church. After dealing with several vexing issues, including those of ordination and Prayer Book revision, he said, "A devotional society such as ours is not called to be political ... there are many other organizations one can join for that." (20)

The years between 1977 and 1980 witnessed the establishment and growth of many wards. One would expect a Society dedicated to Mary to appeal to many Anglo-Catholics, but that was clearly not the case. Wards sprang up in Texas, Arizona, North Carolina, Connecticut and Wisconsin, not in traditionally "high church" areas.

The newly revised manual was printed and distributed. Like the Prayer Book, it contained both traditional and contemporary English texts.

The growth and development of the Society was shown in 1978, not only by a dramatic increase in wards, but for the first time, a budget was presented by the treasurer. It was a small budget of \$1,600, but it meant that the Society could anticipate that amount of income, pay all its bills, secure new medals, and begin more aggressive advertising in several national publications. If in 1976, there were 103 paid members; in 1978, the secretary reported 400 members, and this after careful pruning of the membership list. At the end of 1978, the Superior could report, "We are on the brink of growth, new life, and solid organization." (21) In projecting the future, the goal was set for at least twenty-five wards and one thousand members. When the society reached those numerical goals, it might be appropriate to consider dividing the region, and perhaps establish a council of regional superiors. Similar ideas were expressed by the English Council when it met in the fall of 1978, especially in the light of the fact that the Canadians were contemplating the establishment of their own region. The ward of Our Lady of Hope, Toronto, was encouraged to be-

come the nucleus and initiator of a separate Canadian region. The English council further encouraged the United States to consider "a scheme of organization based on smaller territorial areas" and that Ave would remain the "official" and indispensable organ of the Society in the American region. In January 1979, the Canadian Region was established and was thus no longer the responsibility of the American Region.

In 1979 inquiries began to be received from the Diocese of Colombia, South America. A number of membership applications were received, and the Society of Mary began to grow with the blessing and encouragement of the bishop of that diocese. The newly organized wards were encouraged to translate and adapt materials for their use in Spanish.

The Society of Mary continued to grow in numbers, and members sought to establish local wards. If there were less than the required twelve members, "cell" status was granted to the group to encourage its further development. With growing membership and increasing budget and with inquiries coming from all parts of the country and beyond, the Society of Mary entered the 1980's with a strong sense of maturity.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The Litany of Our Lady is published in St. Augustine's Prayer Book, (West Park, N.Y.: Holy Cross Publication, 1967).
- 2 Fr. J. D. Kenna to Fr. G. Taber,
July 13, 1961.
- 3 Fr. G. Taber to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
November 22, 1961.
- 4 The devotional society of The Living Rosary of Our Lady and St. Dominic was founded in England in 1905, and the person in America responsible for it, has been Miss G. E. Howard, Hudson, New York. It was established to further devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary by means of the Holy Rosary.
- 5 Fr. G. Taber to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
November 22, 1961.
- 6 R. A. Capps to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
January 9, 1962.
- 7 R. A. Capps to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
January 9, 1962.
- 8 R. A. Capps to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
January 9, 1962.
- 9 R. A. Capps to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
February 17, 1962.
- 10 R. A. Capps to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
July 25, 1962.
- 11 Fr. J. D. Kenna to a friend,
September 20, 1962.
- 12 Fr. J. D. Kenna, personal, February 22, 1963.
- 13 Fr. J. D. Kenna to Fr. G. Taber,
March 5, 1963.

- 14 R. A. Capps to Fr. J. D. Kenna,
December 13, 1962.
- 15 Fr. J. D. Kenna to R. A. Capps,
January 12, 1963.
- 16 Fr. J. D. Kenna personal,
January 12, 1963.
- 17 Fr. J. D. Kenna to an inquirer,
January 9, 1963
- 18 R. C. Martin, American Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 1
1973
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 From a sermon preached by Fr. R. C. Martin,
Annual Meeting, May 1975, in St. Paul's Church
Washington, D. C.
- 21 From a report to the National Council,
1978.

