

**VOLUME FOUR: KNOWING WOMAN:
THE CHURCH AND WOMAN**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

I. TWO IN ONE FLESH

- A. Exploring the mystery of Church and the marital image
- B. No monist principle in the Church
- C. Woman's meaning is prophetic

II. THE CHURCH - MASCULINE AND FEMININE

- A. Metamorphosis
- B. The Christifideles
- C. The Laici
- D. The Clerici
- E. Separating the Spurious from the Authentic
- F. Holier Than Thou
- G. The Feminine Side Rebelling
- H. Diaconate for women?
- I. Woman Altar Servers?
- J. Apostolic authority's gift to the Christifideles

III. SHEPHERDING IN THE CHURCH

- A. The first shepherd
- B. Chief steward of the Kingdom
- C. Call no man father
- D. Distinguishing in order to unite
- E. A vital organ

IV. DOCTRINAL POSITION ON WOMAN

- A. An emerging doctrine?
- B. Comparisons to the Arian controversy
- C. Male hierarchy on the defensive
- D. Women teaching women
- E. Failure in doctrinal development
- F. Questions to be answered

G. Gender language

H. A final sign of envy?

V. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIFIDELES

A. A classic example

B. Woman helped to exercise her rights and duties

C. True Feminine: Pseudo Feminine

VI. MARY: MOTHER AND MODEL FOR CHRISTIFIDELIS

A. Model of Obedience

B. Helper and Intercessor for Women

C. Mary and the Fathers of the Church

VI. THE MARIAN AGE

A. Woman at the Crossroads

B. Mary : entrance to the one Church

C. The last age before Christ's return

CONCLUSION TO BOOK IV.

THE CHURCH AND WOMAN

PREFACE

The Church is a mystery. That is the title of the opening chapter of Vatican II's document, *Lumen Gentium*. This writer attempting to write anything about this mystery is more presumptuous than a student discoursing on Newton, Maxwell and Einstein after studying high school physics.

(the Church) as a divine reality inserted into history, cannot be fully captured by human thought or language.¹

Therefore I write with only the hope of catching a few reflections off the complex prism of her wondrous, mostly hidden, life. This fourth book in our series exploring the meaning and role of woman, is the slimmest of the four Knowing woman series, but the most critical. It must of necessity bring our conclusions to bear on the Church, simply because the Church is earth's ultimate feminine entity. At the end time, clothed in glory, she will be revealed to be the Bride of Christ Jesus, presented to Him without the imperfections that are now so distracting, even damning, to those who view only her outward appearance. She is not yet clothed in spotless white, at least to the observer's critical eye. Nevertheless, at the same time she is perfect. We gain encouragement to present this brief commentary on the meaning of the overall femininity of the Church, as well as what that means to us her members by words Pope Paul VI gave in his opening talk at the second session of Vatican II. He reminded us that new things will continually come to light about her.

The Church is a mystery. It is reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies, therefore, within the very nature of the Church to be always open to new and greater exploration.²

Though we can scarcely add anything new, we are grateful for this openness, because, in order to fly, the exploration we make here depends on theological and scriptural wings carefully constructed in books One and Two of our series. Admittedly we try to soar on these wings; and they remain to be thoroughly tested. But we believe them not to be Icarian, falling off in the heat of heavenly sun, because though inexpert ourselves, we have relied on master-builders who have

¹ *Lumen Gentium*, footnote to I.1

² *Ibid*

long risen on theological and scriptural flight machines which accounts for the reliance on many quotations. Through the minds and hearts of many thinkers through the ages, various Church Fathers and many of the Saints, John Henry Cardinal Newman, Saint Benedicta (Edith Stein), and St. John Paul II, we have been led to reconsider what God intended by the creation of man and woman in His image and likeness. Within the last few years, two godly endowed theologians, Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Urs Von Balthazar, have contributed profoundly with “Mary, the Church at the Source”³ which fills all that this attempt lacks.

This image and likeness is a Trinitarian and Covenantal image, not a monadic image. Just as Father and Son share the same nature, but are non-exchangeable in role it follows that God in creating Mankind male and female profoundly recast himself in human soul and flesh. We have found the ramifications of the trinitarian model have everything to say about the roles of man and woman, and about their status in the Original, the Fallen, and the Redeemed Orders. The Church is that Redeemed Order. It is time, then, to turn our attention to the Church: the Virgin-daughter, the Mother whom God has given His children, and the Bride whom the Holy Spirit is preparing for the culmination of the age. Here we will apply what we have learned to the loving intimate relationship of God to His Church which determines, as well, the relationships of those within the perimeters of her motherly embrace.

If at this point it is permissible to become personal, the author, at the time a Protestant, all through her young adulthood felt her mind congeal at any mention of church. It seemed intolerable that a “spiritual” person needed any such stifling thing as a formal service, which never became worship, clustered there with others whose flaws were more apparent than their virtues. Such an attitude can clearly be seen as sophomorically judgmental, but the distance between that early understanding of church and the consciousness of the Church that I now enjoy is to be measured in light years. It is in the Catholic Church that I have been awed and often brought to my knees by heaven’s treasures spilled out from her largess, and I only hope to convey to others, who may look at her askance, a little of that marvel and love that she has inspired.

³ Ignatius Press 2005

CHAPTER I. TWO IN ONE FLESH

Exploring the Marital Image in the Mystery of Church

Since the 1960's coincident to Vatican II, there has been rising turbulence in the Church over the role of man and woman. The creature Man, male and female, whom God created in the Original Order to be Bride to him in supernatural love and fruitfulness, has been brought to the threshold of the New Eden only to be tempted by the same old enticement that caused their breakup in the first place. Alpha comes round to Omega where the two, beginning and end, are meant to merge into the same glorious economy - call it the divine Harmony of the Spheres, or the Celestial Dance or the eternal Wedding Feast. But there looms an obstacle. The same enemy perpetrator of the same disorder that defaced the Original Order blocks the way. The Redeemed Order, which is the Church, eager for reunion in the nuptial embrace of God, is lured - it can only be temporarily - by the same lie that instigated the fall from the Original order.

The adversary Satan may be clever, but his world view is myopic, and his range of temptations so limited as to be tedious. He hardly needs a large repertoire when what he uses is so effective. We recall from our examination in Book I how the two sexes turned away from their high destiny with God. Original in the Garden, the lure has become totally predictable. Each one, male or female, both an emblem of the divine order of First and Second Persons, is once more faced with the choice of accepting or rejecting the Eden of God. Open and self-giving, they may come to God as his adoring Spouse to be endowed with free horizon-less joy, or they may turn again to their own sovereignty, a pure illusion, returning to a tedious, destructive, servitude of the Evil one.

Because of her call to elemental, primary self-giving which sets the stance for all mankind, the woman is again faced with a choice at this critical crossroad that should seem familiar to anyone who has seriously considered Genesis 1, 2, and 3 (Book I). It is she, as always, who is the first to toy with the false offer of power – it glitters within reach. What further position or power

could she desire than to be the crucial one to make the eternal choice - either a heaven of divine union for the Body of Christ, or a hell of self-willed rupture with God and her man. Anyone acquainted at all with the upheaval feminism has brought into the Church will understand the critical decision that is in woman's hand. It remains in this fourth book of the series Knowing Woman to draw out from this ancient temptation of autonomy some of the linked issues that vitally effect our Catholic Christian community life and our immediate destiny.

Think for a moment of the thorniest issues perplexing the faithful: *Humanae Vitae* and the true reproductive expression of sexuality; sexuality outside of matrimony, the uses of the body – egg or sperm donation, surrogate motherhood, stem cells, cloning; God's intent for the role of women faced with patriarchy and the hierarchical organization of the Church. All of these come down to accurately decoding the meaning in the physiology and psychology that God embedded in women, yes, and secondarily men. Does this point to an eventual doctrine of Man, male and female? If a question arises here of "women first," the solution rests ultimately with Eve or Mary before it rests with Adam or Jesus. This may seem a twisted logic, but this book will attempt to explain it, placing the solution in the will and hands of the woman of faith. That is, first she must commit herself to a righteous decision about her meaning, and then make it evident in her life within the Church community.

In the year 1994 two directives from Rome, perhaps seen as beginnings of a doctrinal formulation, have confounded the faithful: the first, the permission for girls to act as altar servers¹; the second the Holy Father's definitive denial that women can ever be ordained as priests in the Church². These two magisterial statements, seeming to be incompatible with each other in their overall philosophy, cannot continue to be so; there will be, in St. John Paul II's words, "a wider perception that includes them and goes beyond them."³ At the moment one of these camps happily accedes to one of these disciplines and grieves over the other - the other camp, contrary-wise. But the resolution of this conundrum points to a clarification that may

¹ The decision came in the form of a circular letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to presidents of episcopal conferences on 15 March 1994, which announced a 30 June 1992 authentic interpretation (confirmed on 11 July 1992 by Pope John Paul II) from the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts. This authentic interpretation said that canon 230 §2 states that service at the altar is one of the liturgical functions that can be performed by both lay men and women. (From Wikipedia.)

² The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sets it out clearly, quoting the decree *Inter insigniores*: "Only a baptized man receives sacred ordination."

³ A speech to the Pontifical Academy of Science, Oct. 31 , '92

auger the emergence of doctrine - a Doctrine of Man: The Meaning of Man and Woman in the Divine Plan which may be seen incipient in “The Theology of the Body” of John Paul II.

In the opening years of the Twenty-first Century, we may be witnesses to the birth-throes of such a doctrine. Even though it is laden with joy and promise, birthing is never a neat, comfortable, or controllable event - ask the mother who goes through it, or the father who anxiously paces nearby. As the Church in engages the Third Millennium, we will hope that the exciting possible nativity of this doctrine be unimpeded. In this examination of the issues, we will look for assistance from those who have guided our thinking thus far especially popes St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Pope Francis I makes his contribution, the direction of which it is early to assess.

What is the Church that she is faced with bringing forth such a painful clarification even if it amounts only to something like temporary relief of dyspepsia? The Church is the physical expression of the purpose and plan of God for the Redeemed Order - for those who have accepted the forgiveness of Christ and have been incorporated into his Body by Baptism. The letters of St. Paul and St. Peter in the height of their exuberance extol the Church as a “living structure” built of the faithful who are its stones, growing into a “holy temple” for an immaculate dwelling for the Holy Spirit! Through the Church all will come to see “the plan of God” hidden for ages. But such a conclusion to the human experience does not arrive without painful growth, increment added to increment over the centuries. (For a discussion of John Henry Cardinal Newman’s insights on the true development of doctrine see Book I). Forces within and without, from the killing of the innocents at Jesus’ birth on, impede every step. Yet, the plan to unify *all things in Christ* proceeds. . . through the Church! Ephesian’s and I Peter’s outbursts of praise for the Church are echoed in *Lumen Gentium*.

By an utterly free and mysterious decree of his wisdom and goodness, the eternal Father created the whole world. His plan was to dignify men with a participation in his own divine life. He did not abandon men after they had fallen in Adam, but ceaselessly offered them helps to salvation, in anticipation of Christ the Redeemer, “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col 1:15) All the elect before time began, the Father foreknew and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). He planned to assemble in the Holy Church all those who would believe in Christ.⁴

⁴ Ibid I.2

The emergence of a new doctrine will then encompass all the truths the Church has codified before and will be another step toward final participation in divine life. Because *the elect* will be that Perfected Man, male and female, whose relationship to God will image that of the Son to the Father, the Church as an assembly of the elect has that relationship to God that he ordained for Man in the beginning. It is this *unity of Man with God*, a divine marriage, that Cardinal Carter, with a growing chorus of voices, places as a foundation stone for understanding the basis of priesthood and Eucharist in the Church. This, too, would be an aspect of the any Doctrine of Man necessitating *marital-union* terms.

The tensions resulting from the unity of God and his covenantal relation to his Chosen People are not resolved within the Old Testament. They await the Trinitarian faith of the New Covenant, in which the absolute unity of God is not monadic but trinitarian. This eliminates the necessity of placing antagonisms between unity and multiplicity, because the Triune God, who is Unity itself, is also three Persons, qualitatively differentiated and irreducible to each other, yet without antagonism.

