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# 076 - Dedication of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

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John XXIII

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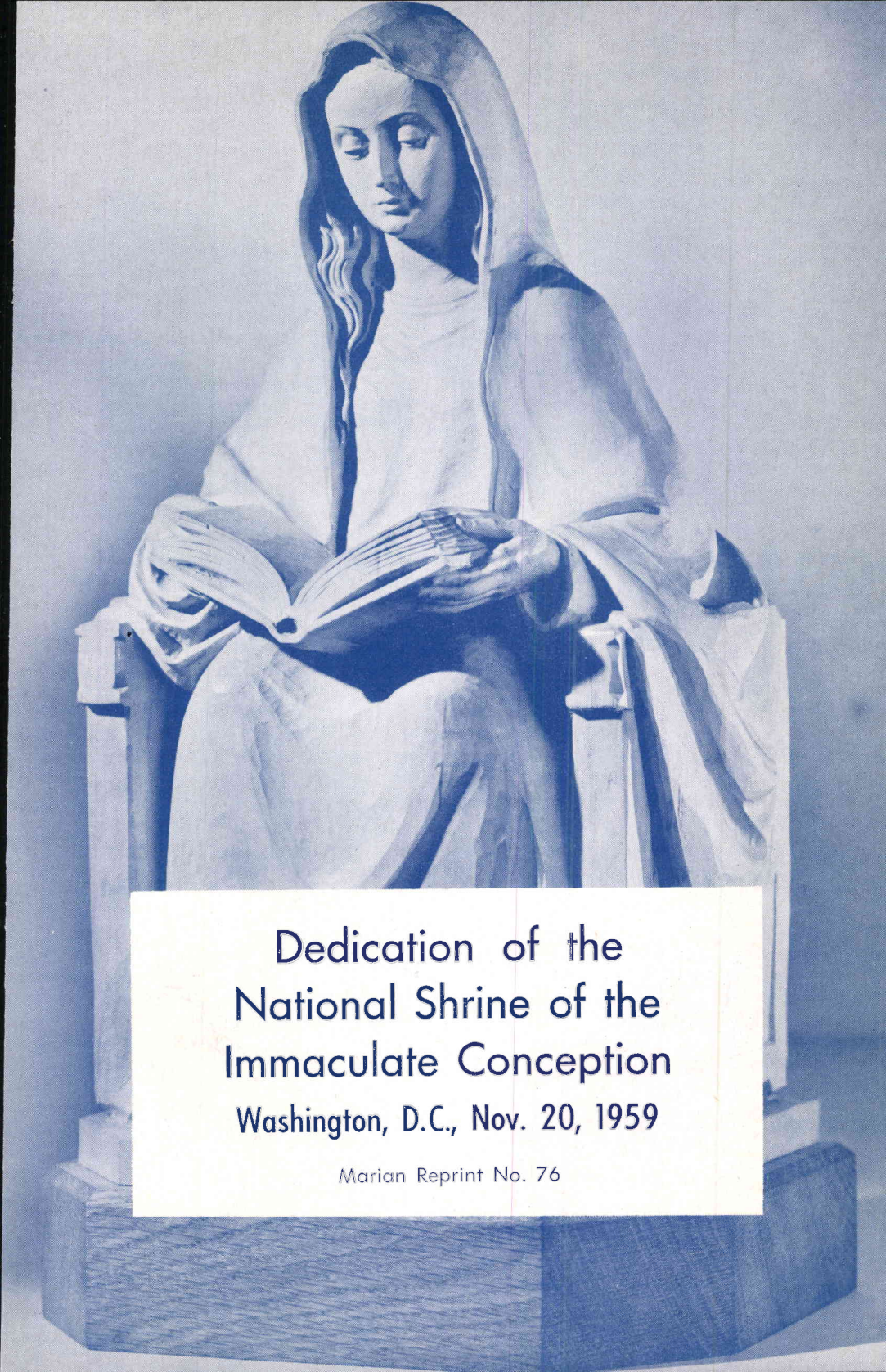
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Dedication of the  
National Shrine of the  
Immaculate Conception  
Washington, D.C., Nov. 20, 1959

Marian Reprint No. 76

## ABOUT THE REPRINT . . .

On November 20, 1959, amid a scene rivaling the colorful pageantry of the Middle Ages, Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York solemnly dedicated the new National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to the glory of the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ. More than 200 members of the hierarchy, including five cardinals and a cardinal designate, were joined by thousands of priests, religious, brothers, sisters, and government and civic leaders for the magnificent two-hour dedication ceremony.

The shrine ceremony was the national focal point of three days of prayer observed by 39,000,000 Catholics in 16,000 parishes throughout the country. The nationwide observance culminated on the day of the shrine's dedication in the consecration of the United States to the Blessed Virgin. It is not surprising, then, that the ceremony was hailed on all sides as marking "a significant epoch in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States."

We are deeply indebted to Monsignor Thomas J. Grady, Director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and to Brother Norbert Brockman, S.M., a doctoral student residing at the Marianist House of Studies, Washington, D.C., for their painstaking efforts in assembling the documents relating to the dedication of the shrine.

The selections for this reprint include a general history and description of the shrine by Brother Norbert C. Brockman reprinted from the December, 1959, issue of the *Marianist*, an important letter of Archbishop John F. Noll addressed to the entire American hierarchy which initiated the second phase of the building of the National Shrine, an English translation of the autograph letter sent by His Holiness Pope John XXIII on the occasion of the Dedication, and excerpts from the sermons and addresses given by prominent members of the hierarchy at the special religious and social ceremonies marking the historic occasion.

*(published with ecclesiastical approval)*

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# Dedication of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Washington, D.C., Nov. 20, 1959

## THE STORY OF OUR NATIONAL SHRINE

Norbert C. Brockman, S.M.

On November 20, the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops of the United States moved in majestic procession into the largest Catholic church in the Western Hemisphere — the Shrine-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. They dedicated the superstructure of the shrine in the presence of 6000 of the clergy and faithful gathered to do honor to Mary under the title of Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the United States.

After forty-five years of planning and work, the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is dedicated, but by no means finished. Convinced that America's tribute to the Mother of God deserves the greatest care, the shrine's builders foresee many years of work before the last artisan lays down his tools.

Even the most casual tourist notices this lack of haziness, the great consideration for every detail that will make this as perfect a gift to Mary as can be erected. Some of this spirit can be seen in the impressive construction statistics, but most of it is apparent in the people who work for the shrine, from the self-effacing and zealous director, Msgr. Thomas Grady of Chicago, to the elderly workman who lays the mosaic tiles in artistic symmetry.

The National Shrine, from the massive building itself to the detailed ornamentation, breathes the strong conviction that for Mary nothing can be good enough. The original plans, which have been changed very little, were the work of Charles Maginnis, one of the outstanding architects of recent years. The sculptors included such artists as Ivan Mestrovic and John Angel; the mosaics of the lower church were the work of Bancel LaFarge, brother of the famous painter John LaFarge.

The structure is itself imposing, as it was meant to be. Mr. Maginnis called it "an architecture of sanity, of distinction, true to its time but

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with no disloyalty to its national individuality." The Roman-Byzantine style was chosen to harmonize with the classic national monuments and buildings of the nation's capital, and yet to be distinct from these. The decorations serve to break the massive lines of the basilica, which stretches over 450 feet in length with a dome towering 237 feet. Its high elevation makes the shrine an awesome sight.