CHAPTER V
THE SOCIETY OF MARY
1980 TO 1987

The year 1980 was the centenary of the foundation of the first Anglican Marian society, which was the direct ancestor of the present Society. The celebration was held in Washington, D. C. at St. George's Parish, and wards throughout the church were encouraged so give thanks for one hundred years of witness.

The annual dues were raised to \$10.00 in order to cover the increased postage rates. Eighteen persons were Life-Members, which meant that they paid \$100.00 and received a certificate signed by the Superior and Secretary. Members of the Society were encouraged to remember the Society in their wills, for the Society had already benefitted from a few legacies, which had been wisely invested. At every Annual Meeting during the 1980's the Treasurer presented a report of receipts and expenditures and presented a budget which anticipated a yearly increase in income. This meant that the Society was in a financial position to consider many long hoped-for projects. Dr. Tipton Westfall, Assistant Secretary, was responsible for Society records, which not only recorded active members, but also kept a record of inactive

members, persons who failed to contribute to the Society and renew their membership. Membership continued to grow and included five bishops. Each year the Secretary reported new wards, and in places of fewer than twelve members, cells were established in places like Placentia, California, Norwalk, Connecticut, Trenton, New Jersey, and Baltimore, Maryland.

Every local ward was encouraged to take the initiative in promoting the Society in its own area.

One of the recurring problems was that of the distribution of Ave. Issues of the American Newsletter continued between distributions of Ave. Copies of the magazine would arrive from England in separate bundles, often weeks apart, which meant that mailing was always delayed. Thus, at the 19th general Annual Meeting, two announcements were received with great joy. Beginning in 1981, the American Region would at last produce its own magazine. The Treasurer had discovered a printer who could print an exact duplicate of Ave, adding one whole section, The American Newsletter (New Series). The cover would contain the words, "American Region Edition." The second announcement was that of the publication of a learned book of Marian studies by Anglican scholars. The Society of Mary was not only a devotional society

but it had a vocation to witness and to teach. This series of publications was designed to teach Episcopalians. It also contained a collection of important essays within the Anglican tradition which could inform and enrich Christians of other traditions. The first issue of Studies and Commentaries was published in 1982. Subsequently volumes II and III were published in 1984 and 1987. The books contained contributions from such distinguished scholars as John Macquarrie, Reginald Fuller, John Milburn, and Louis Weil.

The Society honored some of its members by making them honorary members of Council, and in addition to the Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Church, it also honored Fr. Elwell of St. Clement's, and Fr. Ralph Davis, an assistant from St. Clement's. In 1981, it honored George Byrne for his many years of generous and devoted service as Treasurer, making him an honorary member of Council and designating him as "Treasurer Emeritus."

The Society of Mary celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1981. On that occasion the American Region was well represented at the official celebrations in London.

As was stated in the Assumption issue of Ave 1981:

Without question the great strength of the Society of Mary rests in individual devotion of each member to our blessed Lady. For that reason much of the interest in the Society is directed toward the devotion of the individual living in isolation ... yet ... the Society is more than a group of individuals living in isolation ... we are a fellow-within the Body of Christ bound together in a very special way.

And then the emphasis was given to the development of wards.

In September of 1981, Wallace H. Spaulding succeeded Everett Courtland Martin as secretary. Dr. Westfall continued as editor of Ave, "American Region Edition," until he was succeeded by the chaplain, Fr. Walter E. Frieman.

After the tumultuous 1970's, the Episcopal Church's General Conventions of the 1980's seem rather tame. The 1982 General Convention met in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Society of Mary was not without witness. Although the Society did not as yet maintain its own booth in the Exhibition Hall, its literature was widely circulated, and the feast of the Nativity of the blessed Virgin Mary was concelebrated by five of the bishops of the Society. With such a large number of people in attendance, plans were

made for greater witness at the next Convention in 1985.