A new principle of order is introduced in the universe. Its created image is marital, in that the New Creation in the image of God is precisely the marital union of Christ and his church . . . In particular, the principle refutes the pagan conviction that order is necessarily the suppression of freedom by the submission to a monadic authority principle.⁵

A covenantal union, we have seen throughout our study, is marital, the coming together of feminine and masculine. St. Paul describes the goal of the Church in these terms continually. Christ loves the Church as his bride, the model being the conjugal love of a man for his wife, his own body. There is no suppression of freedom in this headship - but the union of two ob-positioned equals who love each other with eternal steadfast love and are bonded in the Holy Spirit. This bedrock idea can be made graphic by another visualization.

In an illustration, somewhat related to our original diagram of Book One (repeated on page 15), consider two hands, right and left. They are equals, but were they both the same, thumbs and fingers in the same order, they would not be able to clasp each other or work together. If they were both the same, then either one could lead. In their sameness, they would express a monist authority principle - one hand would simply contend with the freedom of the

⁵ Carter, Gerald Emmett, Cardinal, "Do This in Memory of Me" A Pastoral Letter upon the Sacrament of Priestly Orders, Dec. 8, 1983, Toronto. 1.4. Actually written by a priest who has helped me in grappling with these concepts the last few years, Donald Keefe SJ. Covenant Theology.

other in order to act. Undifferentiated, it would boil down to a matter of contention or power who would assume first place and who would take second, as though first and second were degrees of honor. In the holy figure of equal but ob-positioned, first and second, like right and left hands, are simply essential to order and a smooth collaboration, but imply no degree of honor; both positions are fully worthy.

When freedom is rationalized, it becomes the power by which a monad, whether a god, an individual person, an authoritarian despot, or an equally authoritarian collectivist society, preserves its autonomy, its self-sufficiency, its unity, by resisting dependency upon or relation to “the other”. The rationalization eliminates all that might qualify the idea of freedom. It becomes quantified as power, and must be absolute, unqualified, not shared on any rational basis. The basis for social union in such a rationale can only be repression of freedom, for all freedom is centrifugal. . .

(We) must reject this. . . God is not a “great monad” but a Trinity of Persons whose unity is not power but love. That this is fact, the Good News, is a truth of faith. Commitment to this truth transfigures our experience, our world, our humanity. We enter into the freedom of the children of God, whose name is love, not power. Our freedom is his gift, the gift of the Covenant, the Good Creation, the holy society by which we may belong to God. The unity of this society is not monadic, but marital. Marital freedom is centripetal, not the fear and hatred of the lonely monad, but the love which is concrete in the “one flesh” which images the Unity and the Trinity that is God.⁶

No monist authority principle in the Church

It is a monist authority principle that lies behind the argument that sex is merely arbitrary, that either male or female may assume headship - that their equality demands a view that they are the same, not dependent on each other as opposites who complete, but never compete with each other from their non-exchangeable positions. Such an “equal means the same” belief presumes a struggle to see who will be in control. (Which control, we hasten to add, is not to be for either.) In the covenantal, marital ordering, however, each is distinct and worthy, yet, in the Church “the right hand”, the one we have been labeling “initiative or authority,” freely offers itself in sacrifice, and the “left hand” laity, the hand we have been labeling “response or obedience, “freely offers a sacrifice of praise to the Head. They come together - centripetally

⁶ Ibid III.5

drawn by love - in an embrace whose power of love is, in a truer marital image, deeper than the mere clasp of two hands, the Holy Spirit.

For her part, the Church is subject to her Head (cf Eph 5:22-23) "For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col 2:9) he fills the Church, which is his Body and his fullness, with his divine gifts (cf. 1:22-23) so that she may grow and reach all the fullness of God (cf Eph 3:19)⁷

"That she may reach the fullness of God" - such a statement! A *gift of equality* is given to those subject to the Head! Now, as we have seen from the beginning of this writing, in order to make room for such an idea we must transform the whole meaning of subject and head. No words are really adequate, because all language concerning this relationship is tainted by the fallen world's evaluation. Cardinal Carter warns:

This freedom. . . . images the Triune God, and combines marital freedom and marital love. *Perhaps no element of the Christian revelation has been more difficult to grasp than this, the transformation of the notions of freedom, of authority and of love in the New Covenant.* Three centuries of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment rationalism have led us to think of divine freedom as brute omnipotence. . . . From the time of Origen this has been a preoccupation of Christian theologians, who have sometimes . . . ignore the trinitarian transformation of the meaning of authority as revealed in the hymn in Philippians 2, and the consequent transformation of the meaning of freedom.⁸

We remember that wonderful Scriptural hymn referred to in this quote - "not counting equality with God a thing to be grasped, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." There is no "power over," absolutely no oppression, in this authority; it lives to give the freedom it enjoys to the Beloved. And it is this role that the priest assumes when he stands for Christ the Head. With the Body - together, he and the body - unite in one flesh - to make the Eucharistic sacrifice.

The Eucharistic sacrifice is denied when its covenantal and marital structure is denied. Christ is present in the Mass by the sacrificial "work" through which he is the Head of the bridal church. . . . In this sacrificial presence of the Christus totus, the unique sacrifice on the Cross is One Flesh with the Church's sacrifice of praise, in a union which depends upon their qualitative, marital, irreducibility. To understand the Mass as the sacrifice of the Cross merely, or as the sacrifice of praise merely, is to barter the reality for a false simplicity which is non-trinitarian.⁹

⁷ Lumen Gentium, op.cit., I.7

⁸ Carter, op.cit. III.4 italics added

⁹ Ibid

Woman's meaning is prophetic for the Church

Woman's being, her meaning and role as the free responder, the basic and single-natured being upon which the "left hand" understanding (responsive and obedient) on all levels is based, is, then, prophetic. That is, woman in her being speaks God's Word to all ages as a sign pointing to the culmination of the age.

The passage from the Letter to the Ephesians which we have been considering enables us to think of a special kind of "prophetism" that belongs to women in their femininity. The analogy of the Bridegroom and the Bride speaks of the love with which every human being - man and woman - is loved by God in Christ. But in the context of the biblical analogy and the text's interior logic, it is precisely the woman - the bride - who manifests this truth to everyone. This "prophetic" character of women in their femininity finds its highest expression in the Virgin Mother of God. She emphasizes, in the fullest and most direct way, the intimate linking of the order of love - which enters the world of human persons through a Woman - with the Holy Spirit. At the Annunciation Mary hears the words: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Lk 1:35)¹⁰

It is this prophetic quality of the feminine, obviously embodied in the female, that tells the meaning of the Church and the relationships God has established within her. She is the one to receive love, in order to love in return. First a receiver, a beloved; only then a lover! This is the "intimate linking of the order of love." Order speaks of authority and obedience, initiative and response, but now we have transcended any definition of these terms except what pertains to the Redeemed Order, where all relationship, both those who initiate or have authority and those who respond, is carried out in self-giving love, the wondrous gift and mark of the Spirit.

The marital embrace itself is an icon of the inner life of the Trinity.¹¹

Like a woman in relation to her husband the Church is continually receptive and open to the Trinity. As a woman responds, listens and heeds, is subject to her head, and is by this relationship of love made fruitful, so through the Spirit the Church learns a submissive heart attitude from Jesus and his embodiment as Perfect Man, but she learns this heart attitude intimately from Mary who as the first of all those in the company of the Church is the Mother.

¹⁰ John Paul II *Mulieris Dignatatem*, 1988, VIII.29 All of this pertains to the further enterprise of John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*.

¹¹ West, Christopher, *Theology of the Body, Explained*, (Pauline, Boston, 2003)p. 127 drawn from John Paul's *Theology of the Body* 77-83

She learns this heart attitude, as well, from her knowledge of the natural realm where the biological function of man and woman demonstrates the agent and patient principles at the heart of Godhead in whose image they are created. She is comprised of those (the elect) who understand their being as irrevocably *other* than Godhead - creatures - never God - though lifted and gifted by the Spirit of God to an amazing equality with himself which culminates in union.

First of all, the Church in her perfect core must be feminine.¹²

Though in Perfection these creatures enjoy the undeserved gift of equality with God, this can never be confused in any way as being God themselves. They, therefore, acknowledge and willingly live out the other pole - dependency of creature to Creator, turning away from all temptation to be autonomous, never turning back to their fallen ways, rejecting the value system that presses on them from the world that insists that authority and power are the criteria for success and for human fulfillment.

When desire is directed to power as superior to love, Karl Stern, psychiatrist and philosopher, Jewish convert to Catholicism, sees the inherent worth of the feminine refused and denied.¹³ Feminists have accepted this dangerous assumption of power as superior to love, thus betraying the meaning of their sex.¹⁴ (In writing of feminism in this vein, we are not writing of Saint Edith Stein's or Pope John Paul II's concept of feminism which is of a full womanhood, fully realized and valued, but rather a distortion that has run rampant in the world and has attempted to infect the Church). These political feminists truly believe that hierarchy means power, never having grasped their Lord's intent, or the heart of his gospel.

Love and Power as a moral antithesis are at work inside every human being, regardless of sex. Love and power is the polarity of all human relationships. . .and all moral conflicts rise out of a tension between the two. All true love for another means a renunciation - painful or effortless, conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional - of power. . . God started, one might say, his relationship with man by renouncing power over him.¹⁵

Those bishops who have agreed with feminists in the evaluation that power is the mark of importance are exposed as without real comprehension of the service role of their "hand," which though not first in order in relationship to the other is, nevertheless, equally worthy and important. This is evidence of clericalism which is a plague. When the Pope's *Apostolic Letter, On*

¹² Von Balthasar, *Mary the Church at the Source*, Ignatius 2005, p.111

¹³ See Karl Stern, *Flight From Woman*, NY 1965

¹⁴ See William Oddie, *What Will Happen to God*, Ignatius, 1984

¹⁵ Stern, op.cit, p.274

*Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone*¹⁶ attempted to set the ordination issue at rest, shepherds, including an Archbishop, who wrote a much publicized commentary on this letter, caused great stress and may have even contributed to the fracture in the Church that has developed over the “woman issue.” It is this marital reality of the love of opposites, both of whom have renounced power, which underlies the great doctrines of the Church, especially priesthood and Eucharist, and remains uncomprehended by those who continue to assume power rather than the self-giving demanded by love.

Augustine again teaches us: this society (holy fellowship, *sancta societate*) is the “whole Christ”, *Christus totus, integer, plenitudo Christi*, the covenantal, marital union of Christ with his Church. All the themes with which we are concerned converge here: the Good Creation, good because signed with the marital image of the Triune God by its creation in Christ; the martially structured Covenant of the New Adam with the New Eve, the Church; Christ the High Priest, whose absolute obedience to the Father is his Sacrifice, his irrevocable self-donation to and for the Church which is his Body, his Bride; the Holy Society by which we may belong to God understood as the *Christus totus*, the marital One Flesh of Christ with his Church.¹⁷

¹⁶ May 1994

¹⁷ Carter, *op.cit.*, II.1

CHAPTER II. THE CHURCH - MASCULINE AND FEMININE

Metamorphosis

Within the whole family of God, scripture tells us to expect to see a dim, but slowly emerging image of the Son of God. In Mary and Jesus that image is pure; and those who are among the saints bear that image. Those of the present generation in this family, those who are truly *Christifideles* (the faithful of Christ) have been “predestined to conform to the image of his son.”¹ Just as the formation of the Monarch butterfly can be seen through the case as the chrysalis matures, so the imprint of that divine image, though faint and indistinct, is to be more and more promisingly visible among the men and women in the Church. The butterfly form darkening its image on the chrysalis can scarcely speak of the beauty of the actual winged creature that will someday emerge and fly, but it does not, in retrospect, appear to be inconsistent to that marvelous outcome. So, the divine image emerging even now upon the Family of God, must be the imprint of the Blessed Virgin Mother, and will not belie the reality of Perfection which will sometime be its eternal glory. The Church is feminine – the Bride. Mary is the perfect model – she who was from the beginning conformed to the image of her Son.

