

# A TRIBUTE TO MARY MARTIN McLAUGHLIN

JOAN CADDEN

I have been given the privilege of offering this tribute to Mary, because, as a History major at Vassar in the early 1960s, I was her student.<sup>1</sup> But who among us is not her student?

I took courses from Mary, the bibliographies of which sustained me through years of graduate school and teaching. But who among us has not been nourished by the bibliographical feast she offered in, say, her article on childhood?

Gently pressing me to improve my Latin, Mary guided me in an independent study devoted to the translation of Heloise's letters: *domino suo imo patri, conjugii suo imo fratri*. I remember my bewilderment and her reassurance. But whom among us has she not guided in our reading of Heloise?

I learned and grew immeasurably from Mary's patient and generous comments on my written work. But who among us has sent her something to read and not received the benefits of her support and wisdom?

As Mary's student, I felt "the encouragement and help of [...] sympathy and gentleness," which, Mary informs us, Anselm of Bec prescribed for young people. I cannot remember now how it was that she and J. B. found me and my friend one cold, rainy Easter in Northern Italy, and offered us a hot meal and a place to stay. But who among us has not enjoyed her friendship and guidance during a warm and quiet moment at a cold, bustling conference?

It might appear to be an irony of Mary's career that a woman so constantly engaged in cooperative work and so deeply interested in the study of communities should have been so successful at both in what could seem to an outsider to be radical isolation. Those of us gathered here today in the spirit of collaboration as well as celebration know what a strong community she has created and sustained. Mary, we are all honored to count ourselves among your friends, your colleagues, and, indeed, your students. And we all thank you.

## END NOTE

1. Originally delivered February 23, 1991, at the "Mary Martin McLaughlin Invitational Workshop on Women and Religion," Barnard College, organized by Caroline Walker Bynum.