When this tremendous gesture of devotion to Mary was first visualized by Bishop Thomas Shahan, the rector of the Catholic University, he had only a great enthusiasm and a few thousand dollars. Within a year, however, Pope St. Pius X gave his encouragement and prelates and people began to rally to the project. In 1920, seven years after the original idea, Cardinal Gibbons laid the cornerstone on the west end of the Catholic University campus and the lower church was begun.

The crypt church, as it was known, was not completed until 1931, when the depression ended construction. For twenty-five years the fifteen-foot high foundations lay undeveloped, commonly referred to by local seminarians as "the flattop." During these years inactivity on the building front was replaced by spiritual activity — countless pilgrimages came to the National Shrine, many hundreds of men were ordained priests before the Mary altar of the crypt, and planning continued.

Finally, in 1953, under the inspirational leadership of the late Archbishop John Noll of Fort Wayne, a Marian Year drive was begun to carry out a pledge of the American bishops to finish the shrine. Eighteen million dollars has been spent on the superstructure alone, almost all of it gathered during this drive, and another twelve million is estimated as necessary for final completion. Donations have ranged from the pennies of school children to a million-dollar gift from the Knights of Columbus to erect the bell tower. The Mary altar of the crypt church was built with donations from Marys of America. The great organ is a gift of the Catholic military personnel in honor of their fallen comrades. Other groups and countless individuals have provided the funds to make the National Shrine possible.

The Immaculate Conception was made the Patroness of the United States in 1846 by the bishops of the country. Today, in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, American Catholics have a worthy monument to this dedication. In future years, as it has in the past, the shrine will attract thousands of visitors from all over the nation. Catholics among them will go away with renewed zeal for Mary's role in the salvation of the United States; fellow-Americans of other faiths will find here an understanding of our Lady and an inkling of her great mission to bring forth Christ in souls.

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**LETTER TO THE HIERARCHY OF THE UNITED STATES  
CONCERNING THE COMPLETION OF THE  
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Most Rev. John F. Noll, Archbishop of Fort Wayne, Indiana

During the summer of 1944 the Archbishop of Baltimore and the Rector of the Catholic University requested the undersigned to head a committee of Bishops to consider the advisability of completing the National Shrine to Mary Immaculate, and, if they thought favorably, to devise a plan for the raising of funds adequate to complete at least the exterior. The request of the Archbishop has been fulfilled.

At the November 1944 meeting of the Catholic Hierarchy the formation of such a committee was authorized, and at the November 1945 meeting a plan was presented to the Bishops by the undersigned, representing a committee composed of Archbishops Murray and Rummel and of Bishops Ireton and myself. This Committee was augmented soon thereafter by the addition of Archbishop Cushing of Boston and Archbishop Mitty of San Francisco.

Since many Bishops had returned home from the November 1945 Conference before the undersigned made his report, it was proposed by the Chairman of the Conference that the head of the National Shrine Committee communicate with all the Bishops of the United States by mail to apprise them of the substance of the proposal these made and to request them to register their opinion (1) regarding the *advisability* of completing the National Shrine, and (2) regarding the prudence of undertaking the work now.

Replies were received from fifty-seven members of the Hierarchy, all but three of whom believed that the National Shrine should be completed, and forty of whom favored early action in order to prevent further deterioration of the foundation and even danger to the beautiful crypt, on which \$2,000,000.00 had been expended; six questioned the prudence of a special drive at this time when so many post-war campaigns for money and clothing and food are being conducted; eight would go along, but were not enthusiastic.

Why was there thought of undertaking so huge a task just now? The reasons may be thus summarized: (1) exactly one hundred years ago (1846) the Bishops of the United States petitioned the Holy See to designate Mary Immaculate the patroness of our country. Next year (1947) will mark the centenary of the issuance of the formal Papal Brief, by which the requests of the Bishops of the United States was granted. (2)

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It was believed that if work on the Shrine's superstructure were started immediately after the war it would have the appeal of a "Victory" memorial. (3) If the exterior were completed in the next few years, the interior would probably be finished by the year 1954, when the entire world will observe the centenary of the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

While the Bishops' Committee, through the undersigned, proposed a Plan for the raising of funds *over a five-year period* the Committee solicits suggestions from any and all members of the Catholic Hierarchy for a better plan.

The architect chosen by the late Bishop Shahan to draw plans and specifications for the National Shrine, Mr. Charles D. Maginnis, of the firm of Maginnis and Walse, of Boston, believes that a prolonged delay would do great injury to work already accomplished at a cost of \$2,000,000.00 This work has been paid for in full, and Reverend John J. Reilly, Director of the Shrine, has about \$150,000.00 on hand. The annual receipts, which come spontaneously, average about \$85,000.00

The architect believes that it will cost about \$5,000,000.00 to erect the superstructure and to finish the Champanile.

There are few Bishops, I am sure, who would not agree that it would be no task to raise at least \$1,000,000.00 a year through a parish church collection and through contributions of school children, even without a high-pressure drive. Most Catholics have a tender devotion to Mary Immaculate or to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which means the same thing.

The Episcopalians have set \$15,000,000.00 as their goal for the completion of their national Cathedral in Washington.

You will note from Father Reilly's explanations in this brochure that Popes Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI have praised the National Shrine project and blessed it.

The undersigned has no more interest in the completion of Mary's Shrine than has any other Bishop, but he cannot believe that the American people would want a national Catholic project, begun more than twenty-five years ago, to remain unfinished, or that they would not cheerfully make the needed small sacrifices even to preserve the exquisite Crypt from injury or decay.

Your Committee is not acting arbitrarily, but on request, and they would not think of proceeding independently of a mandate from the great majority of the Bishops of this country.



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### MOST REVEREND JOHN FRANCIS NOLL

At a special academic convocation held Dec. 11, 1959, the late Archbishop John Francis Noll of Fort Wayne, Indiana, was posthumously awarded the University of Dayton's tenth annual Marianist Award. Archbishop Noll was selected for the honor because of his pioneer work in creating interest in and soliciting contributions for the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The award, highest religious honor of the University, was presented by Archbishop Karl J. Alter to Bishop Leo A. Pursley, Archbishop Noll's successor at Fort Wayne.

Last November an event took place in our national capital which marked the climax of an epoch in the history of the Church in America. This event was the solemn dedication of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. . . .

Today, the National Shrine takes its place among the great churches of the world. . . . This historic symbol in honor of the Mother of God was not realized in a few years. . . .

Among the many persons deserving of our tribute and esteem in the accomplishment of this great achievement there is one who distinguished himself by his "energetic will" in the promotion of interest in the National Shrine, as well as in the necessary financing of this imperishable monument to the Mother of God. It is for this reason that the University of Dayton is honored to confer posthumously the Marianist Award upon the Most Reverend John Francis Noll, D.D., Archbishop - Bishop of Fort Wayne, for his outstanding service to the Mother of God in America. . . .

From his own faithful of the Diocese of Fort Wayne and from the readers of *Our Sunday Visitor* he was able to offer three and a half million dollars towards the completion of the Marian Shrine. . . .

But in the designs of God's Providence, Archbishop Noll was not spared to see the realization of the great dream of his life, the completion of the National Shrine. He did, however, have the satisfaction of knowing, before his death in 1956, that the needed funds had been raised and that the Shrine was to be completed in a few years.

— *Citation for the Marianist Award to the Most Reverend John F. Noll, D.D.*

## *DEDICATION OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE*

### **AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF POPE JOHN XXIII**

The following is the English translation of the Autograph Letter which His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, on the occasion of the Dedication of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., has addressed to Their Eminences, the Cardinals, and Their Excellencies, the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States, through the Most Reverend Patrick A. O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington. It was read at the dedication by Most Rev. Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate to the United States.

**TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHER  
PATRICK O'BOYLE ARCHBISHOP OF WASHINGTON  
HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEDECTION  
VENERABLE BROTHER,**

It was an extremely gratifying and enduring joy that filled Our heart on the receipt of the news which you, Venerable Brother, took care to have announced to Us, namely that, in the coming month of November, in Washington, a Shrine is to be dedicated with solemn religious rites to the immaculate Virgin Mother of God, thus bringing to happy fulfillment after so many vicissitudes a purpose which the noble and renowned nation of the United States of America had undertaken. This purpose, which was initiated by Thomas J. Shahan and upon which Our Predecessor, Saint Pius X, smiled with favor, expressing salutary auguries and good wishes, has been brought to realization with magnificent daring by the common consent and energetic will of your Sacred Hierarchy, by the generous help of the faithful and with the piety and faith of all, no matter what their rank or group, striving together and overcoming difficulties, to the end that what had been begun might be brought to sure and perfect completion.

There now rises up to heaven a Shrine, high and massive, wondrously bright within with metal and marble and pictures and with its dome and lofty tower dominating the scene far and wide, a clearly visible manifestation of your extraordinary piety. Surely will it be for the citizens of the present and for those yet to come a strong and encouraging reminder that, in the midst of the waves of earthly vicissitudes, they must keep their eyes fixed with a lively hope on things heavenly and eternal and that they must likewise reflect that the cause of any human progress worthy of the name is the religion founded by Jesus Christ; by that religion Nations flourish and stand steadfast, based on solid foundations, namely on reverence and fear of the most high God, on justice and

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zeal for charity, on the true principle of liberty which adheres always to moral precepts and is not in conflict with tranquil order.

We have observed with joy that, on the very day on which this Shrine is to be duly blessed and opened, all those who are accounted as Catholics in your land will consecrate themselves and all that is theirs to the Most Blessed Virgin, immaculate from her beginning. Worthy of praise indeed is this fixed and determined purpose which your pastoral zeal has urged upon you and then proposed for acceptance by the sheep of Christ entrusted to your care, loving children of the Church and of Mary. The Virgin Mother of God is our mother, our Queen, the sure way by which we approach most speedily to Jesus Christ, who was given to us by her; she is the basis of our trust, the overflowing wellspring of all benefits: "for from this source (Mary) there come to us the price of redemption, the cleansing water, the strengthening bread, the healing medicine, the weapons of assault, the remunerating reward" (St. Albert the Great, *Mariale*, p. 164).

But a temple built of stones is of little significance unless there arise a temple mystically erected within our minds. Therefore, in keeping with the consecration which is to be made and which must be diligently observed, let an altar of the Most Blessed Virgin be set up in the heart of each one of the faithful; let families held together by the sanctity of marriage, by mutual love, by moral integrity, and a common spiritual life reproduce her virtues and be fortified by her protection. Let each one know likewise that Mary cannot be completely and perfectly honored unless we carry on our fight with undaunted courage by the side of her who with her virgin's foot crushed and will continue to crush the head of the twisting serpent. Let each one therefore be just like a soldier son, who, under her leadership and guidance, will fight to defend, advance, and spread the Kingdom of Christ.

Finally, We pray that this votive Shrine of yours will be a pleasing and sacred sanctuary for your people who, through the passing centuries, will flock to it in crowds and, meeting with a generous response to their prayers, will there obtain solace, light, and peace, ever gathering new strength and virtue for living their Christian life with piety, energy and purity.

While We entrust these fraternal wishes to the supplication and patronage of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who from her first beginning knew not the slightest stain, We lovingly impart to you, Venerable Brother, to the rest of the Bishops, to the priests, and to the faithful who will be present at the sacred rites of dedication of this Shrine, the Apostolic Blessing, a pledge of Our singular love for you.

Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the 19th day of September, in the year 1959, the first of Our Pontificate.

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### DEDICATION SERMON

The Most Reverend Joseph E. Ritter, D.D., S.T.D.  
Archbishop of St. Louis, Missouri

“We may be pardoned for looking on ourselves as a providential people, destined to show, as perhaps none other has done, what Christian liberty can do with man. To effect this, however, a high ideal must be reached, and the ideal of the highest life of virtue we have in her toward whom we are bid direct our eyes as the model and patroness—in Mary Immaculate, Mother of God.”

These simple and significant words were addressed to the Third Council of Baltimore by the Bishop of Vincennes. The statement is appropriately recalled, for may we not again be pardoned today for calling ourselves a providential people? Why do we presume to do so?

This ceremony marks a significant epoch in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. This Shrine stands as a majestic and compelling witness not only to the physical and material maturity of the Church in our land, but particularly to its spiritual vigor, its magnificent unity, its dynamic Faith. Somewhat like the Israelites of old, we have come today to the “promised land” of fulfilment after forty years of planning and preparation, hope and sacrifice. The span of time has tested our people and, as this magnificent structure so well demonstrates, has brought forth not only their admirable generosity but their universal enthusiasm as well.

Like the building of the great Cathedrals of Europe, so many of which were dedicated to Our Lady, Cathedrals which engaged the skill of great architects and builders and stirred the souls of all levels of the people to a high pitch of faith, so this monumental project, designed and constructed by dedicated men, is the expression of the Catholic democracy of the United States and of the Catholics’ love and devotion of Mary Immaculate.

There is sufficient evidence of this in the distinguished assembly gathered here under the presidency of the esteemed Cardinal Archbishop of New York and in the presence of our Apostolic Delegate, the official representative in our nation of His Holiness, Pope John XXIII, now happily reigning.

Moreover, in more than 16,000 parishes throughout the United States millions of the faithful have consecrated themselves to Our Lady and are united with us in spirit and in prayer.

What is being done here this morning is, in the truest sense of the

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word, being done on behalf of, in the name of, and with the enthusiastic approval of the whole Church in the United States.

Let us briefly trace the history of this great national religious monument to see what inspired its idea and construction.

For its original cause we must go back to the Council of Baltimore in 1846. The Bishops of the country had convened to discuss the affairs and chart the course of a Church faced with problems that were seemingly insurmountable. The difficulties of the time made it imperative as well as natural for them to turn in a special way to her who has ever been "our life, our sweetness and our hope." Solemnly, in the name of the faithful in the United States and in their own name, they placed the Church in America in her loving care and invoked her as its special patroness under the title of the Immaculate Conception.

"We take this occasion, brethren," they wrote, "to communicate to you the determination, unanimously adopted by us, to place ourselves and all entrusted to our care throughout the United States under the special patronage of the Mother of God, whose Immaculate Conception is venerated by the piety of the faithful throughout the Catholic Church. To her, then, we commend you in confidence, that through the one mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself a redemption for all, she will obtain for us grace and salvation." From that day on, in a special way, she belonged to us and we to her. She has protected us, guided us, obtained for us the means of grace and salvation. Is it any wonder, then, that the Bishops, the clergy, the religious and the faithful committed themselves to give some tangible and appropriate expression of their gratitude for the past and their confidence in the future with her as their patroness?