In Mary, the Church is embodied even before being being
organized in Peter. . .²

The relationship of Persons of the Holy Trinity among themselves, the relationship that the Godhead also duplicates between himself and that perfected creature Man - that relationship is slowly to become visible in the Family of God. Therefore, it cannot be difficult to discern which woman in the Church aids that final formation and which woman does not.

¹ Romans 8:29

² Op cit., von Balthasar, p.140

The Christifideles

In this discernment there is a commonalty that is recognized among all the persons in the Church, Baptism into one Spirit, an unquestioned gift of equality in the Spirit among all the parts of the Body. By Baptism not one part has less or more of that Spirit than another.

The eye cannot say to the hand “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”³

There is no distinction in the worth and weight of each member of the Body due to function or to sex. Each person is called into the Body in full equality. No state in life negates that gift.

For as many of you as were *baptized into Christ* have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.⁴

Such persons in the Church are the *Christifideles*. In Christ they share a common dignity and equality. Amongst the *Christifideles*, male and female, the Baptism and Confirmation gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all without regard to sex, race, or condition of servitude in the same measure and the same way. In the Christian community men and women are graced with the gifts of the Spirit and they all bear the fruits of the Spirit, receiving from the same array of gifts and bearing fruits accordingly. These gifts for “varieties of service, varieties of working” are given to all, however in differing degree according to individual receptivity, ability, dedication and sanctity. They are exercised for the edification of the Church body by all baptized Christians who “drank of the same Spirit.”⁵ Yet enmeshed in this truth the mark of sex, male and female, is not obliterated, but remains an indicator of a godly, non-exchangeable role.

They, men and women of any and all races, as *Christifideles*, experience also that eternal truth which they are created to image of the Trinity, “one substance, not confounding the persons”⁶ for by baptism they all have been reborn in the One Spirit, they all eat one supernatural food, and are ordered and governed by one Head, but they remain individuals not merging into some kind of uniform mass. In this single body there are many different parts. Among the uncounted individual parts of this Body, different as they are, there is yet the basic equality of being of that one Body - truly, one substance - *Christifideles* - but not confounding, or reducing to conformity the persons making up this Body.

³ I Corinthians 12:21

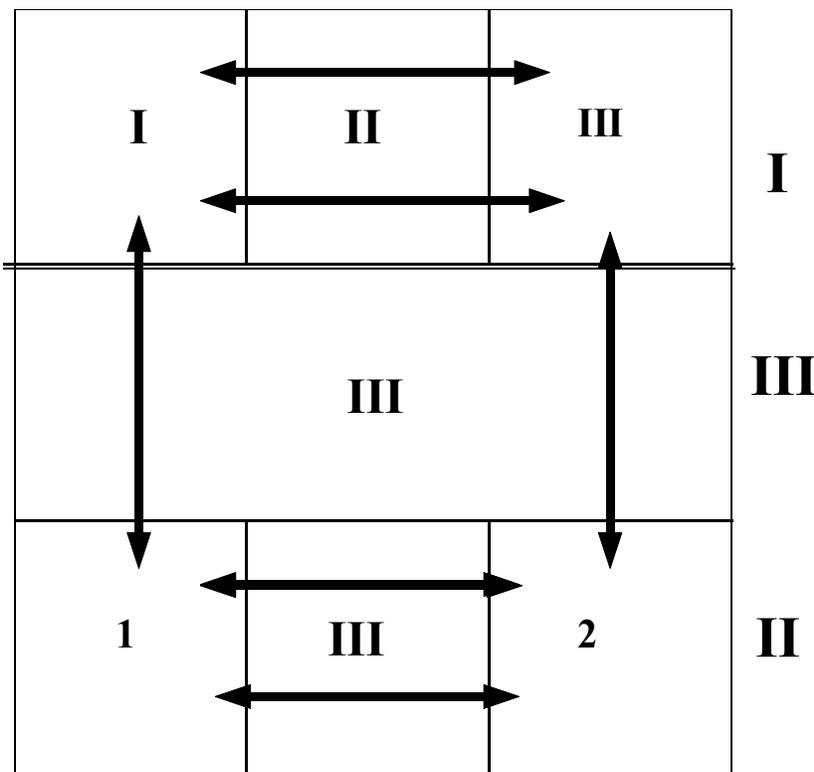
⁴ Galatians 3:27-28

⁵ I Corinthians 12:13

⁶ Athanasian Creed see Book One

True, all men are not alike from the point of view of varying physical power and diversity of intellectual and moral resources. Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language, or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent.⁷

Early in Book One when introducing the basic theme of unity and diversity we stated that should our reader persevere, after awhile when introduced again, he would cry, "enough!" Like the return of a melodic pattern that runs over and over in our brains, we, nevertheless, must return to the useful diagram of our tri-part rectangle (which became a square by stacking three such rectangles. For a review see Book one page 90?). This time we find the bottom rectangle representing *Christifideles* III If leaf-green is symbolic of life nourished by Living water, we will mentally color *Christifideles*, the whole base rectangle, green.



There are qualities to be said of the whole green rectangle that are true of *every participant* in that whole. The whole *Christifideles* is the Bride (actually to be clothed, not in

⁷ Gaudium et Spec, Vatican II document, II.29

green, but pure white) and *she* stands as feminine in relationship to The Holy Trinity. This is regardless of the sexuality of the individuals who make her up (in the diagram, 1 being male, 2 being female). Each one of the participants, male or female, looks to God as a feminine entity (named II) looks expectantly toward the eternal Masculine of the Trinity (I). In recognition of her Head who is God, all individuals of *Christifideles* are granted his priesthood - the priesthood of all believers, which is one of the attributes or qualities of the whole green rectangle. In an analogy from the priesthood of Aaron, the oil that anoints the Head runs down the beard anointing the whole Body.

Yet, within that basic rectangle there are differentiations, the same differentiations of order that are present in the Holy Trinity in whose image the *Christifideles* is formed. "Let us make Man in our image." (Discussed thoroughly in Book One.) We use the singular verb, because *Christifideles* is first of all a single Body - a Bride. Yet, though the gifts of Baptism are the same to all, and incorporate everyone into the Bride/Church, they do not change the indelible mark of sexuality, which is the differentiation which marks the nature of *Christifideles* as not being a monad, but formed in the image of the Trinity for the joys of marital union. This must be because the nature of the Holy Trinity who is her Originator and model, ad intra, is a marital union of Persons, and is not a simple, single Authoritarian. The importance of this is drawn out by Cardinal Carter in the following quote.

This qualitative differentiation of men and women is therefore sacramental and liturgical. This qualitative sexual differentiation is rooted not in physiology but in the created human imaging of the Trinity. . . .More radically still, the Eucharist is transformed . . . for the marital structure of the Church as the Bride of Christ. . . . is intelligible only upon the presupposition that masculinity and femininity are thus distinct. When the distinction is denied, the intrinsic structure of the Eucharistic worship is no longer marital and covenantal, no longer the union of the two . . . in "one flesh" of the *Christus totus*, . . .⁸

As with God, so with Perfect Man, and so, therefore, with *Christifideles* - who is "being changed from one degree of glory to another"⁹ into the Perfect Man, male and female, of the Redeemed Order. This sexual difference makes marital union possible, and becomes God's basic gift to Man upon which all other gifts depend. Therefore, the (mentally applied) green rectangle depicting for us the shared nature of *Christifideles* - shared by every single person incorporated by baptism into Christ's Body, is also divided into three squares to image the same marital,

⁸ Carter, op.cit.,V.4

⁹ II Corinthians 3:18

covenantal image of two united in a third. And each person has a place, either in the right or in the left square, and that place is non-exchangeable with the other. Reading *from left to right* (see the full explanation of this order in Book One), the squares now represent: 1) the *clerici* those with added headship gifts who now wear a stole over any imagined coloration, 2) the *laici* marked by the stance of response, and 3. the Holy Spirit, the Unifier of the ob-positioned. These polar differentiations are determined by sexuality according to its originating principle in the Trinity. It is obvious that those called in *Christifideles* to the polar role of headship in the Church (*Clerici*) are male; it is just as obvious that all females are called to the role of response (*Laici*).

The Church is primarily feminine . . . And the masculine office, which has to represent the true giver, the Lord of the Church (albeit within the Church's feminine receptivity), is instituted in her only to prevent her from forgetting this primary reality, to ensure that she will always remain a receiver and never become self-assertive possessor and user. From a certain point of view, the Church's structure is primarily matriarchal and only secondarily patriarchal . . .¹⁰

It is not so obvious why non-ordained males are included only in the responsive, feminine role (*Laici*). Those who have followed our argument from the first book, have seen that we have in a dozen ways established the basic principle that Man, male and female, is *feminine to God*. We have seen that males have a dual role in every relationship! They are first of all feminine to God in the ultimate meaning of feminine as obedient and responsive to headship, and, of course, masculine in their husband/headship role, and in their work and presence in society. If they do not receive Holy Orders symbolized by the stole, which places them in this higher masculine exercise of maleness, they live out their dual role amongst the *Laici* who are all feminine to God. The unordained male faces God with obedience and responsiveness, and on his level of headship turns to face his wife with initiative and delegated authority. The ordained priest acts as head to the family of God and in his maleness speaks of Author; but he too, turns to God as beloved and in his soul, a bride.

Jesus himself carries both signs, as we have seen. He is obedient and responsive to God his Father as feminine to masculine; indeed, within the Trinity *he originates the very principle of the feminine prior to any creation of female bodies*. In stating this, we are going beyond the limit that St. John Paul observed (which is a risky place to go). As Christopher West, his expositor,

¹⁰ von Balthasar, op.cit., p.140

writes that though sexual difference “whispers to us something of the deepest secret hidden in God from all eternity”¹¹, nevertheless,

John Paul never defines how the fruitful communion of man and woman image the Trinity in terms of who might represent whom. While it may be a legitimate question for speculative theology, lining up spouses . . . with specific person of the Trinity must be approached cautiously lest we move too continuously from the gendered creature to the Uncreated (an un-gendered) God.¹²

In this writing we have examined that “whisper” finding it to be more a voice that has spoken explicitly from the beginning throughout Revelation and therefore, meant to be heard, though carefully. The Persons of the Trinity do make themselves known by the sexuality of their created images in male and female.

Jesus as God relates to us Men only as masculine – coming to this world bearing full authority of the Author. So within *Christifideles* we have *Laici* on the right, all females and those males who *respond* to the *Clerici*. On the left the *Clerici* who represent the fundamental meaning of sexuality in their male bodies by carrying the headship of authority, presenting God’s authority, and given by God in ordination with the symbol of a stole. The priestly authority, Christ’s own, is given for the well-being, communion, order and fruitfulness of the whole Body.

This same marital image we have had before us since the beginning! *Christifideles*, as the restored People of God, the Bride, also is a being “of one nature,” whose “persons” we must not confound. It cannot be but totally destructive of the marital image should women be ordained priests. With such a fatal “yes” to the tedious lie, which is a “no” to God’s Trinitarian order, the devastating fall from grace that overturned the Original Order would bring the same catastrophe to the Redeemed Order - if such a thing were possible.

The Laici

Called *Christifideles Laici*, are those faithful of Christ who carry out their part in the mission of the Church by engaging in temporal affairs, ordering them according to the plan of God. ¹³Just as the Trinity is the beginning for all concepts of equality, so it is for diversity within

¹¹ Op. cit.,p.7

¹² Ibid p.120

¹³ Kinney, op.cit.,Lumen Gentium#31 and Apostolcam Actuositatem #24. There is also *Christifideles Religiosi*, those who live the common life in a stable manner with the sanction of the Church and practice evangelical counsels through vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and thus dedicate their lives to the holiness and mission of the Church. The members when priests are the Agent side of the Church Body,

the membership of this godly family which is the *Laici*. Each individual grows in his distinct individuality even as he grows in union with others in the one familial body. “Unity is the road to (true individual) personality.”

