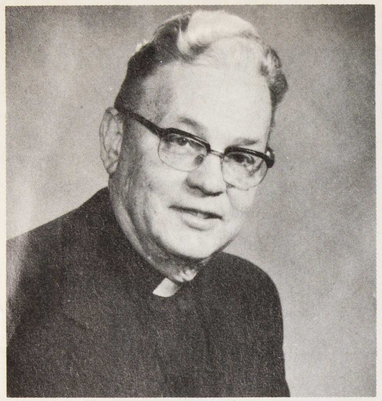

FATHER JOSEPH WRITES

Dear Marian Associates:

This issue of the Bulletin, in as much as it will be the last during this Jubilee Year of Redemption, is dedicated to our Blessed Mother as Cooperator in the redemptive work of Her Divine Son. The Church, through the Second Vatican Council, teaches us that "The Father of Mercies willed that the consent of the predestined Mother should precede the Incarnation, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life . . She gave to the world that very life which renews all things, and She was enriched by God with gifts befitting such a role . . . She devoted herself totally as a Handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of Her Son. In subordination to Him and along with Him, by the grace of Almighty God *She served the mystery of redemption*" (L.G. 56).

The central thought here is the active and responsible cooperation of Mary in the salvation and redemption of the human race: "Rightly, therefore, the Holy Fathers see Her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as *cooperating* in the work of human salvation through free faith and obedience . . . or as S. Irenaeus says, She 'being obedient, became the cause of salvation for Herself and for the whole human race'" (ib.).

Our acceptance of Mary's role in our redemption is based on the opening words of the above citation from the Council's teaching, i.e. "The Father of Mercies *willed* . . ." In other words, we are simply accepting the divine dispensation, God's plan for our redemption, whenever we invoke our Blessed Mother, or speak of Her, as co-redemptrix. The term, of course, must always be properly understood. In the same way do we speak of Mary as being "Advocate", "Auxiliatrix" or "Mediatrix", titles by which She "is invoked by the Church" (cf. L.G. 62). The Council Fathers state it quite simply and clearly: "In an utterly singular way She cooperated by Her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason She is a mother to us in the order of grace" (n. 61). Consequently, because of Her "maternal charity, Mary cares for the brethren of Her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led to their happy fatherland" (n. 62).

As we close the Jubilee Year of our Redemption, and as we reflect on Mary's role in the redemptive work of Her Divine Son, let us keep in mind that the Council Fathers want us to avoid the danger of considering the work of God and the active participation of the Mother of God, as being two separate principles, as if following each other chronologically. This would deprive the human activity of Mary of any real supernatural significance. Such was not the case in Mary's "Fiat". Her self-consecration and Her service in the mystery of redemption is brought about by the *grace of god*! She "served the mystery of redemption" because "the Father of Mercies" willed it so. St. Augustine expressed it this way: "She is spiritually the Mother of the members of the Saviour, because by love She cooperated with Her Son that the faithful might be born in the Church." Or, again, in the words of Pope Benedict XV: "She suffered so much for us, almost to the point of dying with Her suffering and dying Son. She relinquished the maternal rights She had over him for the salvation of men and, in so far as it depended on Her, She immolated Her Son to placate divine justice. Therefore, we may rightfully say that She has, with Christ, redeemed the human race" (March 22, 1918). And, finally, Pope John Paul II, in his address at the General Audience of Dec. 7th, 1983 once again expressed the mind of the Church on this subject, this time in the light of Mary's unique privilege of Immaculate Conception: "We must above all note that Mary was created Immaculate in order to be better able to act on our behalf. The fullness of grace allowed Her to fulfill perfectly Her mission of *collaboration with the work of salvation*: it gave the maximum value to Her *cooperation in the sacrifice*. When Mary presented to the Father Her Son nailed to the cross, Her painful offering was entirely pure." The Holy Father goes on to stress that the Immaculate Mother of God "by virtue of her purity" (as evidence in Her Immaculate Conception) now helps us to strive for the sinlessness and perfection that was realized in Her. "It is for sinners, that is, for all of us, that She received an exceptional grace. In Her role as Mother She strives to make all Her earthly children sharers in some way in the favor with which She was personally enriched."

My final thought: Because our Blessed Mother accepted to be so completely identified with Her Son in his mission of Redemption, She was given tremendous power to bring us to Jesus our Redeemer. For this reason our Holy Father has entrusted his hopes, desires, aspirations for the Holy Year to Mary the Mother of our Redeemer and the Universal Mother of the whole of humanity.

May our Merciful Saviour bless each and everyone of you and may His Immaculate Mother keep all of you ever close to Her Maternal Heart.

Devotedly in Mary Immaculate,

Father Joseph M.I.C.

MARIANS IN THE NEWS

Glimpses From Our Missions in Brazil

One of our Marian priests in Brazil, Father John Glica M.I.C., informs us that thanks to donations from our Marian Associates he was able to build 9 Mission Chapels during the past 4 and a half years, all within the Diocese of Paranagua, state of Parana, and attached to the Parish in Adrianopolis, where he was pastor until his recent transfer to Curitiba. He writes: "What a joy it is to travel to these new mission chapels! One can serve the people so much more readily, hear their confessions and celebrate the liturgy in a truly dignified atmosphere. The religious life in such a mission shows marked improvement when a new chapel is constructed-for the people gather to pray in common on Sundays and Holy Days even when a priest cannot be present." He draws a realistic picture of experiences suffered during recent floods: no mail delivery for two weeks, no transportation of any kind, cut off almost completely from the outside world . . . 200 yards from his residence a hill begins to crumble, an avalanche develops

"What a joy it is to travel!"

taking with it all buildings in its path, electric poles are down, power is cut off, rivers overflow their banks, water floods the streets and roads. The results? —panic among the people, food stores emptied of their supplies and no new deliveries coming through. Father finds himself stranded for 24 hours on the "mission road!" During midnight mass on June 12th the rain came down in torrents. The church was filled to over-flowing and the poor people, with tears in their eyes, raised their humble prayers to Our Merciful Saviour, begging for relief. And, suddenly, just after the elevation, the rains cease. For 10 days they had relief from the rains and the sun appeared once again. But the rains came back with a vengeance on the eve of the Feast of St. John the Baptist. And once again they found themselves cut-off from the world. "To reach one of my mission chapels," he writes, "I drive as far as I can, leave the car, put on my long boots, strap my bag to my back and shoulders and begin the long trek (as much as 16 km.) to

"I drive as far as I can into the interior . . ."

the village." The scene can be depressing as he daily visits his people in their huts and brings them food.

Another of our missionaries, Father Edmund Grabowski M.I.C. , writes of his first experiences as a missionary. "I was assigned to my first mission in October of 1981. My parish is a new one, having been erected but one year previously. To it are attached 47 mission chapels, some as much as 40, 50, 60 and one even 88 km. distant from the home parish in Matriz. The distances, of course, would mean nothing if there were some half-decent roads. Most frequently there are no roads to speak of. What is worse —during the rainy season the "dusty" paths turn into rivers of mud . . . then you go on foot (when possible and there is hope of reaching the mission), with your pack strapped to your back . . ." Life in such mission outposts can be truly monotonous and the arrival of the priest is cause for joy. These people truly appreciate their priests and he enjoys being among them. When they are without Mass they feel abandoned. And so the missionary makes every effort to be present on the Sundays allotted to each mission.

Fr. Glica crossing a brook to get to one of the mission stations.