1983 was an important year in the life of the Anglican Communion as it marked the 150th anniversary of the Catholic Revival, or Oxford Movement. The Superior wrote,

When one reviews the significant influence of the Oxford Movement in the Anglican Communion, surely the Society of Mary is one of them ... The Society must continue its quiet work of prayer and witness. The presence within the Anglican Communion of this Society and other Marian organizations is an important sign. But even more powerful are our prayers and devotion. Individuals and cells and Wards are that essential leaven. And beyond our Communion, the Anglican understanding of the role of Mary and our restrained devotion to her, is of tremendous ecumenical significance. We can be that bridge between one tradition we accuse of excess, and that other we accuse of neglect. It is to be hoped that our publications and observances will continue to bear witness to that Biblical Catholicism expressed by the Oxford Movement and our Catholic heritage. (2)

Several members of the Society, including the Superior, participated in the Catholic Renewal Conference in Loughborough, England, as well as in the official celebrations and conferences in Oxford and London.

The decision of the Council to send copies of Studies and Commentaries to all Episcopal theological seminaries and theological institutions in other places was a demonstration of the strength of the Society's conviction about its witness and teaching.

In 1984, the Society helped to underwrite the publication of a book by Canon A. M. Allchin, The Joy of All Creation, published in America by Cowley Press.

The Society's growth in Colombia was phenomenal. The Bishop was a strong supporter, and several newer congregations in that diocese were dedicated to Mary. The Council agreed to establish a Hispanic Region.

In addition to the growth and development of the Society in South America, inquiries began to come from Ghana along with requests for medals and manuals in large numbers. By 1986 hundreds in the Anglican dioceses of Ghana were members of the Society of Mary, sparked by the enthusiasm of one person, the Rev'd Harry Orland-Mensah, of Accra. As there are said to be more Anglicans in Uganda than in the Episcopal Church in America, so there are nearly as many, if not more members of the Society in Ghana than in the United States. However, at the annual meeting in 1985, the secretary reported a dramatic increase in American members, some 130 in one year.

The influence of the Society was demonstrated when Fr. Bragg from the diocese of Virginia indicated that the Diocesan Council had submitted the necessary resolution to the General Convention for consideration of inclusion in the liturgical calendar of the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (December 8th). What sparked this interest was the article in Studies and Commentaries I 1982, on the Conception by the New Testament scholar, Dr. Reginald Fuller.

Since 1967, when the Council agreed to sponsor a booth at a General Convention, the Society always had a desire to do so. The Society of Mary invited the Guild of All Souls and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament to join together in sponsoring an "Episcopal Devotional Societies" booth at the Convention in Anaheim, California, in 1985. Members of the local ward in Placentia, Rosa Mystica, were responsible for the decoration and tending of the booth.

At the 24th Annual Meeting in 1986 a new project was announced, the publication of a Marian hymnal. Further, the society looked forward to the celebration of its 25th anniversary and Annual Meeting in 1987, and to its witness at the next General Convention in 1988.

The Society of Mary had come a long way from the dreams of Fr. Kenna and the hopes of Ronald Capps. It was now well established with its membership approaching one thousand. There were 35 wards, and work was being done in two foreign countries. Its membership included eight bishops and its financial status permitted the publication of books, the planning of new volumes, and the possibility of other projects. So much of the vision of those early days has become a reality.

How can one measure spiritual and liturgical enrichment? Yet a devotional society is a group of Christians whose primary task is prayer and witness, and in some small way a little leaven leavens the lump, a little salt seasons and enlivens, and a little light illumines the darkness.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Richard C. Martin, "From the Superior," Ave
(American Region Edition), Assumption, 1981,
p. 16.
- 2 Richard C. Martin, "From the American Regional
Superior," Ave (American Region Edition),
Annunciation, 1983, p. 7.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS

As stated above, the 1950's were years of intense religious activity. Churches boasted full congregations, seminaries were filled with students preparing for ministry, and religious institutions expanded their facilities. Various religious societies flourished in numbers and events. It was not suprising that Episcopalians, especially within the Anglo-Catholic movement, discovered yet another devotional grouping, a society dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Other societies were well established in the Episcopal Church. Only the Society of Mary, which recorded thousands of members in England, was not organized in the United States. Fr. Kenna had noted that the Society was one of the three largest in the Anglican Communion, and he was eager to promote the Society of Mary. We have noted that in the 1950's there were over one hundred members, but only one ward. The English Council was eager that its membership should increase in the United States, but was unable to do much about this until someone took responsibility for organizations and promotion.