The sacrifice of selfish privacy which is daily demanded of us is daily repaid a hundredfold in the true growth of personality which the life of the Body encourages. Those who are members of one another become as diverse as the hand and the ear. That is why the worldlings are so monotonously alike compared to the almost fantastic variety of the saints. Obedience is the road to freedom, humility the road to pleasure, unity the road to personality.¹⁴

Individuality in perfect unity with others is reflected in the Body which grows toward Perfection. Here, in the Body of the Church, the salvation of Man, male and female, which is the restoration of Man to his original place in marital relationship with God, is the ongoing process. Therefore, though all are equal in individual worth in God’s sight, all the *Laici* do not have the same function in the Body.

The types of lay ministry to which we now refer, the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, healing, discernment, etc., are given to men and women of the *Laici* without regard to sex. For a woman to use them without any danger of deception, however, we note the same essential qualification, that she be cognizant and heeding of the authority of her husband, or other duly authorized head. Otherwise, as St. Paul tells us, she may not operate the gifts on her own authority (see the exposition in Book II of *authentio*, used by St. Paul in I Timothy.). Men of the *Laici* also must answer to the headship of the Church in the operation of their gifts.

The Clerici

To bring right order to these services of the laity are appointed “apostles, prophets, teachers. . .”¹⁵ These appointments given by the authority of Christ are exercised over the body and fall under a different category.

Priests are enabled to act in *persona Christi* in the offering of the sacrifice of Christ in the mass. As has been seen, this sacrifice is

those who are not are of the Patient side of the Church Body. Authority and obedience are still clear roles to function for the preservation of the peace and unity of the Church body.

¹⁴ Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, op.cit., p.36

¹⁵ see I Corinthians 12:27f

that of the Head of the Body, offered for the Body. The Head-Body relation is marital, covenantal. In this relation, the authority-structure of the Trinity is imaged: the subsistent relations of Father, Son and Spirit have their created analogue in the Head, the Body, the One Flesh of the New Covenant.¹⁶

True to the principles of authority and response that we have explored in these books, we can understand that their essential baptismal equality does not mean all have this special sacramental power.

Fundamental equality does not demand or imply that all are graced with the same powers, either spiritually, sacramentally or jurisdictionally. Diverse charisms and graces are given within the Church. The common priesthood of the faithful does not suggest that each baptized person is invested with sufficient sacramental power as given by the sacrament of orders. Nor does equality suggest a democratic form of government.¹⁷

“The Christifideles Clerici are dedicated and ordained to the sacred ministry of Word and Sacrament, sharing in the power of Christ to teach, sanctify and govern the People of God.”¹⁸ These two groups of members, Clerici and Laid, are first and foremost one - the *Christifideles*, the faithful in Christ - the rectangle of (imagined) green. Their specialization comes secondary to that primary designation. The specialization comes as their particular mission. Both missions are equal in God’s eyes as we see in our diagram representation.

The first square to the left, then, is made up of those with a special calling to be pope, bishop, priest or deacon who find his diversification in terms of sharing the authority of Christ to bestow order and governance; that is, sharing in his headship of the Body in the gifts of ordination. The bishop, and from his authority also the priest and deacon, continues the apostolic ministry which Jesus left to the eleven, which was made twelve again by Peter’s initiative before Pentecost.

Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.¹⁹

¹⁶ Carter, op.cit. V. 6.

¹⁷ ? Carter Can’t find

¹⁸ Kinney, op.cit., (Lumen Gentium #19)

¹⁹ Matthew 28:18-20

Acting with the agency of the Holy Trinity that Jesus fully carried among Men, necessitated that those agents designated by him (the Apostles and their successors) be male for the consistent sign they are of ultimate Agency/Authority. There can be no confusion in the sign, no inconsistency in expressing God's *ob-positional* stance to his people who are his bride. They, in obedience to that head, share a feminine posture with joys of nuptial union.

The bishop or priest is first and foremost one of the Christifideles, one of the faithful who is totally dependent on God, and who lives to praise him. This model of hierarchy - visualizing it on the same plane within our rectangle, not higher than the responders at the other pole, is not the concept that the world has of authority and obedience. The world will never regard them as equal roles. A mistaken model is more often having our rectangle sit on one end with the laity on the bottom and the hierarchy on the top. Equality is not the idea that many priests and bishops have either. Clericalism is a scourge.

“By clericalism,” Shaw writes, “I mean an elitist mindset, together with structures and patterns of behavior corresponding to it, which takes it for granted that clerics – in the Catholic context, mainly bishops and priests - are intrinsically superior to the other members of the Church and deserve automatic deference. Passivity and dependence are the laity’s lot. By no means is clericalism confined to clerics themselves. The clericalist mindset is widely shared by Catholic lay people.”²⁰

There is no institutional fix for the perennial problem of clericalism. The answer is daily conversion by priests and bishops to our servant Lord . . .²¹ Would bishops and priests be more effective shepherds and less prone to defensiveness and secrecy if they cultivated patterns of trusted collaboration with the laity? Surely the answer is yes, as is demonstrated by bishops and priests who do precisely that.²²

A horizontal mindset demonstrating trust and equality would remedy many abuses and confusions in the Church, with this important note - this is not a horizontal democracy in which there are no differentiations or where authority is shared by both poles. That idea is foreign to the order in the Church, that is, the Redeemed Order, as it was an alien and disruptive notion when introduced to Paradise.

The priest does not cease to be a member of the Church by reason of his ordination to offer the sacrifice of Christ. Were that the case, he would stand outside the salvation which is offered only to the

²⁰ Neuhaus, Richard John, The Public Square, *First Things*, March 2008, quoting Russell Shaw. P.57

²¹ Ibid p.58

²² Ibid p.59

community of those for whom Christ died. Within the church, his authority and responsibility are qualitatively different from those who are not ordained to offer Christ's sacrifice. His authority is not greater: it is different. Within the Church, as a member of the Church, the priest has the authority of the Head with regard to the Body. That this does not suppress the freedom, the dignity and the authority of the Body has been sufficiently stressed. . . presidency is the exercise of a maritally structured covenantal responsibility for the worship of the Church. . .²³

With a pivotal role, like Jesus himself, the bishop (and those sharing his ordination) turns to God with the rest of the faithful - just one of the green ones, praising him, obeying him, and being open to the Holy Spirit, as Bride to her Bridegroom - totally oriented toward heeding him and receiving him. The Bishop and priest, too, is to his Creator, feminine to masculine, just as all the members of the whole Body respond to their Head, Christ. Waiting, receptive, dependent, he thinks God's thoughts after him and obeys his holy will, a feminine soul intent on her Lover. Such is the beauty of sexual meaning expressed biblically in *The Song of Songs*.

However, as representative of the governance of Godhead over creation, and therefore part of those who exercise his government for his people - the left hand square in the diagram - the bishop (and those who share his ordination, priest and deacon) turns to face God's family as a father in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The priest, acting for the bishop, stands at the altar for the Priest Jesus Christ, enacting the sacrifice of the Mass. Jesus, as we have seen, did not come in male flesh by chance or by mere condescension of God to mankind's cultural bias (Book I). He incarnated as male because Godhead is masculine to Man in all of mankind's understanding and experience of that word. All those missioned to Holy Orders must be male in accord with the Trinity/Principle that lies behind both the creation of maleness and the headship role.

Since Christ, in instituting the Eucharist, linked it in such an explicit way to the priestly service of the Apostles, it is legitimate to conclude that he thereby wished to express the relationship between man and woman, between what is "feminine" and what is "masculine." It is a relationship willed by God both in the mystery of creation and in the mystery of Redemption. It is the Eucharist above all that expresses the redemptive act of Christ the Bridegroom towards the Church the Bride. This is clear and unambiguous when the sacramental ministry of the Eucharist, in which the priest acts "in persona Christi," is performed by a man. This explanation confirms the teaching of the Declaration *Inter Insigniores*, published at the

²³ Carter, op.cit.,V.7

behest of Paul VI in response to the question concerning the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood.²⁴

On the other hand, Jesus enacted perfectly, as we have seen, the responsive, obedient stance of Man to God, as all Men must, but for this, too, his maleness was suitable. The male is the first person of mankind, even as the Father is the First Person of Godhead (not making second or third a designation less honorable . We remember the Holy Spirit always takes the third place in both unities patterned after the Holy Trinity), so the role of bishop with his priests and deacons is the “first person” in the tripartite unity called, “Christifideles.”

Ordination then “sets apart” men for a special mission which is given by God for partaking in his agency. All members of the body work together with spiritual gifts for the furtherance and well-being of the Body, but ordination is a headship gift of a different order. Priest and deacon receive this gift from the hands of the bishop for whom they are an extension. On the Bride-side, partaker in the basic Christifideles, the bishop is a man among Men, one of the family of Christ. He is a disciple of Christ and is obedient to Jesus, carrying out his commands. Not doing his own will, he lives out the life of obedience to Jesus by obedience to his bishop. He, like the husband in a marriage, must live out both masculine and feminine sides fully - on the one hand, that of exercising godly fatherhood over the particular family to which he is assigned, and on the other, that of obedient service, his primary orientation.

Separating the Spurious from the Authentic

The need for authority about right order was worked out early in the Catholic Church of Corinth under the Spirit-led supervision of St. Paul, often emphatically. Two sides to the Christian coin were necessary; there were those who exercised the gifts of the Spirit, and those who discerned and oversaw the use of the charisms. This is noted in the First and Second Letters to the Corinthians where St. Paul discerns and oversees the charismatic activity of the young church and warns about the waywardness of certain practices and leaders, especially women who ignorantly ignore right order. St. John in his Third Letter warns against a charismatic traveler who goes from church to church, and will not accept his authority as an Apostle. Evidently comfortable that his own pipeline to the Lord is sufficient, Diotrephes refuses the elder Apostle’s authority to judge his charisms. Sadly many Diotrephes are still loose in the Christian community, accounting for 34,000 (and counting) denominations.

²⁴ Mulieris, op.cit.,VII.26

I have written something to the Church; but Diotrefes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority, So if I come I will bring up what he is doing, prating against me with evil words.²⁵

From the earliest Church experience, the need to separate the spurious from the authentic was evident. For this reason God provided the two sides of the coin, those under obedience and those administering authority. The Spirit both inspires through the grass-roots of the faithful *laïd* and discerns the authentic inspirations through the teaching office of the hierarchy, the *clerici*. By their faithful heeding of each other, the Evil one is blocked from interfering. By the interaction of these two workings of the Spirit, we have the preservation of the authentic message, not a dead message, but a truly living one. It is too bad that these two sides, authority of the Teaching Magisterium and obedience of the laity, both inspired by the Holy Spirit, do not encourage and appreciate each other more.

Charismatic woman with all her potential for furthering the work of the Redeemed Order, when not recognizing her need for direction, has been the very root of many a heresy that has wracked the Church, beginning with the earliest one in Corinth. We don't know the feminine influence in Gnosticism, except for the woman called Jezebel condemned by St. John.²⁶ But the Montanist schism, an early major heresy, was programmed by Priscilla and Maximilla who "under the influence of the Spirit" defied their bishop and began a ministry of their own which resulted in the "illumining" of Mantanus and the fall into heresy of Tertullian.²⁷

The "spiritual" woman in the psychic sense, the one who seems to be in intimate contact with the spiritual world, has always been a problem to the Church. It is not the giftedness that occasions stress; that in itself could have been a contribution to the life of the Body, but it has been the age-old problem, the refusal to accept discernment, the refusal to believe that her own "spiritual" insights may not be a direct inspiration of God. The list of such women is long extending to many special "revelations" today which have instigated broken branches of "church."

²⁵ II John 9-10

²⁶ Revelation 2:20

²⁷ *Enthusiasm* i op.cit. p.30-31 The whole book deals with this problem.

Jung labels such a woman “medial,” not implying that all of them work in seance situations, which of course, a Christian would shun, but that they are psychically in touch with unconscious contents which have exciting, irrational aspects. They thus live between two worlds. If they are Christian, they may not realize that all the excitement, all the visionary elements, all the insights no matter how religious the motifs in which the unconscious dresses itself are not necessarily of God. Thus, the first action of a parish priest or of a bishop is to put such a woman (or man) under the test of obedience. If the spiritual enlightenment coming through such a one allows for that (we think of St. Bernadette among many others) and if the visionary is obedient, the first test is passed; if not, the inspiration is judged spurious. Something along this line has given thoughtful people pause about the apparitions of Medjugorje, though the Church’s judgment has not been made at this writing.