In the providence of God it was given to the scholarly Bishop Thomas Shahan, the fourth rector of our National Catholic University, to give the initial impulse to this great project. Prompted by the difficulties and weighty obligations that were his as rector, but encouraged not only by his own deep filial devotion to Mary but the solemn decision of Baltimore as well, he conceived the idea of this magnificent project which we are dedicating today. He quickly made known his dream to Cardinal Gibbons and later, along with the Cardinal, to Pope St. Pius X who granted it his apostolic approval remarking that "nothing could be more useful to the Church or more helpful to the welfare of the Republic."

The Bishop then appealed to the Catholic Women of America to help him carry out his great idea, the building of a national monument to Mary Immaculate. To assist him in this gigantic task he chose a young priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Reverend Bernard A. McKenna. The name of this inspired priest, now Monsignor McKenna

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and present with us this morning, will ever be associated with that of Bishop Shahan with whom he labored so zealously for 15 years. And there is yet another name that will be associated with this Shrine, the name of one who by generous contributions and appeals to the Catholic people and ceaseless pleadings to his brother Bishops gave reality to this magnificent edifice as we see it today, the late Archbishop John F. Noll, Bishop of Fort Wayne. He and Bishop Shahan, we can be sure, are a part of this celebration today and we know that their hearts are filled with joy and gratitude.

But if the Council of Baltimore is the origin of Mary's patronage of our country, a more remote yet no less real reason for her importance in our lives can be traced to the very beginning of our life as a nation — back even to its very discovery. The name of Our Lady and her guidance and protection is associated, not by accident but by the decisive wishes of practically all the discoverers, explorers and early settlers of our country. Christopher Columbus himself sailed the high seas and arrived at our shores under the banner of Mary.

"The ship, the Santa Maria, which had such an effect on our destiny," narrates Daniel Sargent in *Our Land and Our Lady*, "was a ship which wore with reason her name. She came from a Europe which had preserved its youth and joyfulness through confidence in the unique human being after whom Santa Maria was named, St. Mary, Our Lady — she sailed from Europe and from Spain at a period of history when sailormen of christendom, hers among them, still sang every evening the 'Salve Regina' and still held the time of day as being before or after that Salve Regina Hour. And Columbus, its commander, was so much Our Lady's that he wrote her initials into his signature, and carefully prescribed that he should be buried in her chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception."

"It is impossible to think about the history of our country without thinking of the Santa Maria," continues Sargent. "The Santa Maria stands like the frontispiece in the book of all our deeds."

While it was because of another of the same name, one of our colonies was called Maryland by its Catholic founders which made it seem as though Our Lady was brought to our shores to be here, providentially, to greet visitors and explorers alike whether they were French who came by way of the St. Lawrence on the North, or the Spaniards who came through the South, or the British who arrived on the East coast. Whatever the nationality of the explorer or the discoverer, there came along Our Lady under her respective national title. To the Spanish she was "La Conquistadora." Her patronage of the French was reflected in their calling the Mississippi the "River of the Immaculate Conception." And

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even though the Faith had come upon hard times in England — long known as Our Lady's special realm, Our Lady's Dower — nonetheless, before the settling of Jamestown, two expeditions had been made to the coast of Maine under the Virgin's aegis. Later still, in 1634, the expedition of Lord Baltimore sailing on the Ark and the Dove, arrived at the bay which the Spaniards had called the Bay of the Mother of God. On the Feast of the Annunciation, Holy Mass was celebrated by two Jesuit priests and the colony named Maryland.

Time does not permit many other examples that could be given, but these should suffice to indicate that the expeditions and explorations of the new world were initiated by nations and peoples steeped in Marian devotion and love.

The history of the Church in the United States and the history of the discovery and development of our land shed light on today's ceremony. Their study gives us a sequence of events that closely links the past with the present. But if we would assign the greatest, most fundamental reason of all for all this dedication we must go beyond the limits of history, indeed beyond time itself.

This reason is, of course, that from all eternity Almighty God had chosen a simple, humble Jewish maiden to be the Mother of His Divine Son when in the fulness of time, that Son would become Man. Moreover, He bestowed upon her the special privilege of being Immaculate, free from any stain of sin, from the first moment of her conception until she should return to Him to reign forever as Queen of the Universe. In brief, the reason for this shrine is our Catholic Faith and Mary's honor is our motive.

Mary foretold this occasion when, in all simplicity and humility she said, "For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." (Luke 1, 48.) Today we are simply carrying out what she prophesied. We are dedicating a national Shrine to her, in our Nation's Capital, to proclaim her glory and to invoke her powerful intercession not only for these critical times, but for all times. And in so doing we know that our action glorifies God and makes secure our faith in Christ.

This Shrine will, we hope and pray, tell down through the ages of our national life to all who will hear, the story of Mary. It is the story of the loving mystery of the Incarnation — of the coming of God in the person of His Divine Son into our world for man's redemption and salvation. It is the privilege of Mary not only that she had the sublime role as an instrument of God in that tremendous mystery of God's love for man, but that God in so doing raised her up in an association with the Most Blessed Trinity beyond any other creature and beyond human comprehension. That association is the Divine Motherhood. The fact is that God

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in assuming our nature willed to do so through a true mother. She, therefore, who was chosen for this office and who gave her flesh and blood to fashion through genuine conception and motherhood the human nature to which was joined the Divine Nature in one Divine Person, was and is and will be for all eternity the Mother of God.

“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee and blessed art thou among women. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee and, therefore, the Holy one which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1, 30-35.)

This, the message of the Angel Gabriel, embraces the whole story of Mary and of the teaching of the Church concerning her. It reveals Mary as the Mother of the Saviour in the true sense of motherhood. It gives proof of her virginity, that her conception was by a direct intervention of God, that she was sinless and immaculate in her own conception, full of grace. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians says, “When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman.” If the man Jesus “made of a woman” is the Son of God, then that woman must be the mother of a Divine Son and consequently, Mother of God. Equally clear is the testimony of the Fathers of the Church as well as the Councils of the Church. In fact throughout the centuries from earliest times unto our own any attempt to show that Mary is not the Mother of God always developed into aberrations in regard to belief in the Divinity of Christ. So true is this that it is axiomatic, — belief in the Divine Motherhood of Mary is the first defense of the Divinity of Christ.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is truly the most eminent member of the human family. With the sole exception of her Divine Son “the first born of every creature” with whom, of course, she cannot be compared, she is undoubtedly the loveliest flower that ever bloomed on the tree of humanity. She is truly the Mystical Rose, the Spiritual Lily. We show a still more profound conception of her dignity and mission when we venerate her as the human instrument specially chosen by the Holy Ghost for the miracle of the Incarnation, whereby she became a most precious “Spiritual Vessel,” as we pray in our aves “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

Mary’s relationship because of her Divine Motherhood to her fellow creatures is that of spiritual motherhood. As St. Augustine beautifully says, “She is spiritually the mother, not indeed of our Head i.e., the Saviour from whom rather she is spiritually born, but the spiritual mother of His members i.e., ourselves, because she cooperated in love towards the birth of the faithful in the Church who are members of that Head; bodily she is truly the Mother of that Head.”



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Sublime as without doubt Mary's office is, the Church teaches and Catholics have always believed that Mary remains a creature of God and whatever prerogatives are attributed to her, including her Immaculate Conception are the fruit of Christ's Redemption. Furthermore, whatever power Mary may have comes to her through her Divine Motherhood and because of her association with Christ Our Saviour. That association is so intimate and so essential for man's redemption in the plan of God that necessarily Mary has truly merited to become a minister in the distribution of divine grace.