The foundation and development of a devotional society is dependent upon the leadership and enthusiastic drive of particular individuals. There are other factors

which made the time for the organization of a society dedicated to Mary ripe. The Anglican shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham was becoming better known as a place of pilgrimage. Founded in the 10th century, and suppressed by Henry VIII in the 16th century, the shrine was restored by the vicar of Walsingham in the early 1930's. The bishops of the Anglican Communion were invited to the first bishops' pilgrimage in 1958. By the end of the 1950's, Episcopalians were becoming acquainted with the shrine and many joined its growing network of associates and friends. Enthusiastic leadership was the key to the foundation and development of the Society of Mary. The rector of St. Clement's Philadelphia, Fr. Joiner, organized a strong and active ward, but he did not promote the organization of the Society beyond his parish. There were members scattered about the United States, with enough members in one area to organize a ward, but it was Fr. Kenna who spearheaded the organization, and became the responsible person that Mr. Capps indicated was needed. We have noted how he shocked the English Council, not merely by an idea of an autonomous organization but with a definite plan of action, which he pushed. A process which might have taken a year or more, took but months. He thus forced the English Council to approve autonomy, albeit with their

nervousness that the American Region would become as independent and as separate as the United States and as the Episcopal Church was from Great Britain and the Church of England respectively. But from the beginning, it was unwise to exercise too much independence. Too many Episcopalians looked to England for approval, and further, the Society was dependent upon England for its essential materials, such as manuals, medals, and publications.

Leadership required organization and the support of persons who shared the vision. Once autonomy was granted, the American Region of the Society organized a Council and placed on the Council respected persons, such as the rectors of two of the most influential parishes within the Catholic tradition, St. Clement's, Philadelphia, and the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York. The Abbot of Nashdom exercised his authority to appoint the first Regional Superior. He did not appoint Fr. Kenna. He appointed Fr. Utley. This points to the fact that the person in charge is not always the driving force of an organization. The Superior presides over the meetings. However, it was the Secretary, namely Fr. Kenna and those who succeeded him, who were the key persons in the development and growth of the Society. It was the Secretary who communicated with the membership and with potential members.

It was the Secretary who kept the records, and who was responsible for those other key factors, publicity and advertising. It was the secretary who was responsible for urging clergy and lay persons to promote and organize the Society in their parishes and areas. Fr. Kenna had called it "evangelization." In all his correspondence he urged people to respond and join the society and organize it. Therefore in the organization of wards, particular persons were responsible for their activity. The moments of crisis in the history of the Society were moments when the secretary did not maintain records, or keep up with correspondence, or was embroiled in some personality conflict. What is true of the national Society was also true of the development of wards. In every instance the local ward depended upon the drive and enthusiasm of a particular person. We have already noted that the ward in New York never really developed, though many members lived in that area. The Superior presided, but the secretaries were the key persons in the growth and development of the Society.

Organizations which depend mainly on volunteer activities often suffer from the disadvantage of being ineffective. The success of the organization rests with keen leadership and dedicated service.

No one can organize alone. Members of the Council, such as Tacey Hurst, Virginia Bald, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Cooper, George Byrne, and later John Rosso, David Chase, Fr. George McCormick, Wallace Spaulding, and Fr. Walter Frieman, were all persons responsible for doing the work.