In looking over all the many illuminations of truth that have come to the Church through women, we see that where the personal revelation has had a life-giving contribution to the Church it has met the test of validity by first submitting to godly authority. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque was directed by Christ to submit all he showed her to her religious superior through whom, though not a promising person, he would validate what was really of him and what was inadvertently received from the Deceiver who presents himself as one of the unfallen angels or in disguise of a holy saint. Her obedience may seem trivial in the light of the blessing these spiritual insights have given to so many, but to her at the time it was an agony. The devotion to the Sacred Heart has had a continuing vivifying effect in the lives of countless Christians.

Streams of heresy flow from the other woman, the one who defends her inspirations and gathers others to respond to her exciting revelations. Ronald Knox’s work in the pursuit of the “enthusiasm” movements over the centuries finds as a common figure - the woman visionary. With financial resources of her own she sometimes patronizes a dissident man or woman and finances an “ism” of her own. Never is this done with evil intent, or even with egotistical advancement in mind, but often the woman does it with the deceived belief that she is furthering the Will of God, that she is helping the only true church - her own purer version. “By their fruits. . .”, the result in all cases has been divisive to the Body of Christ.

A Quaker woman of the nineteenth century, Hannah Whital Smith, well known for her writing of the spiritual classic, *The Christian Secret to a Happy Life*, also dealt with such people. She described them as the most devoted of Christians with absolute faith in the guidance of the Lord. She saw them take many a “pitiful fall.”

I cannot tell how many fanatics when I have tried to convince them of their errors, have said to me, 'But Mrs. Smith, what must I do? . . . These inward voices come to me in my most solemn and sacred moment! . . . The mistake arises from limiting the voice of the Lord to impressions only and not recognizing that his voice comes in many other ways.²⁸

Herself a Quaker relying on "the inner light," Hannah Whital Smith saw many vagaries of her religious persuasion. Yet, though she recognized the non-authentic, that she needed the overarching protection and discernment of the one true Church for her own authenticity – she did not. Oddly for such a wise woman, it never occurred to her that she was in the same position as those for whom she had so much concern.

Holier Than Thou

Another deception encourages the spiritual woman to become a separatist. With a strong sense of right and wrong, the very sense that Satan perverted in the beginning (The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil), she easily falls for this temptation. She wants to preserve, to restore the primitive discipline and purity she imagines were true of the early Church; she cannot live in a milieu with other Christians who are not living purely, or who may not even be "saved." She may have right instincts about sin, but her tendency to withdraw and take up life only among others of like mind, is hardly the kind of submission being asked of her in the larger sense. She, too, has the mind of a heretic, supporting many movements antithetical to the Church.

Jesus used the analogies of salt and yeast to describe the effect of the person belonging to him. These commodities are of no benefit to the lump of dough if they refuse to mingle with it, willingly suffering a loss of any self-importance in the larger mix. Yeast not mixed with flour does no work of leavening, but slowly deteriorates. Salt not mixed with food brings no savor. Such were the parables Jesus used to tell of the potential to raise the lump or savor the pot. The picture is one of total submission to the rest of the body, no matter how impure that body may seem. Through the self-giving of one person - yeast and salt are used in small amounts - great numbers can be reached by God.

The charismatic outpouring in the Church through the 1970's and 80's was tested by its willingness to undergo submission to the Church as a whole. When groups tried to perpetuate themselves by withdrawal into communities, they were tempted to resist any submission to the

²⁸ Quoted by Ronald Knox op.cit,p.577 from her book, "Religious Fanatics."

Church hierarchy. If they did not eventually bow to local bishops, their history was already written in the dead ends of Holy Spirit movements which ran aground from the stream of Salvation History with a divisive spirit of separatism, isolation, and elitism. That obedient stream flows towards that consummation when the Church as spotless Bride is finally united to her Lover.

Keep the Feminine Side Rebelling

Satan's course is to keep this union from happening, to delay it day by day. He holds off the reunion of God and his Bride in whatever way he can. He, therefore, keeps the feminine side rebelling, encouraging the seizing of masculine prerogatives, thus obscuring the feminine truth and indefinitely postponing the great reunion of God and his people in the Redeemed Order. Satan continually wars on woman. She must not be allowed to become whole and holy; her choice toward obedience must be blurred, and the alternative which is compatible with the old seed of disobedience enhanced in every way. The woman, depending on her choice – yes, her free will, becomes a source of life or death even as her dream symbol, the tree, can be made into a coffin, or a cross, or can be the tree of life.

A whole woman is the sign of Man's true relationship to God, of his return to freedom and how it is accomplished, and of his fruitfulness when in communion with God. Satan well knows what is at stake and continues to work at defacing demarcations between the masculine and feminine established by God, mostly by defacing the feminine, but also by promotion of uni-sex, and homo-sex, and by insidiously ridding where he can the meaning of gender language in the Holy Bible. All of these grave errors caused by displacing God's order with human ideas - called progressive and enlightened, are impinging upon Church members like sleet pellets (even at times from the Church's bureaucratic offices), creating a slippery slope whose far end is degeneration and blindness.

John Paul II sees in the modern world an active willful displacement of God by man and believes that this displacement of God, more than any other single factor, explains the human catastrophes of the twentieth century.²⁹

In this milieu the woman is the sign of disobedience, playing Satan's game once more, while obedient woman will be the sign of the Cross of Christ and his submission to God's will. She will be the ever present sign that it is not power and works of power that are the criteria for

²⁹ Little, op.cit., p.23

holiness; it is the fruitfulness of obedience, the yieldedness which makes impregnation by the Spirit possible. It is the Cross that overcomes evil. Submission is the Cross - the death of self-will, and the reliance on the power of God to overcome.

Diaconate for Women?

By the fourth century at the Council of Nicea the ordination of men to the permanent diaconate was curbed. By the fifth century it faded out in the western Church entirely. The implication is that there were abuses. Why for fifteen hundred and more years did the Church have no permanent diaconate of married (or celibate) men?

In the first deacon class to be trained and ordained in the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, far from uniquely it turned out, the general experience of the wives was to observe the ferment caused (1973) when the Director of the Diaconate, a priest, encouraged them to believe that very soon the order would be open to women. Forty years later, repercussions of that initial misinformation continue to disappointment and dismay, even to cause disobedience among women who fell under this false hope.³⁰

If this kind of a stir occurred in the 1970's, and though dampened, continues today, it was not unknown in the earliest Church. We see from the situation in Corinth that St. Paul faced women who were misunderstanding their new freedom in Christ (and it was a new, wonderful freedom!) assuming it meant egalitarianism - an opening for anyone of either sex to assume authority. Because this repeats the temptation and the fall of Eden, the apostles, especially St. Paul, confronted it head on. Sexuality, being male or female, had a meaning embedded in creation. The Creator imbued the sexes with principles of headship originating in the Trinity and made evident by the very function of their sexual bodies. It was an early Theology of the Body which has been observed in the Church from the beginning. St. Paul knew at rock bottom what this order was and why, but he had difficulty in explaining it, getting tangled up in hair lengths and veils,³¹ and finally out of frustration just demanding – “because I say so!”

And he said so vehemently. “If anyone is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.”³² And when this wasn't enough - “. . .it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached? If any one thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should

³⁰ As late as 2015, a newly ordained deacon was accompanied by his wife, both participating equally at a baptism in albs. (St. Paul. MN)

³¹ I Corinthians 11

³² I Corinthians 11:16

acknowledge that what I am writing is *a command of the Lord.*"³³ How Bible-believing, Bible-only, churches get around this is the question; for most of Protestantism it is as though this were never written.

Earlier in the same writing, he had allowed that women might prophesy and pray – that is “speak in church” – *if* they were under the veil, or authority, of their husbands.³⁴

The role of deacon, then, since its reinstatement with *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II has seen some voices mistakenly encourage women to assume it would include them. Without doubt women served in the early Church and may have been called deaconesses³⁵, though a place in Holy Orders with the bishop’s ordination cannot be conceived in light of apostolic admonitions about woman’s role. The deacon as the “bishop’s man” was ordained into the bishop’s ministry; a woman for no prejudiced reason, could not symbolize this office without damage to the inherent meaning of woman as a prophetic sign to the community. At stake would be the clarity of symbolic meaning of the sexes which lay at *the heart of the right order of Perfection.*

It would have wrought havoc both in the family and the Church family if a woman were to have been granted authority to administer any Church governance, especially because this would be over her husband. The reversal of their inherent meaning as biological beings, male and female, would bring upheaval to the consistency of order in the family where such order is a direct reflection of the Triune Unity of Persons, whose agency and receptivity are inherent with an original stability far greater than the biological forms that represent them. It was with this wisdom and obedience that the Bishops’ ordination became the rite for setting apart men for diaconate responsibility; women were never among them. Again, we can be assured of this because of the apostolic prohibitions stated plainly by St. Paul.

On the other hand, because interpretation of some of St. Paul’s own writing might infer women deaconesses, and because of the stubborn tendency to believe positions of authority have prestige and command more respect– a falsity Jesus emphatically overturned; because we persist in believing in an unequal hierarchy of *value* instead of an equal hierarchy of *order*, women have scrambled from the first to take positions of what they assumed was honor and power. Becoming a Christian is to repent of this in the very heart. Women with Mary as their model are meant to be signs of an inner disposition motivating the whole Bride/Church.

³³ | Corinthians 14:35-37

³⁴ See I Corinthians 11:5

³⁵ | Timothy 3, Romans 16:1

If there were early Church deaconesses, they surely never were adjunct to the Bishop's ordination. St. Paul's ire about women pressing for authority (then deeming it to be service) tells us that apostolic continuance in whatever level could belong only to men, and not to any man, but to a man designated and called to that role by God. Deacons were one of an order of three levels of the apostolic service ministry: deacon, priest and bishop, all offices to be served only by men. All three orders began by first becoming deacons. Obvious would be the profound incontinuity if women were ever ordained to the diaconate.

In that case who were these supposed deaconesses mentioned in the letters of St. Paul? What is known is that when adult baptisms were much more common than they eventually became, and when baptism was mostly by emersion, women were necessary helpers. Priests and deacons were not comfortable, nor was it appropriate for men to assist female catechumens. There were other occasions when a woman's ministry was essential in the church, even as it is today. These women may have been called deaconesses because they had a semi-liturgical function. They may even have been set apart by some kind of ceremony, but they were never part of the ordained apostolic ministry. St. Paul certainly makes that clear, as has the 2000 year Tradition of the Church.

With the misunderstanding women perennially have about the meaning of their sex and their attempts to surmount misunderstanding with rationalizations, the suppression of the order of deacon in the early centuries may be understood as a way of ending their demands. With the possible word "deaconess" to be found in the Bible, the clamor for authority on the part of women may never have ceased through the early centuries. We see in the fourth century the difficulties Tertullian ran into with two women "filled with the Spirit" who championed serious heresy.

Previously referred to, Msgr, Ronald Knox's book, Enthusiasm, records the destructive "religious" woman and her reach for "power" in the Church over the centuries. With other factors, including the diaconate as more and more the step toward priesthood, a priesthood inaugurated by Christ for men only, it simply became a way of easing out of the disturbances to cease all ordinations to the permanent diaconate. No permanent diaconate, no women deacons! If women should continue to be militant about it today, the Church may consider resorting to the same cure.

The pure service part of the role of deacons is, however, much in line with the meaning of woman.

A person whose function is not determined by his own will . . . entirely at the disposal of others. . . Diakonos means a lackey. A menial. . .and we see that in the New Testament “lackey” and “slave” had not yet become “minister” and “servant”³⁶

It is *the ordination* to that calling in the Church that excludes her from this role. The Church has found a way to mark women as special servants, and that is through consecration to a religious order. Yet there may be some need for a different mark of service for lay women. Dissatisfaction was expressed early on that the diaconate was too clerical and not service oriented, or lay oriented, enough. In the confusion of our half-formed Christian consciousness, it becomes attractive to serve at the Eucharistic table, but less attractive to “wash feet” in the wanting community. Perhaps women in some kind of recognized way could be a serving sign.

