

Statement on Catholic Devotion to Mary

(Adopted Unanimously at the Business Meeting, June 29, 1955)

THE members of The Catholic Theological Society of America feel bound in conscience to express their regret and sorrow at the distortion of Catholic devotion to Mary contained in the statement unanimously approved at Los Angeles last month by the 167th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The picture of Catholic devotion presented in this statement is one that Catholics will find simply unrecognizable.

It is not true that in the mind and heart of Catholics Mary takes the place of Christ.

It is not true that Catholics think of Mary as a "semi-divine" being.

It is not true that the cult of Our Lady of Fatima symbolizes any "new and exalted status of Mary."

All Catholic devotion to Mary, now as in the past, is based upon the fact that she is the mother of the One Christ who is both God and man, and that therefore she has the same right to be called Mother of God as any mother has to be called the mother of her son. We have exactly the same scriptural warrant for honoring Mary as God's Mother as we have for worshiping Christ as God. Catholic devotional practice is the legitimate expression of this fundamental biblical fact.

It is most significant that the Catholic Church, which is accused of practicing a devotion to Mary that "now equals, and even exceeds, the devotion to Christ himself," has, from the very beginnings of Christianity, alone asserted unequivocally and with one voice that Jesus is not only "Lord" but God in the proper and exact sense of the word. It would be reassuring if all men who call themselves Christians could be as unanimous in proclaiming their faith in Christ as God, as the Presbyterian General Assembly was unanimous in its attack on Catholic devotion to Mary.

The members of The Catholic Theological Society of America unite in humble prayer before Almighty God, in hope that Mary in whose virgin body God came to men in Bethlehem may by her intercession help to hasten the day when all men everywhere may be brought to God in common faith and love.