"With these principles understood," as St. Pius X writes on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, "will it not appear to all that it is right and proper to affirm that Mary whom Jesus made His constant companion from the House of Nazareth to the place of Calvary knew as none other the secrets of His heart; distributes as by a mother's right the treasures of His merits; and is the surest help to the knowledge and love of Christ. To be pitied are they who neglect Mary on the pretense that thus they honor Christ. They forget that the child is not found without Mary His mother." (*Ad Diem Illum* 1904.)

It is not unfitting, undoubtedly it is called for, that we during this hour of tribute to her, express the hope and offer a prayer that this monument might become a milestone along the road by which all peoples will advance toward her. She is the spiritual Mother of all and she extends a welcome to all to join her in the praise and adoration of her Son. At the moment of her acceptance of Divine Motherhood her halo became interlocked with Our Lord's and they can never be separated without doing violence to the Christian Faith. Honor her and you cannot help but honor her Divine Son; praise her and you praise Him; love her and you love Him. Being the Mother of God she is also the Mother of mankind. May she someday be recognized and universally venerated for what she is.

May we also express the hope that this Shrine dedicated to Our Lady and pointing as it does through its inspiring tower to the Heavens from which all blessings come, become the instrument of divine benediction upon our nation and all its people. May it stand as the symbol of the *union* of all men under the headship of Christ. There can be no surer or more direct road than by Mary for uniting everyone in Christ.

May it be the guiding symbol to that *truth* which is God and which shall make men free. Mary is invoked as the Seat of Wisdom for she bore Wisdom incarnate in her bosom. Hers will be the mission to ever defend truth, Divine truth and its reflected human truth, not only at this citadel of learning, but against the assaults upon the human family

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by a false science conceived in the minds of the enemies of God and man.

And finally may this temple dedicated to Mary ever remind us that it was through Mary there came into the world the Prince of *Peace*. Under the Queenship of Mary the whole world can be brought to the acknowledgement of Him who alone can give peace to the human family. Who knows but that in the end it will be the great devotion of the peasants and people of Russia to Mary, which will win for the world an era of peace, prosperity and happiness.

In the meantime let all of us who have gathered here and all whom we represent here ever remember that this Shrine to Mary is a perpetual challenge to us to reflect Mary's life and her beautiful virtues in our own lives. That in the last analysis it is, not what we build with stone and precious materials to honor Mary, but what we build in our hearts. To be genuine our piety toward the Mother of God must spring from the heart. External acts have neither utility nor value if the acts of the soul have no part in them. Now these latter can only have one object, which is that we should fully carry out what the Divine Son of Mary commands. For if true love alone has the power to unite the wills of men, it is of prime necessity that we should have one will with Mary to serve Our Lord. What Mary said to the servants at the marriage Feast of Cana she addresses also to us, "Whatsoever He shall say to you do ye." Now here is His word, "If you love me, keep my commandments." (*St. John* 14 : 15.)

Perhaps when the Bishops met at Baltimore 113 years ago some of them, in their mind's eye, envisioned just such a majestic edifice as this to epitomize the act whereby they consecrated our country to Our Lady. Whether they did or not we are a fortunate people that we are so consecrated. We are more than fortunate. Echoing Bishop Chatard once again, we are a providential people, destined to show as perhaps none other has done, what Christian civilization and Christian Liberty can do with man. But to do this a high ideal must be reached — and *that*, to the scholarly Bishop, and for us, is the highest life of virtue. The assurance of its accomplishment is manifested in this magnificent Shrine, dedicated to her toward whom we are bid to direct our eyes this day as our Model and Patroness — Mary Immaculate, Mother of God.

## DEDICATION OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE

### ADDRESS AT LUNCHEON FOLLOWING DEDICATION

His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman  
Archbishop of New York

The National Shrine is not something that had to be built. It is something that the American bishops, priests and religious and the American people *wanted* to build.

The National Shrine is a solemn and an imperishable pledge to serve God after the example and under the protection of Mary. It is the voice of the entire Catholic population of America voicing praise of God and of His Blessed Mother, acknowledging dependence and asking help.

Above and beyond its architecture and yet through the striking and enduring medium of its architecture, the National Shrine has a meaning and a message. In a world threatened by the advances of atheistic communism, the Shrine is a visible symbol of faith. In a world, strongly lured by materialism and gradually suffering a loss of moral sense and moral strength, the Shrine is a mighty and monumental symbol of selflessness.

Through the doors of the Shrine, people from every state in the Union, from every country in the world will walk — Catholics, Christians, and non-Christians. The heaven-searching Tower, the colored Dome, the great, solemn interior will speak to them of faith and of spiritual ideals. Just as the great buildings of Egypt and Greece and Rome have revealed to us past civilizations, so will the Shrine proclaim to all the faith of our Fathers of our generation.

In centuries to come, if God so wills, the Shrine will celebrate many, many anniversaries. We are gathered today at a beginning. As the years pass on, all of us will be called to our heavenly home. But this Shrine will stand before new generations proclaiming its message and continuing to be a living link between our land and its heavenly Queen.

In the end, we thank Almighty God Who in order to bring us more surely back to Himself has given us as a people and as a nation a special love for Mary and a special confidence in her. We thank God that His own Blessed Mother is patroness of our land. We thank God for the Shrine which stands as a symbol of our national dedication to God through Mary. We trust that in God's Providence, our beloved America will under the protection of Mary endure as the land of freedom, of prayer, of generosity and good will for all peoples everywhere.

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### SERMON AT EVENING PONTIFICAL LOW MASS

His Eminence Richard Cardinal Cushing  
Archbishop of Boston

The splendor of this morning's ceremony of dedication was almost overpowering. We would not want it less. The pent-up feelings of America since that *Salve Regina* on the quarterdeck of the flagship of Columbus in 1492 have never found more eloquent, more significant expression.

This solemnity, besides what was so beautifully said here, by its very nature, publicly demonstrated that this was not merely the opening of another *church*, or another *cathedral*, but of a unique citadel of prayer and faith, where all men who believe and pray must always feel at home.

Appropriately enough, this being a true "home," it is dedicated to a *Mother*, the Mother of God and the Mother of Mankind. This is a home where everyone is welcome; the door is always open, whether a child comes to escape the heat of the sun or the fury of the storm. *This Mother* of so large a family does not even ask that we wipe our sin-begrimed feet on the doormat.

Catholic America, by which we mean the *free* Catholic Church in the *free* United States of America, has come of age today. At long last, as proud adolescents we are happy to place in the hands of our Mother our first pay envelope. "*This shrine, dear Mother, is all yours; it is our gift to you!*"

By human standards, at least, by architectural comparisons, it is a lovely gift. Great temples of the past have been, in most cases, the benefactions of kings . . . sometimes we suspect that their stones were cemented by the sweat of the slave. This shrine is our very own giving, prayer upon prayer, mite upon mite, sacrifice upon sacrifice. Could we have made it better, it would better be; could we have built it sooner, it would not have waited until today.

The most satisfying feature of the planning and erection of this National Shrine is the fact that its building was *not* a strict necessity. It is our "luxury gift" to Mary, over and above the ordinary call of Christian duty, as She, indeed, was Christ's "luxury gift" to us, over and above, it would seem, the structural necessities of His Church.

For Mass, for the Sacraments, and for devotion and the right honoring of God, there are many adequate churches almost everywhere in this city and beyond it. None of us would be without the consolations of religion were this area, "Mary's Acre," still the empty farmland it was a half century ago, wind-swept and still unploughed by the contractor and the builders.

