

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Monday, June 30, 1947:**

THE second annual meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America was held in St. John's Seminary, in Boston, Massachusetts, from the evening of the June 30th until July 2nd, 1947. The convention opened with a business meeting on Monday evening at 8 P. M. V. Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., President of the Society, held the chair. Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward G. Murray, Rector of the Seminary, said the opening prayer and welcomed the members of the Society. Father Connell then delivered his report and addressed the members as follows:

"We are assembled for the second annual meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America. A little more than a year ago our Society was inaugurated. The universal enthusiasm which greeted it gave proof that such an organization was in wide demand as an essential feature of the Church's activity in our country. And in the year that has passed we have received many expressions of approval from priests and bishops, and above all from our Holy Father Pope Pius XII.

The Constitution of our Society prescribes that at the annual meeting the President shall give a report of the activities of the Society. The first item of this nature in the course of the past year was the corporate petition of the Society to the Holy Father for the solemn definition of the doctrine of our Lady's Assumption. In accordance with the unanimous decision of the Society at the meeting of June 26th, 1946, the petition was drawn up by Dr. John F. Sweeney, S.J., of Woodstock, inscribed very artistically on parchment, and sent to the Holy Father through the Apostolic Delegate. An acknowledgment was received from the Holy See, and the Apostolic Delegate sent a very gracious letter.

On December 11th, 1946, the Committee on Current Problems, headed by Monsignor Murray, held a meeting in Washington, and proposed several topics as suitable for discussion. Some of these form the subjects of the papers to be read at this meeting. On January 15th, 1947, the Board of Directors also held its meeting in Washington, and decided on the time and place for this meeting, arranged for the publication of the proceedings, and

discussed other matters pertinent to the Society. The report of the proceedings of our first meeting appeared in April, and copies have been sent to all the members. It is planned to send copies likewise to other members who will be interested in the work of the Society, particularly the members of the American Hierarchy. The Committee on Research and Publications also held a meeting in Baltimore, on June 18th, of this year.

And today we are present in Boston as the guests of Archbishop Cushing, who has generously invited us to reside in the Seminary during our meeting. I think the predominant attitude of our souls today should be gratitude—gratitude toward those who have labored for the establishment and promotion of our Society, gratitude toward the members of the Hierarchy who have encouraged us, gratitude especially toward Almighty God who has providentially raised up our organization—as we firmly believe—to give light and guidance to the darkened and bewildered world in which we live.

It is vitally important, however, that we plan some definite objectives for our Society. There is indeed great benefit in the meeting itself, with its opportunity to discuss particular problems of outstanding interest and the occasion it offers to exchange views with those engaged in the teaching of Theology. But we should visualize also objectives of more universal and more lasting value. If I may be permitted to express my opinion, I think that our most important and most comprehensive purpose should be to obtain for Sacred Theology the place of primacy that is due to it in the hierarchy of the sciences. This objective was presented clearly and objectively in the paper read by Father William O'Connor at last year's meeting, but it deserves repetition. We cannot indeed expect the great rank and file of our fellow-countrymen, who are outside the true Church—and many of them devoid of any genuine religious belief—to classify Theology as a true science. To them the spiritual and supernatural realities with which Theology is concerned are nothing more than the mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans. But, even among Catholics—and even among some Catholic priests and educators—there are lacking the esteem and appreciation that should be given to Sacred Theology. Perhaps the basic reason is our American emphasis on what is called practical values—which often are identified with benefits of the material order. It is true, Theology is primarily a speculative science; but it is also true that it has an intimate connection with things of the practical order, particularly the leading of a good, supernatural life, which is something of supremely prac-

tical value. At any rate, it should be our primary objective to secure for Theology among Catholics the place of dignity which it deserves as the queen of the sciences, the very keystone in the arch of learning.

Furthermore, we must regard as one of our chief objectives some corporate theological works, representing the best theological thought of America. Suggestions concerning the particular types of work most needed have been made and can be found in the published account of the meeting of the Board of Directors—works dealing with the place of an authoritative Church in a democracy, moral problems relative to war—and particularly a Dictionary of Apologetics. We shall not be giving the best we have to the Church in America and to the Church universal unless works of this kind are accomplished by our Society in the course of the next few years. In the course of the past year it was my privilege to spend about two months in Europe, where I learned by personal observation how much the world depends on America at the present time. This must not be understood merely in the sense that the nations of Europe look to the United States for material resources. We enjoy opportunities for theological research which are not available today in a number of old-world countries, particularly freedom of expression; and we should make use of these opportunities. We must not allow ourselves to be the victims of an inferiority complex; we must not yield to the mistaken notion that only Europe can produce theologians of the first rank. We must realize that today the world looks to America for leadership in scientific matters and that includes Theology. And the obligation of supplying this need rests on us who are privileged to bear the name of theologians.