In terms of organization, the national Council was an important factor in planning and development. The Council made decisions, many of which required money for their implementation. The Council was responsible for raising the funds necessary for the Society to function. One of the most important factors was communication and publicity. Money had to be raised to promote the Society. Fr. Kenna's first concern was advertising, when he invited Fr. Elwell and Fr. Taber to consider ways of making the Society of Mary known. One of the first concerns of the Council, and a continuing concern, was publicity. Throughout its history, inquiries were received as a result of advertistements. Yet there were limits, due to lack of funds. It was not until the 1980's when the Society achieved some financial security, that it could develop its publicity and communications more fully.

The Society does not consist merely of individuals. It is made up of groups called wards. Every ward was

established by somebody, either clergy or lay person. Every ward is sustained by a particular person. Where wards are moribund or inactive, it may not be because there are no members, but because there is no leader. In the case of wards, it can be observed that the ward superior is the key person, not so much the Secretary. Thus the organization on the local level and the organization on the national level depend on particular people and a group of supportive workers. As people respond to the publicity and become members, they are encouraged to organize on the local level for witness. The Society of Mary has grown from two wards in 1962, to over 35 wards in 1987. It has grown in numbers from one hundred and fifty or so in the early 1960's to approximately a thousand.

If communication in terms of advertisement recruits members, communications through such publications as Ave sustains members. Ave has been a source of communication and of education, for it contains learned articles and information. When people join an organization, they expect to receive something more than membership credentials. In the case of the Society of Mary members receive and may wear the medal, and they receive thrice yearly, a publication. Life members receive a certificate which may be

framed and displayed.

Who are the members of the Society of Mary? At the beginning, Fr. Kenna began where he assumed people would respond. He assumed that Episcopalians of the Catholic tradition would certainly join a society dedicated to Mary as an expression of their promotion of Catholic principles. In that belief he was only partially correct. There was some response from traditional Anglo-Catholic parishes. But the vast majority of the members of the Society have come from many traditions within the Church and from parishes and areas of the country least likely to be considered if one's criterion is narrowly Anglo-Catholic. It is a diverse group of people, and it includes some from other traditions, particularly Methodists and Lutherans. In fact, there are very few wards in the traditionally Catholic parishes, though there are members of the Society within those congregations. As we have already noted, membership includes eight bishops and extends beyond the Episcopal Church to the Northern Cone of South America and to Ghana.

A devotional society is characterized by prayer and witness. For that reason, the Society of Mary has resolutely avoided and resisted any involvement in ecclesial politics. At moments of crisis in the history

of the Church, there are those who have wanted such a grouping to take a position. In the recent history of the Episcopal Church, the issues of ordination of women and of Prayer Book revision have been particularly controversial. Throughout the periods of controversy, the Society continued to grow but steadfastly refused to take a stand on any issue, leaving it to its members to pray and act according to their own consciences and convictions. The Society was determined to stick to its vocation of prayer and witness. The survival of devotional societies within the church is itself an answer to prayer. It is difficult to measure how prayer works. One can only point to what appears to be answers to prayer or results. Devotional societies lose some credibility if they engaged in activities beyond their purposes.

There are many wards whose members are organized within one parish. There are other wards with members from several parishes. Nearly all wards meet regularly. One ward meets regularly to pray the rosary, and nearly all wards gather together to celebrate the Eucharist on feasts of Mary. One ward is engaged in a ministry of visitation to the sick and housebound of its parish, and another is responsible for a parish book shop. One of the wards in Wisconsin sponsors a yearly pilgrimage to a nearby Roman

Catholic Shrine, while another ward in New Jersey promotes ecumenism by frequent meetings with local Roman Catholics and Orthodox. So the various wards of the Society are engaged in a variety of activities and ministries, undergirded by the quiet daily work of prayer, and following one of the objects of the Society which is take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family life. In several places the liturgies and programs of the ward become diocesan events, attended by many people. Individual members of the Society have expressed what the Society means to them, as for example, the woman in New England who encouraged the establishment of new wards, and the person in Virginia who expressed gratitude by a generous gift.

The Episcopal Church has been enriched by the many and diverse devotional organizations within its life and mission. The Society of Mary is one of many devotional societies, which contribute to the spiritual lives of its people. The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer is an international movement founded in the United States and organized in most dioceses to support the Church with continual intercessions through a network of prayer groups. The Anglican Fellowship of

Prayer promotes the use of quiet days and retreats, and sponsors schools of prayer and an annual international prayer conference.

The Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer stresses daily contemplation of the Word of God and sponsors a yearly retreat for its members.

The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament continues its work in promoting the centrality of the Eucharist and bearing witness to traditional eucharistic teaching and practice. The members use the organization's Intercession Paper for daily prayer.

The Guild of All Souls continues its ministry of praying for the departed. The names of departed members are contained in an intercession paper published thrice yearly. The Guild of All Souls joins with the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in an annual Requiem.

The Daughters of the King is an order of women and girls organized in local chapters, who desire to dedicate themselves to the life of prayer and service, to spread Christ's kingdom.

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew is an organization of men dedicated to bringing the kingdom of Christ to men. It is like the Daughters of the King, committed to

evangelism, but it is not in the narrow sense a "devotional" group.

The spiritual vitality of the Episcopal Church has been greatly affected by the various renewal movements, such as the "charismatic" movement. Among the many groups which seek to renew parishes and people, are the Cursillo, Faith Alive, Episcopal Marriage Encounter, and Episcopal Renewal Ministries. All of these groups and others seek to spread the Gospel and promote the spiritual well-being of Christian people. Various aspects of faith and devotion are represented. The Society of Mary is one of the many groups emphasizing different aspects of faith and practice.

Throughout the history of the Society of Mary, we have noted specific factors which encouraged its growth and development. These included the right timing the gifts, talents, and enthusiasm of particular persons, and their ability to organize and inspire others. It is necessary to have some organization and good communication, and above all adequate publicity. With those ingredients, people are likely to be generous in giving, to provide the resources which make publicity and communication possible. With adequate resources, we have noted the

ability of the Society to further its ministry and image as a teaching society through its learned publications. We have also noted that the power of prayer cannot be measured, but it cannot be overlooked. With the pattern of constant and steady growth. Such an organization fulfills a need, a need of persons, and a need within the life of the church.

CHAPTER VII

IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS: SING OF MARY

It is appropriate that among the many and diverse organizations within the Episcopal Church, there be one to honor and promote devotion to Mary, Mother of the Lord.

All various groupings within the Church have some impact on the lives of people in the general life of the Church. As a devotional society, the Society of Mary has enriched the spiritual lives of its members. It is a fellowship of praying people, following a daily rule of life designed to enrich their spiritual journey, albeit with a focus on the Incarnation and on Mary. It is also a fellowship of witnessing persons, for one of the objects of the Society is to take Mary as a model in purity, personal relationships and family. As a group, the Society bears witness to Mary's place in the economy of salvation. The Society of Mary, like other devotional societies, is essentially pious, that is, its chief activity is prayer and worship. Because of that, its members are linked with the liturgical life of the Church, as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer. In fact, each would admit to bearing witness to some aspect of the Prayer Book. None, however, have engaged directly in Prayer Book revision. The

prayers of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, for example, have been answered in Prayer Book revision, and in vesture and ceremonial. They witness, as stated above, to the centrality of the Eucharist, and to the doctrine of the Real Presence, and to the right to reserve the Sacrament for adoration and for communion of the ill.

The Book of Common Prayer 1979 answered those prayers. Likewise, the Society of Mary prayed for the restoration of Marian observances in the calendar and for provision for Mary's inclusion in the Liturgy. Those prayers have been answered. In the future, it would seem that the dogma of the Incarnation needs to be understood and re-understood in the light of recent theological developments, for example, the current issue about inclusive language in worship. While honoring Mary, it may be the vocation of the Society to emphasize the Incarnation and the sacramental principle, and to witness further to the object of "purity of life" in the context of changing morality.