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The magnificent cathedral of St. Matthew fittingly houses the throne of jurisdiction here. The parish churches, and the splendid edifices of religious communities give religion in Washington a unique, Rome-like variety that has enriched the life of all of us. Nor did we build here from the mean and shoddy motive that others were building "national churches" and we could not be outdone by them.

But the heart has its own necessities; the eyes of faith sees vacancies in the completeness of Christian organization that cry out to be filled. And thus, although every parish in the land might have all the parochial buildings that it could possibly use, and every diocese its worthy cathedral, we needed the opportunity to express a more unselfish sacrifice, a more abundant generosity.

This is what this Shrine has tried to tell the world, sometimes in feeble whispers, sometimes in exuberant shouts, during these forty years since the great far-seeing Gibbons laid its cornerstone in the unpredictable world climate of the "post-war" year of 1920.

Throughout these forty years, this "Lent" of forty years, the Christian piety of many, now dead, and many more still living, has labored here amid hardships, disappointments and unrecorded sacrifices. But today, Beloved Brethren, is the "*Resurrection Day*" of Mary's Shrine. "Let us be glad and rejoice therein!" "Unless the seed be buried in the earth and wither, it cannot fructify and spring up again."

An abandoned crypt almost, under an unattractive roof, entered by makeshift ways over sticks and stones, — this was what greeted the eyes of those who took the trouble to look for the "National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception." And if a visitor inquired, — as we hoped he wouldn't — we had to tell him, in truth, that this seemed to be the symbol of love of the Catholic people of the United States for the Mother of God.

Today "Somebody's Folly" exists to confound the Wise. Today somebody's "unrealistic" vision stands the real-est thing of all! Reach out and touch these sturdy walls; caress with your eyes these lofty vaults! Embrace with your heart the mosaic of Christ in glory and the reality of Christ in the swaddling clothes of the Eucharist.

Mary knew, and we knew, most of us, what occasioned the delays. Problems beyond the solution of anyone halted the incarnation of the dream. Oceans of heart-sickness surged around empty wheel-barrow and emptier purses. Zealous Directors and others immediately concerned learned "the hard way" the lesson of submission to the will of God. But in each thinking Catholic heart, as we worshipped in the catacomb, there was the unwearying hope of someday seeing the Cross in the clouds. Beloved Brethren, *this is the day!*

From this day on, the mood is changed. From this "truly blessed

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Night" we change our "De profundis" to "Exultet." "O felix culpa, O truly happy fault from which has come this blessed night of fulfillment!

From this day on, Beloved Brethren, no longer need we search the shadows of the Old Testament for texts befitting our assemblies here, no longer quote the prophecies or penitential writings that mourn the lot of Sion in her exile. Rather we turn with joy to the end of the Book where in the inspired words of the Apocalypse we find appropriate words of benediction. Can we not apply to this great day in the history of the Faith in America the words of Mary's *first* adopted child when he says:

"I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,  
Coming down out of heaven from God,  
Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.  
And I heard a great voice from the throne  
Saying: *Behold the tabernacle of God with men;*  
And He will dwell with them."

But, Beloved Brethren, let us not be carried away by the greatness of what here surrounds us. Let us keep in mind the sobering thought that "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." "Unless the Lord buildeth the house, they labor in vain who build it." *Unless* through these years of material construction *we have been building a temple to God and within our hearts*, better that this shrine be a classic ruin like the Colosseum or the ancient Wonders of the World.

But this can never be. This can never be because we meet here tonight not to *praise* ourselves but to *pray* for ourselves and for all we love. On this great day as we make our gift to Mary, is it conceivable that she will send us away without a special souvenir of our pilgrimage? And while we luxuriate in thoughts of heaven, will she let us forget the earthly blessings which this, of all our cities, so compellingly symbolizes?

Down this broad avenue is *another shrine, another dome*. Surmounted by an image of Freedom, the Capitol of our Country assures us that all is well. The path between the two unites them, but leaves them distinct and separate. *May they remain so!* While either stands, both shall stand. When either one is threatened, let the other tremble!

Every so often some one of superficial outlook, usually of sincere-enough intent, runs up and down this symbolic avenue of which I speak singing out-moded songs about what they call "Separation of Church and State." These prophets of gloom, these readers of long-dead entrails, grow wearying at times; even sympathy can lose its smile when over-taxed. Let the location of this Shrine and its carefully-selected distance from the Capitol reassure them. Although Faith can move mountains, it cannot be expected to shorten the distance between these two *Domes*. In this holy spot, on this significant occasion, let us sincerely and with-

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out equivocation declare before all that there can be no rivalry between our patriotic and spiritual loyalties, no competition for the Catholic in his roles as citizen and believer.

But, Beloved Brethren, we should add that Catholics *do* unite our Church and our State—we *unite them in our prayers!* This monument we dedicate today is our enduring pledge of it. May our beloved Country become ever worthy — because of *our* worth as loyal citizens — of God's choicest benedictions:

“Long may Our land be bright  
With Freedom's holy Light;  
Protect us by Thy Might  
Great God Our King!”

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### TEXT OF SERMON AT THE SOLEMN PONTIFICAL MASS FOR RELIGIOUS

The Most Reverend Karl J. Alter, D.D., LL.D.  
Archbishop of Cincinnati

It may have been a mere coincidence that the flagship which brought Columbus to these shores on his voyage of discovery bore the name "Santa Maria"; but it was no mere coincidence which prompted him to name the island on which he landed "San Salvador." That was a deliberate act of faith. It was no mere coincidence that the first city founded in the Catholic colony of Maryland was called "St. Mary's." Maryland itself received its name in honor of an earthly queen, but its first city was given the name of Mary to honor our heavenly Queen. If it seems that we put too much stress on this sequence of events, nevertheless no one should deny us the comfort of believing that Mary Immaculate has exercised a special protection over this land which has been solemnly dedicated to her honor.

"Per Mariam ad Jesum" is an axiom in our Catholic way of life. A keen appreciation of the unique place occupied by the Mother of God in the plan of our redemption has always been a sure criterion of loving devotion to her Divine Son. A right understanding of the Mystery of the Incarnation is utterly impossible without an understanding of Mary's part both as Virgin Immaculate and as Mother of God. That which was true in earliest Christian times is also true today. Through the Mother we approach the Son; through Mary we come to Christ.

It is fitting also that the site which has been chosen for the building of this magnificent Marian Shrine should be the campus of the Catholic University of America. In the Litany of Loretto, one of the titles of honor with which we salute Mary proclaims her as "Sedes Sapientiae" — "Seat of Wisdom." This University also has a claim to that title. It is indeed a "seat of wisdom." Its purpose is to conserve the knowledge acquired by human effort in the past, to transmit this deposit of truth to succeeding generations, and to extend ceaselessly the horizons of the human mind. This University however has never confused knowledge with wisdom. The two are not the same. Knowledge is like a two-edged sword. It can cut either way. It can serve the cause of human welfare or it can inflict untold harm. Much depends upon the way in which it is used. Knowledge which discovers the use of penicillin can be a friend of man. Knowledge which results in the fashioning of a hydrogen bomb can be man's mortal enemy. Knowledge can be misused; wisdom never. If directed to a wrongful purpose, it ceases by that very fact to be true wisdom.

