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Report, 1990-91: Houston, Texas, Region

Francis G. Wearden

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REPORT, 1990-91: HOUSTON, TEXAS, REGION

The tenth annual gathering of the Houston Regional Unit of the Mariological Society of America was held at Cullen Hall on the campus of the University of St. Thomas, in Houston, on Saturday, February 2, 1991. The structure of the meeting consisted of a morning and an afternoon presentation by our Episcopal Moderator, Bishop Austin Vaughan on the topic of "Marian Dogmas of our Christian Faith." Two reactors led discussions after each presentation.

Msgr. F. G. Wearden opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. with the Rosary and a statement of the purpose of the Mariological Meeting to the 250 participants. He then introduced Bishop Vaughan to the crowd which gave him an enthusiastic Texas welcome. Many of the Bishop's friends who participated with him in Operation Rescue were among those present.

Bishop Vaughan's introduction explained that all of Mary's privileges are gifts of God, given to her for the sake of all humanity. God had a reason for each gift He gave to Mary; He wanted to show us by them the heights to which a mere creature could be raised as a result of His grace. Bishop Vaughan referred to Pope John Paul II's frequent use of Our Lady in his pontificate. This is not just because he is personally devoted to her, but because it works, i.e., *de facto* it does bring souls to Jesus Christ.

The Bishop gave seven topics that he would cover in his two presentations. "In reality," he said, "I will probably cover four of them." His prediction was right. The seven topics were: (1) Mother of God, (2) Ever the Virgin, (3) Immaculate Conception, (4) Assumption, (5) Mother of the Church, (6) Mother of all Mankind, and (7) Mary as the object of our special devotion and veneration. Each topic was skillfully covered with many interesting details.

The Bishop ended his afternoon presentation with a moving explanation of the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego in 1531 on Tepeyac Hill near the present Mexico City. The simple telling of this story and showing of the miraculous image resulted in the conversion of eight million Indians in only ten years. No such phenomena had ever occurred before in the history of Christianity. This should tell us something for the needs of the Church today.

The conferences were separated by a beautiful Mass celebrated in the University Chapel and followed by lunch. The two reactors for the morning session were Fr. Dominic Felix and Marilyn Hogan; for the afternoon session, Fr. John Peters and Rich May served as reactors. Lively discussions followed each presentation, and the day went too fast for everyone.

REV. MSGR. FRANCIS G. WEARDEN
Director, (Houston) Texas Region, MSA