The recent history of the Society of Mary shows signs of its maturity, signs of a Society come of age and of a Society firmly established. What are the signs of this maturity? The visions of the original founders

are being fulfilled. Fr. Kenna suggested a truly national Society with at least a ward in each state. There is not a ward in each state or diocese, but there are wards representing most areas of the country, such as the East and Northeast, the Mid-West, the West, the Southwest and the Northwest, and the South. There has sprung from the American Region, the Society of Mary in Ghana and in South America.

Fr. Kenna dreamed of an American Region magazine. It was not the intention of the National Council to sever links abroad, so Ave in its American Edition, includes the most pertinent sections of the English edition. However, the American Region can boast its very own publication. Fr. Kenna dreamed of the Region publishing tracts, and he himself produced one. But now the American Region has produced three books as vehicles of teaching and witness.

Fr. Kenna dreamed of the Society bearing witness at General Conventions of the church, not alone, but in cooperation with other devotional societies. Now the Society has the resources to witness not only at General Conventions, but to advertise in key church publications.

Surely another sign of maturity can perhaps be measured financially. An indication of this as we have

seen in the history was the introduction of a yearly budget and the constant rise each year of that budget figure, from one thousand dollars to eight thousand dollars. The stewardship of resources was further demonstrated in investments to provide the Society with some kind of endowment.

The publications of the Society of Mary give it the image of a group which takes responsible scholarship seriously. Because its members are drawn from many aspects of church life, it cannot for long be perceived as a society of one party or tradition. It now takes its place as a respected and honored group within the life and ministry of The Episcopal Church.

In the preface to the book of essays Studies and Commentaries 1984, the editor wrote "The Society of Mary is the principal Marian devotional society in the Anglican Communion, bearing witness to the unique role of Mary in the economy of salvation, and expressing honor and devotion to the Mother of the Lord, as an integral part of the rich Anglican tradition." He further stated that the purpose of the essays was "to teach Episcopalians, increasing their knowledge and inspiring their devotion, and to share with other Christians some distinctly

Anglican approaches to Mary's place in our liturgy, theology, spirituality, and history." (1) These remarks about the book also express the ministry of the Society of Mary, and indicate the intimate link between knowledge and love, between the head and the heart.

The history of the Society of Mary has demonstrated a quality of love and devotion for Mary which accounts for the steady growth and development of this particular devotional grouping.

In the same preface the editor went on to say, "Within Anglicanism devotion is often subtle and understated, profoundly biblical, and expressed more often in hymns and poems, in sculpture, paintings, and stained glass, than in statements and doctrines and treatises." (2) Anglicans thus would rather "sing of Mary."

Scholars who have written books and those who have contributed even to the Society's publications have tended to have written from the inspiration of artistic works, and then attempted to express the inexpressible "in order to increase our knowledge and quicken our devotion." (3)

The enthusiasm of leaders and those who worked with them, the steady and persistent work of the members of the

Council over the years, and the hundreds of faithful and devoted members have established a Society capable of proceeding into the future.

Insofar as Mary is continually neglected and misunderstood and ignored, there is a ministry for the Society, for one of the objects is just that: "To spread devotion to her in reparation for past neglect and misunderstanding, and in the cause of Christian unity." (3) Another factor in the further growth and development of a Society dedicated to Mary, is an increase of late in interest in Mary in various Christian traditions, as indicated in a number of books published recently. Surely a response to some of the moral issues, in terms of marriage, human sexuality, moral standards and so on, by a Society dedicated to Mary and to following her example will have some appeal. Yet at the same time for many feminists Mary has little or no appeal, either because she is misunderstood or, because she is understood so well as to be rejected.

Given the steady increase in members, and the establishment of more wards in many parts of the country, and a degree of financial "security," there are implications for the possibility of re-organization, and

in providing such things as a Marian hymnal, a book of devotions, and more publications. But as the past was so dependent upon persons, so will be the future. As in the past, the Society had to keep resolutely to its mission and purpose, it will need to continue to do so in the future. The dreams and hopes of one person, Fr. Kenna, have come true, but it is the obligation of the present members to continue a steady and effective witness in the future.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Richard C. Martin, Studies and Commentaries II
(Society of Mary Publication, 1984).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.

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