Undoubtedly, another objective is to encourage individual theologians to produce works of lasting value. A stimulus to this activity is the interest manifested by Cardinal Spellman, who has provided for an award to those who have produced theological works of special excellence. There are countless problems to which we can profitably devote our attention and efforts. Probably most of us have read the discussion lately carried on in the pages of *America* concerning the demand for theological discussion of labor problems. There are many theologians here today who have the ability to propose the teaching of the Church on current problems of this nature in a clear and convincing and popular manner. It is a mistaken notion that popular expositions of Catholic Theology are necessarily unscientific—although unfortunately, there are Catholic writers who present the teachings of the Church in a loose and inaccurate fashion. But

it is also possible to explain even the most profound theological doctrines in correct yet simple and intelligible language; and to do this, not only in books, but also in pamphlets and magazines and newspapers, should be regarded as one of the tasks commended to the members of this Society. In this connection it is well to remember that a deep interest in Theology is lately being shown in the ranks of the laity, and we should foster this interest by providing clear, exact expositions of the science to which our lives are devoted.

Finally, it is to be hoped that our present members will promote membership in our organization. We do not seek primarily large numbers; what we hope for is a group of priests who are interested in Sacred Theology—whether they are professors of Theology or not—and who will strive within their own sphere to give the Church and to the world the treasures of wisdom provided by the most sublime of the sciences, the science of God and of divine things.”

Following the President's address, Rev. Joseph C. Fenton, Secretary, gave his report which in substance concerned all the activities of the Society since the publication of the proceedings of the previous year. He also announced the first death in the Society, and prayers were requested for the happy repose of the soul of Rev. Hugh William Radigan, O.F.M.

Rev. James Edward Rea then made his treasury report (which will be found elsewhere) and this report was accepted as read. In the course of his report he made several suggestions which evoked discussion. He recommended that the fiscal year determined in the Constitution of the Society (January 1st to January 1st) be changed from June 30th to June 30th, in order to facilitate preparation of treasury reports. Father Fenton observed that this was a matter which must be submitted to the entire membership and it was suggested that the proposed constitutional changes be sent to all members of the Society before the next annual meeting. Father Rea also suggested that in view of the expenses required to publish the proceedings, it would be necessary to place an assessment upon each member. After some discussion, Father Edmund D. Benard made a motion which was seconded by Father Eugene Burke, C.S.P., and which was passed unanimously. The motion read, “I move that the Treasurer of the Society be empowered to request from the mem-

bers, if necessary during the next several months, a special contribution to cover extraordinary expenses."

Father Connell then appointed a Committee on Nominations, the members of which were: Rev. Thomas J. Riley, Rev. Joseph C. Diebels, S.J., Rev. Leonard A. McCann, C.S.B.

Rev. Edward Hanahoe, S.A. was appointed recording secretary for the sessions of this convention.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P. M. with prayer.

### **Tuesday, July 1, 1947:**

At 9 A. M. on July 1st, the Society was honored by having the Most Rev. John J. Wright, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Boston, offer his first Pontifical Mass to beg God's blessing upon the Society's work. The Archpriest on this occasion was Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward G. Murray. The first session on Tuesday began at 10:35 A. M., with Father Connell presiding. Bishop Wright again honored the assembly with his presence. On this occasion Father Connell voiced the suggestion of the Committee on Nominations to the effect that Bishop Wright be elected as a lifetime honorary member of the Society. This suggestion was unanimously accepted. The Bishop then voiced his gratitude to the Society for the honor thus accorded him. Father Fenton, Associate Professor of Fundamental Theology at the Catholic University, then read a paper on "The Theology of the Church and the State." This paper was originally assigned to Rev. John Courtney Murray, S.J., but Father Murray was unable to attend the convention due to illness. (Text of Father Fenton's paper will be found on p. 15.) At the conclusion of the paper on "The Church and State," Father Connell resumed the chair and led the discussion. The discussion was concerned with methods of explaining to non-Catholics the Church's intolerance of dogmatic error together with her charity for those who conscientiously follow an erroneous conscience. Father Benard suggested that a psychologically acceptable method of presenting the truth that the Church is intolerant of error while tolerant of persons in error is to approach the problem from Christ's own formulation of the twofold law of charity. It was also pointed out that there is danger in placing too much emphasis on the subjective rights of conscience lest

that should tend to solidify one's adherence to false tenets. The discussion then proceeded to center the assembled body's attention to some common cases of co-operation with non-Catholics.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 P. M.