This University has for its purpose, moreover, not merely the pursuit



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of human wisdom but the pursuit of divine wisdom as well. It recognizes another source of truth than that which can be discovered by the use of unaided reason. It is fully aware that God in His goodness has been pleased to reveal a body of truth which transcends the grasp of the human mind. Faith supplements the deficiency of human knowledge. It is the function of this University to preserve this deposit of faith; to correlate the two sources of truth, namely, the human and the divine, and to vindicate their consistency with each other. This glorious temple which towers above the campus of the University is a significant symbol of that relationship. It proclaims the supremacy of religion in its curriculum; not in the sense, however, that other disciplines must lose their autonomy in their search for truth, or that the rule of Faith should become a substitute for a valid methodology in the field of science. It is religion not only as a supernatural faith but as a science of theology which becomes the organizing principle of university studies. Without such a principle, the centrifugal force of highly individualized intellectual disciplines would explode into a chaos of conflicting claims to certitude. Thoughts and hopes such as these were never absent from the minds of those who conceived the idea of a National Shrine to Mary Immaculate and placed it on the campus of this University as a tribute to her honor and as a symbol of religion.

There are many shrines to honor our Blessed Lady dotting the landscape of Europe. They are not altogether infrequent here in this relatively new country of the West. Lourdes, Fatima, Loretto, Guadalupe come quickly to mind as places where Our Lady manifested her supernatural favors. This National Shrine in honor of her Immaculate Conception has no such history. It represents however our gratitude for past favors, and ever more an urgent appeal to her powerful intercession for continued protection in the future. To Mary therefore on this day of historical significance we lift up our voices in praise and jubilation. With her we exclaim: "My soul doth magnify the Lord; my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. . . . Behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, for He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name."

If the question is posed therefore as to the purpose of this Shrine, we answer that it stands here to reaffirm the primacy of the spiritual over the material; of the eternal over the temporal; of the supernatural over the secular. This National Shrine is the visible embodiment of our Faith; it is the outward expression of the inner life of an organic and sacred community which we call the Church. This Shrine has been built with these thoughts in mind. It is the response of a faithful and devoted people to the love which they have for Mary Immaculate. Bishops, priests, and people have reached out into God's created world and have assem-

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bled enduring stone, precious marbles, jewelled glass, gold and silver ornaments; and these they have wrought into a symphony of color and form in order that they might give glory to God and honor to His Blessed Mother. "O, Mary, Conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