A critical letter about diaconate called “A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concerns”³⁷ regarded a “new clericalism” as a potent danger to the compelling vision of lay people in all levels of society carrying the Christian message and action to a needy world. Instead of emphasizing the great value of the Christifideles Laici witnessing to faith, serving the needs of Men in the work-a-day world, the diaconate seems to imply that ordination is necessary to be really part of Christ’s work, and that that work then is chiefly clerical, even liturgical. There is no denial here of the central work of Christ that is Eucharistic, but the diaconate did not begin in this authority-related service, rather, it began by waiting on tables.³⁸ It is protested, that by sharing in the bishop’s ordination, the diaconate obscures its origins. The letter quotes the former Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Archbishop Jean Jadot:

I believe in the laity. And the laity as laity. I was very, very impressed I must say, by my experiences in Africa and my closeness and friendliness with some African bishops who don’t want to hear about a permanent diaconate. They say it will kill the laity in the Church because it will reinforce the conviction already existing that to work for the Church you must be ordained.³⁹

³⁶ MacKenzie, John L. *Authority in the Church*, op.cit.,p.23-24

³⁷ “A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern.” 6363 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60660

³⁸ Acts 6:1-6

³⁹ Ibid

Perhaps a study of the Old Testament order of Aaronic priesthood and its relationship to the tribe of Levi might be instructive in viewing the diaconate. The Levites themselves were a wave offering of the people, they were identified with the people and were the people’s own offering to the Lord for his service from their number. They did not share in the Aaronic ordination, but were kept strictly separate from the Aaronic priests. As representative totally of the people, there was a cleavage between the Aaronic priesthood and the Levite even though Aaron was of the tribe of Levi. Again a differentiation was made

If women were to receive a specialized service of ministry, a “setting apart” ceremony would seem appropriate at which time she emerges from the Laici, and is offered by the Laici in order to do the special work of the Laici. Not an ordination to Holy Orders or an entrance into Clerici, or consecration to a religious order, but a commissioning by the whole Church for a special service would be appropriate to her meaning while still obviously remaining a member of the Laici.

A commissioning would include the clerici’s blessing and approval on a woman chosen from the ranks and put forward by the Christifideles laici. She would then be fully representative of the laici, and would not be ordained to the clerici.

Here it remains to be underscored, that the Tradition for the diaconate is set, and that any such change in concept and fundamentals in regard to women is not possible. Proposing an alternative “setting-apart” for certain lay women, however improbable – there is no Tradition to substantiate the idea, draws out clearly the impossibility as it now stands of diaconate ordination for women.

Now that priesthood for women has been definitively taken off the table, the diaconate for women must be as well. The ordination of women to the diaconate will never be possible without destruction of the godly meaning of male and female which has already occurred in the churches of the separation. There are women wearing clerical collars in a nearby *St. Paul’s* Lutheran church.

And women altar servers?

Oddly enough, if placing girls at the altar is to assure them that they are just as good as men, it isn’t doing the girl or women in general a favor. Rather, it is in danger of destroying their intrinsic feminine meaning by telling them they are the same as men, or at least, should be. When they understand their importance to the Church body as women, they don’t want to be the same as men; they want to be true to the body and soul that God has given them (this is true

after taking into account a common origin - first overall the tribe of Levi, then (according to our diagram) to the left the Aaronic priests, and to the right the Levites. The diaconate might have been such a lay oriented body of both men and women *if it did not receive headship gifts* in ordination. But quite different from the relationship of Aaronic priesthood to Levitical orders, the ordination of a deacon is a sharing in the bishop’s ordination, which is not the consecration of a lay person chosen out of the laity for a special service ministry. Therefore, women, for their own sakes, as well as for the sake of their ultimate sign in the community with this ordination cannot become deacons.

Theology of the Body). Each girl hears an inner call of God, personally, intimately, that is heard only because she is she, not he. The Church, at the present moment permitting women to serve at the altar⁴⁰, seems to be bending to a culture which ignores and does not understand the feminine nature, its specific meaning and call.⁴¹

The hierarchy might seem to be persuaded, really, that being male is better somehow (that upended rectangle). Such ignorance is warping the girl's God-given potential, slighting her singularity, and denying that her own call, which is not to the altar, is as important and worthy as the call of a man. God is calling her to be like the Blessed Mother in ways that only she can - he can't. Mary, without any slight, was not mentioned as present at the Last Supper. She will be wife and mother, or she will be virgin spouse and virgin mother serving the whole Body. She will bear and nurture the people of God one way or the other.

For her sake, in either the married or consecrated single state, headship will be a gift *servicing* her so that she can fulfill the deepest longing of her soul - to achieve oneness with the other and with the other to bring forth new life. For the consecrated virgin this is to be with God alone. But he will give her a head - a male role which may be held, in this case, by a female superior usually under authority herself, to provide for her, protect her, and bring order to her life, so that her inner being can be fulfilled. For the married, the protector, provider, and maintainer of order will be a husband with whom she finds her unity and fruitfulness. To desire the headship, or authority role rather than her own is a basic envy that when introduced into a family system will destroy it - the same temptation destroyed order and harmony in Eden. Political feminism's deleterious effects are everywhere in evidence.

However, we must look further to solve this conundrum. A development of doctrine may bring together elements that seem on the surface to be mutually incompatible only to make a delightful unity of what is otherwise discerned as contradictory. That is the role of doctrine. This certainly could be the result in the concrete problem faced by the Church in allowing girl servers while denying the altar to female priests. To the mind of the most conservative Catholic, such a development would be a vindication of their obedience to the Holy Father's decision to allow girls to serve on the altar. At the same time it would become an immediately available and powerful teaching reality in the midst of the congregation of God's people which would serve to

⁴⁰ When the sparsity of Vatican documentation is considered, the allowance for female altar servers seems tenuously based.

⁴¹ It was widely reported that John Paul II had promised Mother Teresa that this would not happen.

unite them. We recall again Jacques Maritain's wisdom, (there is a) "great need of distinguishing in order to unite."

An example is soon to be given from one parish's experience, but before it is described some principles gained from the above beg to be drawn. First, man and woman are indeed equals before God, even as the Church has always held; "in Christ there is no male or female", that is, Baptism confers the same salvation with its "weight of glory" on all regardless of any natural condition. Yet, as we have seen amply demonstrated, baptism does not wash away the differentiation of sex which in itself demands a different psychology, a different approach to life, and a totally different function in the Christian furtherance of humanity and Salvation History.

Now we have the present image of the girls garbed the same as boys and filling the same function at the altar. The Church in this seems to be saying, boys and girls are equal - the sexes in the Church are equal. So far so good. But the critical differentiation is not apparent; a differentiation that is as important to the girl's and the boy's meaning and role as the fact that they are equals before God. This greets some incredibility! But she is now *Saint* Benedicta of the Cross.

Motivated, no doubt, out of concern for equality and justice, the Church has, to this point, unintentionally demeaned the truth of woman which is to be different - a key to a whole other activity of the development of humanity in Christ, and to be respected in that difference. As we saw in Book I, St. Benedicta (Edith Stein) even suggesting, oddly enough, that within the species Mankind, woman is a distinct sub-species, so different is she in her interior being and her call by God.

Can we say that the first principle of relationship of man and woman has been acknowledged in granting altar server status to girls? That principle is the one of equality. But the second principle is trampled - the equally important one of their radical difference of being, their role and call of God. This second principle is fully acknowledged in maintaining priesthood for males alone; where the first principle of equality is demonstrated also, in the dichotomy of priest and laity; Christifidelis all, but distinguished by the two roles which are intended for a marital kind of union, Christifidelis *laici*, and Christifidelis *clerici*.

By some unconscious process, hopefully inspired by the Holy Spirit, a small church in the midst of the corn and bean fields of the plains has an angle on the dilemma.⁴² Now that the significance of this happenstance has been discovered it may be offered as a model for others. This small church found a role for girls when it wished to be obedient, but was reluctant to fully comply with girl altar servers. Much appreciated was the work of Senior High School boys who were regularly serving at the altar with a strong and dedicated masculine presence, there was some unspoken anxiety that having boys and girls do the same thing would discourage these young men from continuing. There does seem to be a documented reluctance in the male psyche to do what might be shown to be “woman’s work” and this is especially strong among adolescents. Perhaps this, too, is part of God’s original gift - the inner knowledge of difference and a determination not to have this innate difference stolen away.

Therefore, it developed in this community that two young girls at each mass were seated near the front of the sanctuary on the side opposite to where the boy servers traditionally sat. Their function is to leave their places during the singing of a hymn after the prayers, and solemnly process together to the back of the church where they gather the gifts. Proceeding back, accompanied by the family offering the Mass for remembrance, they meet the priest, deacon and boy servers at the steps of the sanctuary where they ceremonially bestow the gifts. At the Sign of Peace they again travel the main aisle extending the peace to the first person of each pew.

Consider the appropriateness theologically of this liturgical function for girls and see how it might be enhanced to a true representation of the equal but different feminine role among the People of God. Here we may also call upon the Blessed Mother Mary to be the transparent model of the true Woman through whom all girls and women gain their inspiration.

First, these young girls do not do what the boys do even though they have been called to an equal honor in serving at Mass. Secondly, the function they serve is wholly appropriate to their inner feminine meaning in differentiation from the masculine that we have so thoroughly explored through this and three previous books. Our Blessed Mother is the first Bearer of the Gift of God. She takes what is given to her from her participation in the human family and offers it to God who transforms her gift to become the very Son of God. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” That miraculous “becoming” was in the Virgin’s womb. How appropriate that

⁴² St. Peter’s Church in Colman, SD in the 1990’s

girls, virgin and innocent, representing the congregational family, receive the gifts given by the whole people, and bear them to the altar of God for the one Transformation.

Then Our Blessed Mother, in turn, comes from her Encounter with God, and bears to us the blessings of the sanctuary, the solemn greeting of the love and peace of God. Entirely in this spirit these young girls bring that godly peace to the assembled People of God. Their intermediary role in both actions is wholly indicative of their meaning and role as godly women among his family. The beauty of the Mediatrix is exemplified in them. This role of intermediary is inherent to the sex that receives the seeming immaterial and as matrix, makes it appear materially among us - the role of fruitful mother. This fruitfulness is inherently physical, but may well be expressed in a higher way in the self-gift of the consecrated virgin. A woman stands in the middle of this mysterious and awesome reality - "the Word *became* flesh."

The women present at mass are then endorsed in their womanhood and its meaning; their womanhood is honored in both its equality to manhood and in its differentiation. The priestly role belonging to the called male alone, standing at the altar *persona Christi*, may then be balanced in the pew by women who recognize that they are the important sign of the whole feminine laity who are even now becoming the Bride of Christ in another eternal differentiation. These girls whose role, though essential, is hidden - the bringing of gifts imaging the mediatrix may well be scorned by those who have the power mindset of the world - exemplify that hiddenness, too, is of the essence of true femininity. A poetic image of the feminine has been the walled garden whose beauty⁴³, far from all eyes, is centered by a flowing fountain.

There are further steps which could be taken to encompass the depth of meaning of a specialized role for the female altar server. First, the garb of the young girls should be appropriate to the equal but different truth of their being. They could have a ritual garb, but different from the males. A suggestion is something graceful and feminine, something distinctly liturgical - capes have had a liturgical use; blue would be immediately reminiscent of the Blessed Mother. But garb is not the most important aspect of this change.

Clearly, instruction of these girl altar servers in the meaning of their acts in the liturgy and their presence in the sanctuary would be very important, important for the liturgy of the Mass, but vastly important for their self-understanding and acceptance of self as women. Also education of the whole parish, especially of those mothers who are anxious to have their girls participate,

⁴³ An image seen in Song of Songs 4:12f

would be undertaken, and always with the emphasis on the feminine uniqueness which is of inestimable value to the People of God - a role incapable of fulfillment by men. Impressed by this instruction would be the dignity of this aspect of the liturgical gathering which would be made apparent by the weight given these actions, both in bearing the gifts and in extending the Peace. When others ponder this, it is entirely possible new aspects, good or bad, will make themselves known. Bearing the Word of God in the opening procession, ceremonially placing the book upon the ambo, and opening it, also expresses the feminine role in the God/man covenant that soon is to take place upon the altar. Whether anything in Tradition can be found to support or oppose such an idea would need further study of theologically adept liturgists.

