

## Marian Studies

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Volume 39 *Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth National  
Convention of The Mariological Society of America  
held in East Aurora, N.Y.*

Article 8

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1988

# Welcome Address by the Reverend Edward M. Grosz, Diocese of Buffalo, June 1, 1988

Edward M. Grosz

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### Recommended Citation

Grosz, Edward M. (1988) "Welcome Address by the Reverend Edward M. Grosz, Diocese of Buffalo, June 1, 1988," *Marian Studies*:  
Vol. 39, Article 8.

Available at: [https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian\\_studies/vol39/iss1/8](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol39/iss1/8)

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## WELCOME ADDRESS BY FATHER EDWARD M. GROSZ

"The Mother of the Redeemer has a precise place in the plan of salvation."

With these simple, yet profound words, Pope John Paul II begins the opening chapter of his magnificent Marian Year Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater* ("The Mother of the Redeemer").

With these beautiful words I wish to begin my remarks on this opening day of the thirty-ninth annual convention of the Mariological Society of America.

What a joy it is for me to welcome all of you to the Diocese of Buffalo and Christ the King Seminary.

You are "precious in the eyes of the Lord" (Psalm 116:15), you who are such devoted daughters and sons of the Church, daughters and sons of the woman whom Pope Paul VI, at the conclusion of the second session of the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," acclaimed as "Mother of the Church" to the thunderous applause of over 2,000 Bishops of East and West, gathered together in the largest church of Christendom.

What we will be about these two days is most important to all of us and to the Church at large.

As witnesses to the truth of the gospel, as a Pilgrim Church traveling down the corridors of time, we, the Church—past, present, yet to come—acknowledge, admire and acclaim Miriam of Nazareth as the most precious earthen vessel whom the Father fashioned and deigned to fill with the loving presence of His only-begotten Son.

As Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit, she is the Church's "untainted sol-

itary boast." And the Church—one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic—breathing "with her two lungs, the East and the West" (*Redemptoris Mater*, No. 34), has never felt the need to apologize for the unique role and the many privileges which rightfully belong to the woman the scriptures fondly address as "the Mother of Jesus" (John 2:1; Acts 1:14).

And, we have to admit, that the Church, through the centuries, has come to understand the tremendous insight of one of her sons who emphatically noted: *De Maria, numquam satis!* ("About Mary, we can never say enough!"). Mary remains ever the path which leads us to Christ. "Every encounter with Mary can only lead us to an encounter with Christ" (Pope Paul VI).

On a recent journey to Germany, I was delighted to feast my eyes on a most beautiful painting of Mary which hung on a wall in a Munich church. The Child Jesus sat enthroned on the lap of His mother. Mary held Him close to her heart; her hands were so placed, however, as to give the impression she was also presenting Him to the observer, who was immediately struck by her gentle, radiant countenance. Beneath the painting appeared the words: *In gremio matris sedet sapientia Patris* ("In the lap of the Mother is seated the wisdom of the Father").

Well do we address this Virgin as *Sedes Sapientiae* ("Seat of Wisdom") in the Litany of Loreto. Well do we admire her as *Mater Sapientiae* in the motto of the Mariological Society of America.

May we love this Virgin-Mother in the heart of her Son. And, as we celebrate this Marian Year and the Millennium of Christianity in the Ukraine, may we cherish her as:

- a woman for all seasons,
- the Mother of the Redeemer,
- the Mother of all races,
- O clemens, O pia;* ("O clement, O loving,)  
*O dulcis Virgo Maria.* (O sweet Virgin Mary.)

On behalf of Bishop Edward Head, Bishop of the Dio-

cese of Buffalo and chairperson of the Marian Year Committee of the NCCB, and on behalf of our Diocesan Marian Commission and Diocesan Marian Year Committee, I thank you for choosing scenic western New York as the site for this meeting.

We welcome you and hope that your stay will be pleasant, refreshing and most rewarding.

REV. EDWARD M. GROSZ  
*Director,*  
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