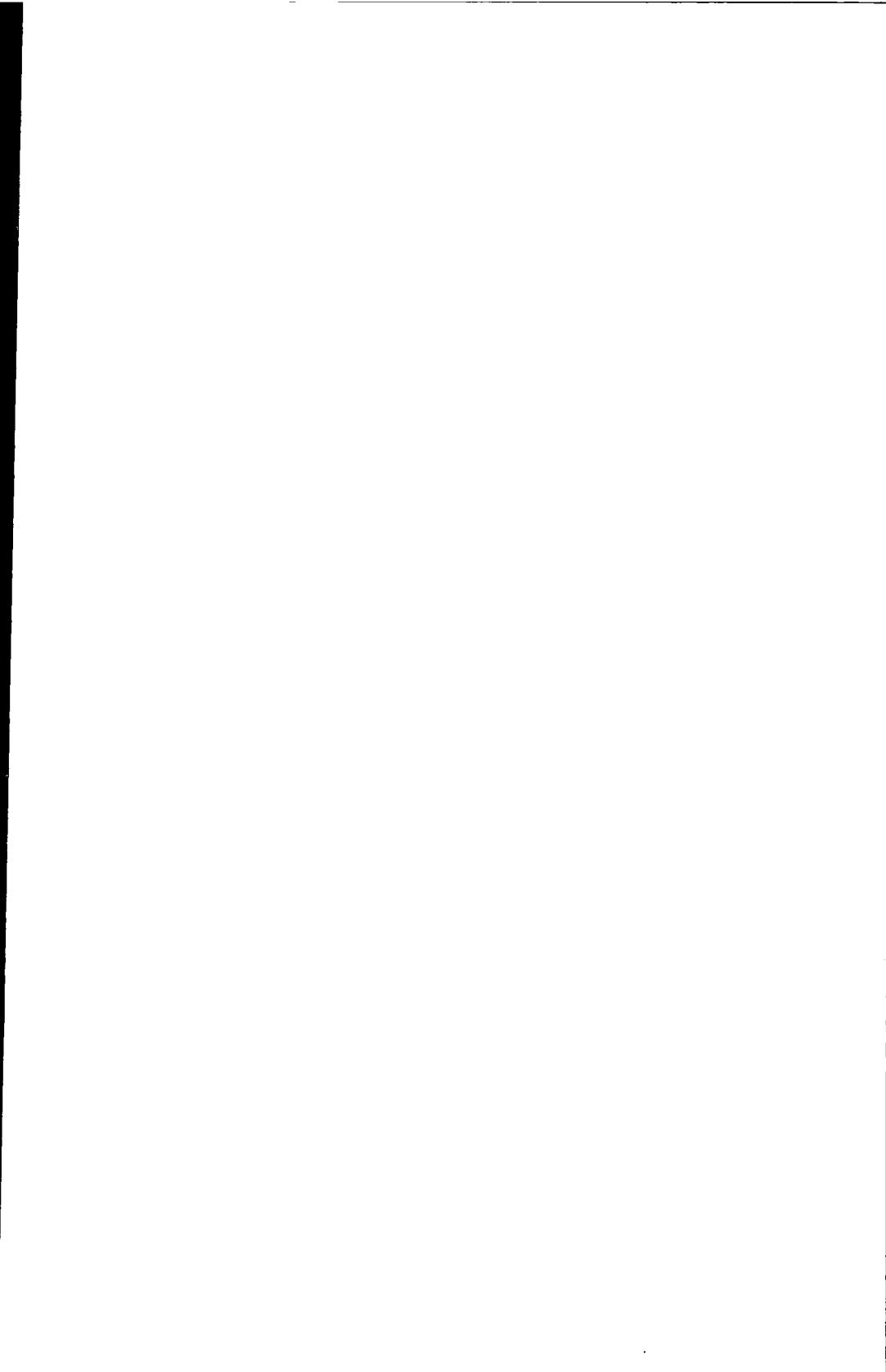
### NATIONAL SHRINE PILGRIM'S PRAYER

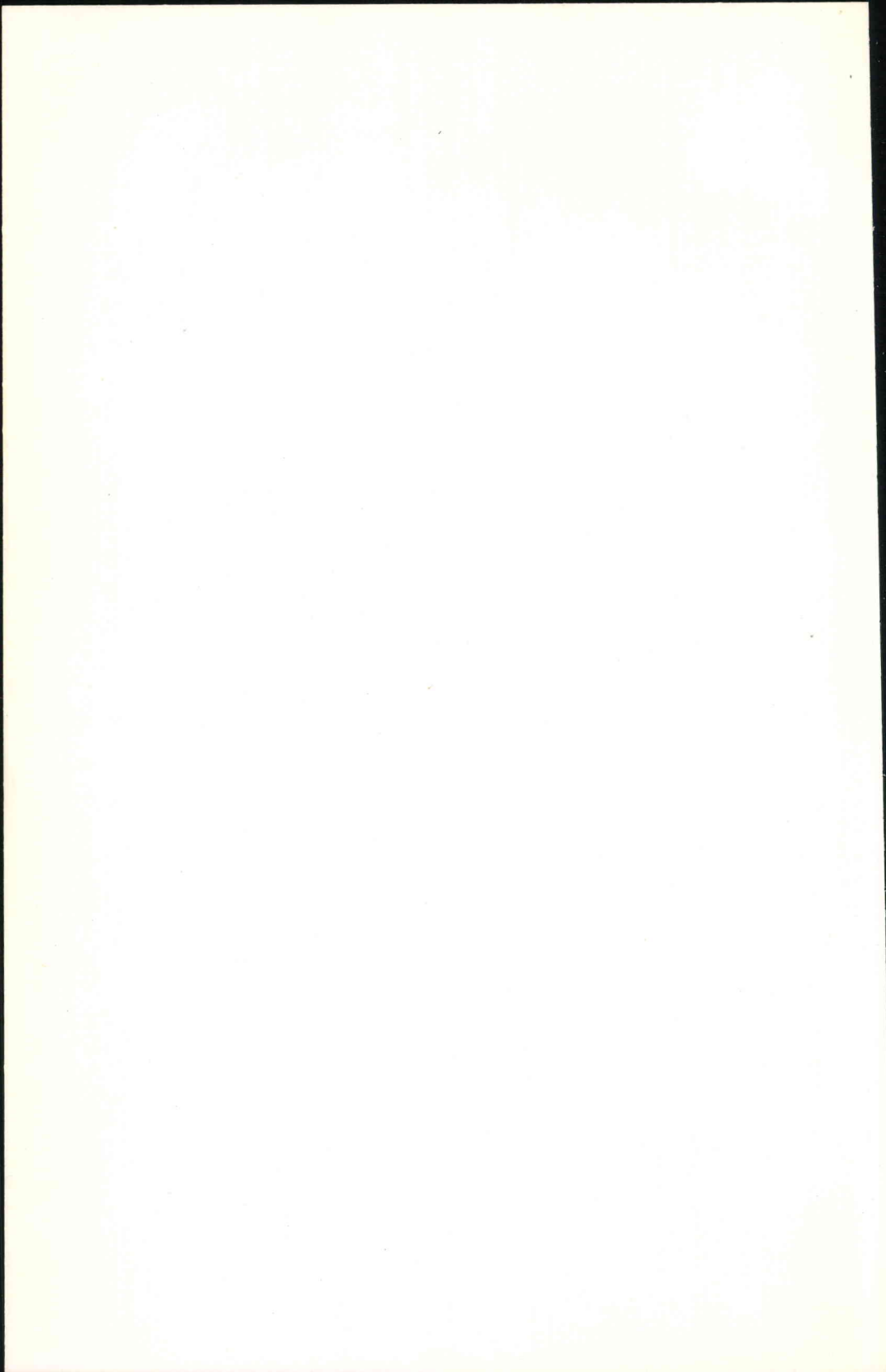
Most Holy Trinity: Our Father in Heaven, who chose Mary as the fairest of your daughters; Holy Spirit, who chose Mary as your spouse; God the Son, who chose Mary as your Mother; in union with Mary, we adore your majesty and acknowledge your supreme, eternal dominion and authority.

Most Holy Trinity, we put the United States of America into the hands of Mary Immaculate in order that she may present the country to you. Through her we wish to thank you for the great resources of this land and for the freedom which has been its heritage. Through the intercession of Mary, have mercy on the Catholic Church in America. Grant us peace. Have mercy on our President and on all the officers of our government. Grant us a fruitful economy born of justice and charity. Have mercy on capital and industry and labor. Protect the family life of the nation. Guard the innocence of our children. Grant the precious gift of many religious vocations. Through the intercession of our Mother, have mercy on the sick, the poor, the tempted, sinners — on all who are in need.

Mary, Immaculate Virgin, Our Mother, Patroness of our land, we praise you and honor you and give ourselves to you. Protect us from every harm. Pray for us, that acting always according to your will and the Will of your Divine Son, we may live and die pleasing to God.

*We are reserving a special issue of the "Marian Reprints" for a sermon delivered by His Excellency, the Most Rev. Charles P. Greco, Bishop of Alexandria, since it is a magnificent exposition of the fulfillment of Our Lady's prophecy "Behold, henceforth all nations shall call me blessed." (Luke 1 :48.)*





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47. FILIAL PIETY: MARIAN AND FAMILY—*Gerald J. Schnepf, S.M.*
48. MARY AND THE HISTORY OF WOMEN—*E. A. Leonard*
49. OUR LADY, MODEL OF FAITH—*Jean Galot, S.J.*
50. OUR LADY, SYMBOL OF HOPE—*Jean Galot, S.J.*
51. MARY, MODEL OF CHARITY—*Henri Holstein, S.J.*
52. SPIRIT OF THE LEGION OF MARY—*Frank Duff*
53. THE TIMELESS WOMAN—*Gertrud von LeFort*
54. MARY, QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE—*James M. Egan, O.P.*
55. THE LOURDES PILGRIMAGE—*Pius XII*
56. OUR LADY OF LOURDES—*Bishop Pierre-Marie Theas*
57. ESTHER AND OUR LADY—*Ronald A. Knox*
58. MARY AND THE THEOLOGIANS—*Thomas E. Clarke, S.J.*
59. EDITH STEIN AND THE MOTHER OF GOD—*Sister Mary Julian Baird, R.S.M.*
60. BEHOLD THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD—*Richard Graef, C.S.SP.*
61. LOURDES DOCUMENTS OF BISHOP LAURENCE—*Bishop of Tarbes, 1845-1870.*
62. THE POPE OF THE VIRGIN MARY—*Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O.*
63. DEVOTION TO MARY IN THE CHURCH—*Louis Bouyer, Orat.*
64. BEAURAING DOCUMENTS OF BISHOP CHARUE—*Bishop of Namur*
65. MOTHER OF HIS MANY BRETHREN—*Jean-Herve Nicolas, O.P.*
66. ST. BERNADETTE AND OUR LADY—*Mary Reed Newland*
67. LOURDES, WITNESS TO THE MATERNAL SOLICITUDE OF MARY—*James Egan, O.P.*
68. MUNIFICENTISSIMUS DEUS—*Pius XII*
69. IS OUR VENERATION TO OUR LADY "MARIOLATRY"?—*Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R.*
70. MARIAN DOCTRINE OF BENEDICT XV
71. 25 YEARS OF BANNEUX—*Bishop Louis-Joseph Kerkhofs*
72. WHAT JESUS OWES TO HIS MOTHER — *Ceslas Spicq, O.P.*
73. — 74. POPE PIUS XII ON SODALITIES
75. SECOND CONGRESS OF SODALITIES — WORLD FEDERATION

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2. THE MEANING OF MARY—*Lois Schumacher*  
LITANY FOR OUR TIMES—*Robert L. Reynolds*
3. MARY AND THE APOSTOLATE—*Emil Neubert, S.M.*
4. THE IMITATION OF MARY—*Placid Huault, S.M.*
5. MARY, ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN—*Lawrence Everett, C.S.S.R.*
6. FATIMA—IN BATTLE ARRAY—*Joseph Agius, O.P.*
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8. MARY, CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN—*Francis Connell, C.S.S.R.*
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10. MARY, OUR INSPIRATION TO ACTION—*Robert Knopp, S.M.*
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24. MARY'S APOSTOLIC ROLE IN HISTORY—*John Totten, S.M.*
25. AD DIEM ILLUM—*Pius X*
26. KNOW YOUR MOTHER BETTER: A MARIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY—*Stanley Mathews, S.M.*
27. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AND MARY'S DEATH—*J. B. Carol, O. F. M.*
28. IMMACULATE MOTHER OF GOD—*James Francis Cardinal McIntyre*
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30. AD CAELI REGINAM—*Pius XII*
31. OUR LADY AT HOME—*Richard T.A. Murphy, O.P.*
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