Believing that sexuality has no special meaning in liturgy is to mix the whole revelation of God into mud soup. Could the Blessed Mother just as well have been a male? Could Jesus just as well have been female? There are advocates for the latter with arguments posted on line advocating female priests.

Apostolic Authority's Gift to the Christifideles

The Church holds within herself the answer to mankind's ancient authority problem. Within her there must be a peaceful and practical resolution of the rebellious tendency of fallen human nature. Willing obedience, a total self-giving to God's own authoritative headship is the answer. For with the Church, even as she relates herself to Christ as Bride to Bridegroom, there is a call to her people to be submissive to godly authority and to learn to think God's thoughts after him via the agency of his appointed authority - the college of bishops headed by the Holy Father.

We have seen the early application of the Divine order in the Church in John the Apostle's First Letter. Already we noted there was dissent in the Church, evident in the Second Letter, and he was having difficulty gaining obedience to his authority as we see in the Third Letter. In his first letter he spoke directly about how spiritual deception is to be distinguished from spiritual truth; his 'we' and 'us' refer to the Apostolic office that he held, received from Jesus himself.

We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ 1 John 4:6

How do we discern today the spirit of truth from the spirit of error? Is obedience to apostolic authority which resides in the hierarchy of the Church evident or missing? This discipline of obedience to our spiritual authorities is often difficult; it certainly separates those submissive sheep from self-determined goats, but it must be in place for the Bride to be ready for the consummation of her marriage to the Lamb. So simple: Mary or Eve.

CHAPTER III. SHEPHERDING IN THE CHURCH

In order to solve the authority problem inherited by each generation since Adam's Fall, the Church has had a two part polarity of the Christifideles in the marital, covenantal image, as we have discussed. The Clerici have been given headship gifts of Jesus Christ by which to father the family, and by which to exercise authority (the diagram's right hand square) of God, even as Our Lord did, and all for the benefit of the equal but ob-positioned Laici. This governance brings his people together in a hierarchical family order akin to marriage, and will continue until Jesus takes that headship back to himself as Bridegroom, and turns all authority and power over to the Father.

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.⁸

Then comes the end, when he delivers the Kingdom to God the Father, after destroying every rule and authority and power (opposed to God). For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.⁹

The Laici responds to this headship with a free obedience to the command of God that reflects the friendship and equality with him before the Fall from Perfection. To make this headship perfectly clear, Jesus established a Shepherd over the flock he was forming even before it had become a cohesive and visible body born from his torn side.

The First Shepherd

The Spirit guided the Church to stretch out the awning of headship from the First Shepherd and the apostles to others who would continue their shepherding over time. It is necessary that the office continues till the end of time when it cedes itself again to Christ, though each individual holding that office is mortal and lives no more than three score and ten years.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching

⁸ Ephesians 1:22-23

⁹ I Corinthians 15:24-25 parenthesis added

them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age.¹⁰

Jesus himself as Bridegroom and Chief Shepherd did not, in his earthly absence, leave his bride without a manifest head, or his flock without a manifest Shepherd. Peter, that appointed, first Shepherd, was addressed by Jesus after the Resurrection in irrefutable, irresistible, future-defining, horizon-opening words:

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John do you love me more than these? he said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” he said to him, “Feed (*Grk.bosko - feed pasture*) my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” he said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” he said to him, “Tend (*Grk.poimaino, a shepherd’s tending*) my sheep.” he said to him a third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him. “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed (*bosko*) my sheep.”¹¹

Surely Jesus meant this for his Church for all time until he came again. Peter’s lifetime was already proscribed to end in martyrdom, but the feeding and pasturing of the sheep must not end until the Chief Shepherd’s return. Therefore, his office must be maintained. What else would “rock” mean, but imperishable and everlasting - at least until the end of this age. Peter, at the mid-point of Jesus’ ministry, singled out as the rock¹² upon which he would build his Church, at the end accepts humbly the title “shepherd” for himself and for the “elders,” reminding them all in his letter of First Peter, how to keep the flock until the Chief Shepherd returns. Then they will answer to that Chief Shepherd for the care they have given his flock.

So I exhort the leaders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not by constraint, but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your care, but being examples to the

¹⁰ Matthew 28:18-20

¹¹ John 21 :15-18 parentheses added

¹² Matthew 16:18-19 Protestants object to the perpetual rock – the papacy, and reject it. They object to the obvious establishment of Peter as the rock foundation of the Church, finding convoluted arguments against his being the rock. Yet, they continue to willingly call Simon Bar-Jona, “Peter.” Thereby acceding each time to his being named “Rock.” If we read the Gospels, substituting “Rock” each time Peter’s name appears, we would gain an idea of foundational headship that has become in Protestantism wholly diluted.

flock. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.¹³

Jesus in identifying himself and Peter with the Shepherd image was harking back to the title as applied to the Lord in the Old Testament. "Shepherd" was the title given to the rulers of the people: the king, the royal officers, the leaders - all who held legitimate authority.¹⁴ He furthered that meaning in naming Peter. Shepherd is an apt image for authority that rightly governs God's people because it is by his voice (or Word) that he leads his sheep. He needs neither force nor restraint because of the nature of sheep who meekly respond to his recognized, authoritative, but kindly voice.

The Old Testament prophets took their spiritual shepherds to task for their insufficient attention to the sheep, for the selfish concerns that caused neglect, even to the misuse and abuse of the sheep. The Lord promises to raise up good shepherds for his people. Such human weaknesses of the designate shepherd may plague the Church always. (Jesus once acknowledged that one of the twelve he had chosen was "a devil"¹⁵). What misery the Church has gone through in recent times with the failure of some shepherds. Knowing human nature as he did, Jesus foresaw it would be so, but nevertheless, evil as they might be, it was impossible that his Church have no shepherd at all.

He had compassion on the crowd because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.¹⁶

Expressing such concern, Jesus did not leave his flock shepherdless. It is inconceivable that he meant his sheep to be scattered, separated into one small vulnerable band after another, divided from one another, and easily taken in by the wolves in sheep's clothing. He warned that the so-called shepherds who would come to deceive would not "enter by the door," the authorized point of entry to the fold, but would climb in some other way. How many sects and cults have originated by well intentioned but disordered "shepherds" who have not entered by the door, and who don't even recognize it?

To Peter before his denials on the night of the trial, Jesus foretold his role as head of the apostles:

¹³ 1 Peter 5:1-5

¹⁴ MacKenzie, John L., *Dictionary of the Bible* (NY 1975) p.803

¹⁵ Jn 6:70

¹⁶ Matthew 8:36

“Simon, Simon, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith might not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen (sterizo, make firm, fix firmly) your brethren.”¹⁷

Peter erased his three denials by replying passionately to Jesus’ questioning; three times he expressed his total love of the Lord and with each affirmation he accepted more deeply his appointment to be shepherd, to take over in care for his sheep. Jesus thus entrusted his Church to Peter’s care, and to the shepherding of those who would sit in the Chair of Peter in the centuries of preparation for Jesus’ return. Though that person in the headship role would display all the weaknesses of the first shepherd and sometimes worse, the work of God’s action through the office established would keep the Church on a straight course so that Jesus’ prophecy would ever be true, as it must be true:

“And I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”¹⁸

Chief Steward of the Kingdom

Convert to Catholicism, former Presbyterian theologian and seminary professor, Dr. Scott Hahn, has researched the meaning embedded in these words and points out that the authority of Peter over the Church is deliberately given by Jesus in the format of the Davidic Kingdom. This has been recognized in the Church’s liturgical readings for many years, pairing Isaiah 22 with Matthew 16, but is not often expounded. King David, Jesus’ predecessor in the flesh, appointed a steward over his household who held an important office and carried the official keys that opened for him every door in the king’s household.

The Lord God himself had charge of this office, appointing and removing men from it according to their trustworthiness. The authority of the household steward thus passed solemnly from hand to hand. Given to Hilkiah in David’s Kingdom, the Lord God speaks of what this authority means through the words of Isaiah:

¹⁷ Luke 22:3-32 parentheses added

¹⁸ Matthew 16:18-19

. . .and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And I will place on his should the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.¹⁹

Though Hilkiyah himself humanly fails in his duty, perhaps in itself an indicator, Jesus does not hesitate to set up his Kingdom upon the parallels to be found in the designated offices of the Davidic Kingdom. From that parallel we learn much about the authority given to Peter, and Jesus' intent for his Church - the eternal Kingdom of David. The Chief Steward will bear the keys of the Kingdom, he will have the authority to open and shut, allowing people in and out, giving or denying access, applying legal restraints and lifting them, and he will be called "father."

The word "pope" is from the Italian, meaning "papa." It is in recognition of this authority of Steward of the Household that Pope John Paul II declared about his headship:

We are guardians of something given, and given to the Church universal; something which is not the result of reflection, however competent, on cultural and social questions of the day, and is not merely the best path among many, but the one and only path to salvation.²⁰

St. John, too, had a clear sense of the way God worked through his appointed authority, even with those who could not understand or follow his will. He reports about Jesus' trial:

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that years, said to them, "You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people that that the whole nation should perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.²¹

Call No Man Father

As this account shows, even those religious authorities who unknowingly do so are carrying out the purpose God intends. It is with such confidence that the Christifideles Laici

¹⁹ Isaiah 22 :20-22

²⁰ Pope John Paul II Sunday, March 12,1987, reported in *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*

²¹ John 11:49-52

accepts the headship office of the Clerici as being ultimately unassailable by the gates of hell, and are obedient while fixing their “trust in him who judges justly.”²² As members of the local parish we call our priests “father” in the same spirit; even in the face of Jesus’ warning against calling any man, “father.”

“And call no man your father on earth for you have one Father, who is in heaven.”²³

Are Catholics disobeying Jesus? They must not call this man their originator, or their ultimate teacher. The faithful are crediting him, however, with carrying responsibility in God’s name over God’s family. The faithful laici look to God, and to no human being, as their only Originator/Father. In calling the parish priest “father,” the laici are merely recognizing his authority over them as delegated by the authority of the One Father, who has given *fathership or headship to an office*, even as in the Isaiah reading, “he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” The laici is also recognizing the *familial structure of covenanted people*. In this same sense St. Paul wrote:

I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me. Some are arrogant as though I were not coming to you . . .What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness.²⁴

The fatherhood that Paul claims and disciplines by is that delegated to him by Christ, but he severely admonishes anyone who because of that fatherhood goes on to claim his name as that of their originator.

• . .there is quarreling among you my brethren, what I mean is that each of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?²⁵

The parish priest in accepting his people’s use of “father” also recognizes the source of that fatherhood which he exercises as head and governor of a part of the one family in Jesus Christ, who himself recognizes one Father, God. With these things in mind, the word “father” is

²² 1 Peter 2:22

²³ Matthew 23:9

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 4:14 ff

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:11-13

an apt title for the head of a local Christian family, one which brings out the best in relationship between the Christifideles Laici and the Christifideles Clerici, and one which accurately symbolizes the relationship of the family of God to Holy Trinity. In light of these eternal principles exemplified in the visible Church and reaching perfection among the faithful through her careful nurturing, can the reality of sexual signness be seen more clearly?

(One wonders how advocates of woman priests consider this. What would they propose to do with the appellation “father”? Use “mother”? What grounding would that conceivably claim? The grotesqueness becomes more apparent.)

“We Must Distinguish in Order to Unite”

Since the Church has freed her children from the dependencies of their long childhood, and has allowed them freedom in a kind of adolescence, it is not to be wondered that they too, exhilarated by a sense of freedom, and not comprehending, at this point, the complexities of that freedom, have been tempted to follow all kinds of notions. Misreading freedom, they also misread equality, and at least temporarily misunderstand the implications of their salvation. But this deception in the Church among the Christifideles is more insidious than we may be aware of. The Enemy has a chance, he thinks, of delaying, or even of overturning on the way to holiness of the family of God.