The afternoon session was opened at 3 P. M. with Father Connell occupying the chair. Most Rev. Archbishop Cushing graced the occasion with his presence and opened the meeting with prayer. Father Connell took the opportunity to express the Society's gratitude to the Archbishop for his gracious hospitality and his kindly interest in the Society. The Archbishop responded by manifesting his pleasure at the opportunity to lay before the theologians of America some practical suggestions gleaned from his own experience.

In substance the Archbishop made the following observations. He pointed out that in the Catholic Church there are two kinds of food: the Word revealed and the Word enfleshed. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, both foods are presented. We find therein the revealed Word of God, as in the Epistles and Gospels, and later in the Mass, the Word enfleshed. The first is to prepare for the second. Now, the work of the Society of Catholic Theologians pertains to the Word revealed as taught by Our Lord, and as interpreted by the infallible tradition of the Catholic Church. He went on to observe that experience shows that there is great ignorance among our people in regard to their faith. We find great manifestation of devotion and "sacramentarianism." They partake, indeed, of the Word enfleshed, but they neglect the Word revealed. The result has been a truncated form of Catholicism. Consequently, there is need for bringing the Word revealed more effectively to the Catholic people. The Archbishop noted a growing manifestation of mediocrity among the clergy, and urged that theologians do more to help priests to give their people the kind of food they need most. He complimented undertakings, such as Father Connell's book, *Morals in Politics and Professions*, and concluded his remarks by announcing some of his own plans for improving the opportunities offered to laymen of the Archdiocese to becoming better acquainted with the revealed Word of God.

After the Archbishop's address, Father Connell made a motion that His Excellency be made an honorary lifetime member of the

Society, and the motion was carried with enthusiastic applause.

Father Thomas O. Martin then read a paper on "Problems in the Morality of Warfare." The text of which will be found on page 47.) Following the paper, Father Connell then led the discussion, which centered around the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the origin of this distinction, and its application to problems connected with modern methods of waging war.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P. M.

**Wednesday, July 2, 1947:**

In the morning session of the meeting the members were divided into departmental groups. Each group had its own chairman, and the discussions were informal. The departments and their chairmen were as follows:

Dogmatic Theology: Rev. Francis S. Shea, S.T.D.

Ascetical Theology: Rev. Leroy V. Cooney, S.T.D.

Moral Theology: Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D.

Fundamental Theology: Rev. Louis I. Cunney, S.T.D.

Pastoral Theology: Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward G. Murray, S.T.D.

The afternoon session opened at 2:40 P. M. Father Connell read a cablegram from Rome which contained the blessing of the Holy Father upon the gathering. The text of the cablegram was as follows:

The Holy Father on the occasion of the meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of the United States at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, lovingly imparts to all participating his paternal apostolic blessing as a pledge of enlightening divine grace.

The paper read at the afternoon session was delivered by Very Rev. Edward A. Wuenschel, C.S.S.R., and was on "The Definability of the Doctrine of the Assumption." This paper evoked a lively discussion in which Father Philip Donnelly, S.J., and Father Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., discussed the dogmatic implications of Genesis, iii. 15.

The session was temporarily halted at 4:15 for a ten minute recess.

At 4:30 P. M. the final business meeting was held.

The President called for a report from the Committee on Admissions. Rt. Rev. Monsignor James E. O'Connell, chairman of the committee, gave the report. He announced that 49 applicants were accepted for active membership, 3 for associate membership, and 2 applicants were rejected. (One a seminarian, and the other a woman.)

On the suggestion of the committee, His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman was elected to honorary life membership in the Society.

Monsignor O'Connell moved that a necrology list be instituted for the members of the Society to be included in the annual publication of the proceedings. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

He then moved that a vote of sympathy and a promise of prayer be offered V. Rev. David Baier, O.F.M., superior of the recently deceased Father Hugh W. Radigan, O.F.M. This, too, was seconded and was carried unanimously.

