

# RELIGIOUS BULLETIN

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## THE HONOR GIVEN TO MARY



Protestant View: In the Catholic-Protestant dialogue that is being carried on, points of contention have been aired and misunderstandings have been brought out in the open. An old, and now repeated objection of Protestants is Catholic "divinization" of Mary. One of the latest statements of this Protestant misconception is made by Harvey Cox, a Baptist seminary professor, in an article, "A Protestant Appraisal of Catholicism," in the December issue of Harper's. He objects to Catholics' exalting Mary "to a status of near divinity" with the title "Queen of Heaven," charging that Pope Pius XII elevated her "to hypostatic union with the Blessed Trinity."

It was refreshing to read the answer of the Rev. John E. Coogan, S.J., in his column, Right or Wrong, syndicated in Catholic newspapers. He not only pointed out that the Rev. Mr. Cox had based his criticism on inaccurate quotations from Pope Pius XII, but he restated concisely the basis for the devotion of Catholics to Mary.

Basis of Catholic Honor: "Confessedly, we Catholics," writes Father Coogan, "pay high honor to Mary. But the honor we pay is merely a reflection of the honor first paid her by Almighty God. Did not He -- from all eternity -- choose that Jewish maiden to be the Mother of His divine Son? And is it to be supposed that God the Father had not endowed her with qualities of nature and grace consonant with her unimaginable vocation? When she conceived of the Holy Spirit and brought forth a Son, was not that Son a Person? And was not that Person God? Was not the Blessed Virgin, then, the Mother of God? Why should Christians hesitate to give her that title if God did not hesitate to give her that vocation? If, then, Mary is the Mother of God, what incongruity is there in the title 'Queen of Heaven,' that so shocked our Baptist critic?"

"Of course the Protestant fear is that such honor given the Mother -- a mere creature -- takes something from the honor due her Son. That has not been our Catholic experience. We so honor the Mother precisely because of our infinitely greater honor of her Son. Hence we have experienced the truth of the saying that, 'With Mary the primary truths of the Gospel are safeguarded; without her, men erect altars to an unknown God.'

"Through wide areas of Christendom, as Belloc has said, 'Christianity has come to mean little more than a vague feeling of kindness, especially for (dumb) animals. But in our Church that honors Mary as the Mother of God, Christianity is what it has always been: the religion

founded by Christ, the only begotten Son of God, true God of true God.' May our Baptist critic, then, and all 'our separated brethren,' join us in honoring as the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven her whom a distinguished Protestant poet long since called "Our tainted nature's solitary boast."

True Catholic Devotion: Father Coogan's defense should also impress Catholics who, either in an effort to make a rapprochement with Protestants or out of a desire to eliminate pietistic practices and sentimentality for more fundamental Christian beliefs and practices, have played down devotion to the Mother of God. Devotion to Mary is not a fringe devotion to be taken or left at will. It is not sentimentality. As Father Coogan points out, God Himself gave her a central place in the economy of redemption, and, guided by centuries of tradition, we cannot, no matter how deep our devotion, exceed the honors He heaped upon her.

Notre Dame Devotion: The tradition of devotion to Mary at Notre Dame goes all the way back to Father Badin who named his Indian mission here "Notre Dame du Lac." Father Sorin took the name for the university he founded here and built it on devotion to Notre Dame. Generations of Holy Cross religious and generations of Notre Dame students have carried on this tradition. The present day student who fails to cultivate a deep devotion to Our Lady passes over one of the most precious heritages the University of Notre Dame offers him. Father O'Hara, the long-time and revered Prefect of Religion, on being consecrated bishop chose as the motto for his coat-of-arms a phrase from a sermon by St. Bernard on the name of Mary: Ipsam sequens non devias, "Following her you do not go astray." This is a fitting motto for every Notre Dame man.

**Novena for Exams**

If you did not begin your novena for success in examinations yesterday, you can still begin today or tomorrow and complete the novena before the examinations begin. But remember, a novena won't work miracles. It will help you get the most out of the serious study that must be joined with the prayer.

**Fan Mail**

Lack of space demands that the Bulletin adopt a policy of not printing "Letters to the editor." Signed letters will be answered by mail. Some letters of criticism -- constructive as well as destructive -- have been received. Very few, however. And believe it or not, some letters of commendation have been received. Fewer.

**In Your Charity**

Please pray for the following. Deceased: father of Dorothy Laughlin of the Library staff; father of Robert Snow, Off-Campus. Ill: father of Al Schulte of Morrissey; Father Arthur Schoenfeldt, C.S.C., (surgery), Assistant University Chaplain last year.