Father Edmond D. Benard, secretary of the Committee on Current Problems, then gave the committee's report. (This report will be found on p. 106.)

At the completion of his report. Father Benard moved that the President be empowered to appoint a committee which would make a survey of the theory and practice of Catholic Action as found in the United States. This was seconded and carried unanimously.

Father Connell then appointed the following committee:

Very Rev. Edward A. Wuenschel, C.S.S.R.

Rev. Adam J. Otterbein, C.S.S.R.

Rev. Lawrence Riley

Rt. Rev. Monsignor John A. Fearn, chairman of the Committee on Research and Publications, then made his report. (Text on p. 110.) The Committee recommended the compilation of a bibliography of reference works in Sacred Sciences, designed for the use of postgraduate students. It was also suggested that later on a simpler one might be devised for Seminarians. The committee also considered the suggestion of Father Fenton for a compilation of a Dictionary of Apologetics, and assured him that they will aid in its publication.

In view of the recommendations made by Father Rea in the



first session of the convention, Father Martin moved that the Secretary be instructed to notify the entire active membership of the Society not less than one month prior to the next meeting as to the proposed changes in the Constitution. Upon the acceptance of the motion, Father Martin, as the Society's parliamentarian, was commissioned to formulate the constitutional changes to be submitted to the general membership before the 1948 meeting.

In view of diversity of opinion as to the suitability of the time of the annual meeting, it was also proposed to amend Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution so as to enable the Board of Directors to designate the time of the annual meeting according to their own discretion. With this in mind, the Secretary of the Society was instructed to send notification of the proposed change to all active members not less than one month before the next annual meeting.

Father Connell then appointed the following committees:

*Committee on Admissions*

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward G. Murray, Rev. Kenneth B. Moore, O.Carm., Rev. Immanuel Doronzo, O.M.I., Rev. Martin J. Horak, O.S.B., Rev. Anthony N. Fuerst, S.J., Rev. Gentle Crowley, O.F.M., Rev. John J. Galvin, S.S., Rev. Thomas O. Martin.

*Committee on Research and Publications*

Rt. Rev. Monsignor John M. Fearn, Rev. Aloysius McDonough, C.P., Rev. Lawrence J. McGinley, S.J., Rev. Kilian J. Healy, O.Carm., Rev. John H. Harrington.

*Committee on Current Problems*

Rev. Edmund D. Benard, Rev. Francis F. Reh, Rt. Rev. Monsignor Thomas J. Riley, Rev. Eugene Burke, C.S.P., Rev. Thomas E. Henneberry, S.J.

Father Connell expressed his thanks to Archbishop Cushing, Bishop Wright, Monsignor Murray, the faculty of St. John's Seminary, and the seminarians for their contribution towards the success of this meeting.

Father Benard moved that an expression of thanks be given to the President and officers of the past year who did such excellent

work on behalf of the Society. The motion was seconded and carried with enthusiastic applause.

Father Fenton moved that at the next gathering, a Requiem Mass be celebrated for the deceased members of the Society. Further, that this be a regular feature of the annual meeting. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Father Rea gave the report of the Committee on the Cardinal Spellman Award. (The text of this report is incorporated on p. 111.) The committee had decided to limit the reward to the present members of the Society and to award recent work whether published or not. Five names were jointly recommended:

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R.  
 Rev. Immanuel Doronzo, O.M.I.  
 Rev. Gerard Yelle, S.S.  
 Rev. John Courtney Murray, S.J.  
 Rev. William O'Connor

The names suggested were unanimously approved by the assembly. The form that the reward was to take was left to further discussion by the Committee.

The Committee on Nominations proposed the following names for consideration by the Society's membership:

President—Rt. Rev. Monsignor James E. O'Connell, Rector of St. John's Home Missions Seminary, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Vice-President—Rev. Hubert P. Coughlin, Pontifical Institute of Studies, Toronto, Canada.

Secretary—Rev. Augustine P. Hennessy, C.P., *The Sign*, Union City, N. J.

Treasurer—Rev. Martin J. Healy, Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, New York.

Board of Directors: (Two Years)—Rev. John P. Haran, S.J., Weston College, Weston, Mass., Very Rev. Edward A. Wuenschel, C.S.S.R., Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, New York, Rev. Francis S. Shea, St. John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass.

All names suggested by the Committee were accepted by the Society.

Monsignor O'Connell gave a brief speech of acceptance, and the convention adjourned with prayer at 6 P. M. A. P. H.