That which distinguishes the Catholic Church from the many branches of Protestantism is not frequently called to our attention. This is out of respect for ecumenism and the unity much desired by all those who love Jesus Christ and grieve that his prayer, “That they be one as you Father and I are one,” is delayed. Yet, unless we clarify the differences that separate us, it is not so evident where the source of unity is. Unity will come through making fine distinctions, in sorting out things that are still undifferentiated - then we will find the overarching principle that brings the longed for unity? Really? Hasn't the simple answer already been given?

A Vital Organ

Coming to light more fully in our day the significance of male and female, to which idea these four books have been devoted, casts a new light on the difference, and maybe the crucial difference. The Protestant Church who entertained its adolescence by a break with the parent and family heritage, has in many of its branches already accepted women ministers. For most branches of Protestantism there is no belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the consecrated bread and wine, or in the non-bloody extension in every mass of the one sacrifice of Calvary, so the

ministers of these Protestant communions are not priests; they do not consecrate the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, nor do they, in *Christi persona* hear confessions and forgive sins. However, with the ordination of women in the Anglican communion (the Anglicans or Episcopalians may claim not to be Protestant) even these aspects of priesthood have been appropriated by women - a serious problem.

In ordaining women to ministry and headship functions, these groups of Christians are consistent with their Protestant founding which already has dispensed with universal unity under headship authorized by Christ. It would seem that many in the Catholic Church also would be happier in that kind of organization, but it is the spirit of our times not to leave the Church over conflict with authority, but to try to deconstruct that authority, or bend it to another will. Larry Christianson, a noted Lutheran minister-author writes;

The innumerable divisions of Protestantism have all gone away from each other to set up separate housekeeping with Bibles clutched firmly in hand. An individual or a church - may say, "The Bible is my only authority." But what is really being said is this:

"My authority is what I understand the Bible to say. One cannot escape the subjective judgments which are involved in interpreting the Bible. It is not quite accurate to score Protestantism for having a "paper pope." What Protestants really have is a whole collection of flesh and blood popes - from the pastor of a local church, who solemnly declares to his vestry meeting that, "This is what the Bible says to us . . ." to the delegates of a national convention, who decide by majority vote what the Bible says to a specific situation; to the theological professor who rests his case on the "proven results of scientific scholarship;" to the spunky layman who takes Luther at his words, and decides that he is greater than the emperor, or popes or councils.

The sheer proliferation of Protestant sects over the centuries is mute testimony to the fact that the Bible - which calls Christians to a real, not merely theoretical unity - in and of itself is not the instrument that will bring about that unity. Protestants so long and so thoroughly convinced that the Roman Catholic Church did not have the right answer with its office of an infallible pope, have watched with interest and perhaps a touch of unholy glee, as the Catholic Church has begun to call into question the principle of infallibility. But as yet, not many have recognized the Protestant plight in regard to a center of authority as clearly as Lutheran theologian, George Lindbeck. In regard to removing the principle of infallibility from the office of authority he says: "One metaphor which could be used in describing the infallibility debates is that it is concerned with how to extract a tumorous growth from a vital organ without committing suicide. This is not a condescending

comparison. The Protestant is well aware that his churches lack the vital organ in question.²⁶

Catholicism does not lack the vital organ, and the surgery on the tumor, if there ever was one, was affected successfully by Vatican II Council. But now we are faced with the other problem: educating the Catholic on the polar nature of the two functions of Christifideles, their equality and importance and irreducibility. Simply expressed, but a bright light for numbers of women who heard him at the National Council of Catholic Women, November 9, 1987,²⁷ the then Archbishop John Roach of Minneapolis/St. Paul reflected upon “why as a eucharistic people we seem so splintered.”

As I thought about this I have been helped recently by a series of meditations which one of the priests of this Archdiocese has done on the question of trinitarian collegiality. . . (we place) our own relationships in the context of relationships of the Trinity. Jesus reveals how personal and warm and tender the Father is. He is the image, the exact likeness, the splendor, the reflection and the glory of the Father. The Father anoints Jesus with the Holy Spirit and clothes him with the most attractive virtues. John says, “The Father glorifies the Son, he who gives me glory is the Father”.

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one, but very different. The Father does not do what the Son does, the Son does not do what the Father does and neither does what the Spirit does. Jesus spoke often of doing the Father’s will. He wasn’t obsequious; that was his role and he recognized the Father’s role. The Father did things unique to the Father. He initiates, governs, presides, creates in a very distinctive way. The Son’s role is to respond, to be the word for the Father, to reflect the Father, to be the splendor and glory of the Father. The Spirit is the bond of love animating the Father and the Son. He is the comforter and consoler and paraclete and inspiration.

That may seem to be a kind of lofty ideal for us, but I think it’s what we have to aim at. Our roles are different, but that ought to be a source of rejoicing, not resentment. There are things that you do as laity that I shouldn’t do. There are things that I do as bishop and priest that you shouldn’t do. . . There is no inferiority or super superiority in the Trinity. There can’t be any among us. I must exercise a kind of leadership and a kind of authority for the good of the church which is not your responsibility. To do that, however, I must recognize not only the dignity of you as persons and children of God, but as people in whom the Spirit resides and to whom the

²⁶ Christenson, Larry, *A Message to the Charismatic Movement*, (N.M., 1977)

²⁷ Roach, Archbishop John, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Eucharistic Celebration, Nov. 9, 1987, National Council of Catholic Women

Spirit speaks. . . In a collegial gathering all bring gifts. The leader becomes servant and the last rises to full dignity.

Though the Archbishop does not draw out his Trinitarian model to the conclusion about man and woman's inherent meaning and role, it lies behind his theology. We may see then, that for the woman to respond, to reflect, and to be the glory of the man, is not a servile place, rather is part of the loving relationship of the basic created collegiality, another way of stating the marital relationship. Nor is the initiating, governing, presiding role of the man in the family a prestigious one for "the leader becomes the servant."

The Church will of necessity maintain its hierarchical structure, but it will never be understood in the world were a twisted view of hierarchy and authority is indelible. That much must be abundantly clear as we near the end of our thesis.

This is of fundamental importance for understanding the Church in her own essence, so as to avoid applying to the Church - even in her dimension as an "institution" made up of human beings and forming part of history - criteria of understanding and judgment which do not pertain to her nature. Although the Church possesses a "hierarchical" structure, nevertheless this structure is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. And holiness is measured according to the "great mystery" in which the Bride responds with the gift of love to the gift of the Bridegroom. She does this "in the Holy Spirit," since "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). The Second Vatican Council, confirming the teaching of the whole of tradition, recalled that in the hierarchy of holiness it is precisely the "woman," Mary of Nazareth, who is the "figure" of the Church. She "precedes" everyone on the path to holiness; in her person "the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (cf. Eph 5:27)." In this sense, one can say that the Church is both "Marian" and "Apostolic-Petrine."²⁸

Godly government means justice for all who enjoy it, in the home and in the Church. For that government to be godly both the governors and the responders heed each other and are submissive to God. This stance was beautifully expressed by the late Archbishop Humberto Medeiros in a reflection on the teaching authority of the Church:

Those who share in the teaching authority of the Catholic Church must always be Christ-like they must always be humble, sincere, and open to the inspiration of the Spirit. To someone like myself the purpose of authority is primarily to inspire, encourage, to direct and

²⁸ Mulieris, op.cit, VII. 27

to challenge others to new levels of Christ-likeness; seldom should authority be used to rebuke and never to oppress. As an instrument of this authority, I stand as a spokesman for my Church and for what my Church believes. I do so, not to cause alienation or to cause anger, but simply because I believe this has been willed by Christ for his Church until the end of time.²⁹

²⁹ Appointed Archbishop of Boston in September, 1970. RIP 1983.

CHAPTER IV. THE DOCTRINAL POSITION ON WOMAN

An Emerging Doctrine?

If it seems premature, even presumptuous, to suppose that the questions of sexuality are forcing the development of a new Doctrine of Man, there are many indications that the struggles that now engulf the Church may point to just that. Hammering out definition eventually establishes doctrine, and the Church body now cries for definition of the meaning of sexuality. A formulated doctrine unites the faithful by speaking cogently to those who are of good will, but whose honest doubts and intellectual confusion must be answered before they can settle into happy unanimity in the Body of Christ. Even with a Spirit-guided and True doctrine, there will be some who because of conscience or pride cannot acquiesce, and these, leaving the Church, will be mourned individually, but the confusion wrought by their continued presence will not. The course of doctrine is to bring peace to the Body of Christ so that it can go forward in its mission to bring all nations into the knowledge and love of God through Jesus Christ. At the level of engagement of the present controversy, energies for the outward mission are sapped.

At present “two religions” raised by the questions of sexuality are trying to coexist within the same Church body, an incredible situation for a Church that was instituted so that “they may be one, Father, as you and I are one,” a Church that was given a governance for faith and order authorized by Jesus himself, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church ...what you bind shall be bound and what you loose shall be loosed.”

The seeds of the present upset were sown liberally four and more decades ago, and though some of their growth has withered, some weeds still thrive and should be recognized. Loretta Jancoski⁶⁴ speaker at the Women in the Church conference of 1987, asserted that of these two groups, one is “trying to give life and reality within the structures to feminist virtues,” and a second “is finding their voices to defend the traditional male values and subordination, which

⁶⁴ Founder of Institute of Religious Education

patriarchy has been fine-tuning for 2,000 years.⁶⁵ Another voice, obviously from the other side, describing the two religions wrote:

. . .one is forced to speak either in the category of “feminist-liberationist priesthood” or of “male-Christian priesthood,” when given the fact that the female priesthood is based on a theology in opposition to traditional doctrines of the Church and the creative and salvific acts of God.⁶⁶

For a meeting of minds and hearts between these two opposing camps, what round can be found? We have seen that hidden within Tradition and the Bible there is a feminine dimension mostly overlooked that when highlighted will expand our knowledge of God’s revelation about Himself and His creature, Man, male and female, and set a new course toward peace and unity in the Spirit. Newman describing the development of doctrine assures us that it cannot mean anything closed, rather it stimulates vigorous steps to wholeness for the individuals who look to it and live by it.

Comparisons to the Arian Controversy

In all of this it is inevitable that we make comparisons to the turbulent Fourth Century spilling through the Fifth into the Sixth, through which centuries great and small Greek minds raged over the nature and roles of the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity. Two very different religions could be seen then, too, and the side which eventually lost, the Arian, at one point had almost gained complete victory. Said Athanasius, a Bishop-fighter, “The whole world has gone Arain. ” Emerging from the fight were some heroes who withstood many defeats in the skirmishes, but at the end stood battered but unbowed, among them Sts. Athanasius, Basil, Hilary, Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Jerusalem. The vigorous thought and precise language of these men finally established the Doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325) - Heaven’s own answer. It is upon that awesome Truth that we have depended on in much of this

⁶⁵ National Catholic Register, Nov. 15, 1987, p.1

⁶⁶ Belonick, Deborah, quoted by Little in “The Female Priesthood”, p. 137 Dr. Joyce Little writing for Faith and Reason Vol XIII #3 1987, Christendom. She recognizes her mentor Fr. Donald J. Keefe, S.J., then of Marquette University, who has pursued the relationship of the covenantal character of creation and the sacramental character of the Church for many years –writing Covenantal Theology. Keefe is also the theologian behind Cardinal Carter’s Pastoral quoted at length in these pages. He is now retired at Fordham University, and in correspondence with the author.

argument. In its time this established doctrine quieted controversy and ushered in an era of peace and missionary zeal.

Saint Pope John Paul II pointed out that all heresies can be traced to inadequate philosophical premises. When analyzed carefully, it is not difficult to see that the root of both the Arian controversy and the modern feminist one is the same and lies buried in similar unstated assumptions. Both are secularist and have uncertain grasp of the spiritual reality that undergirds the Christian way of thinking, or if they do comprehend that reality, they discard it with much the same bias of Nietzsche - that Christian obedience is merely "corruption of the master morality into the slave morality."

Nietzsche is not alone in the confusion about Christianity which extends to the definition of "equality," another essential idea that we have tried to clarify (Book I) and which will be central to an emerging doctrine. This confusion has caused him and others to consider feminism and democracy to be let loose because of Christian instincts, possibly because of the unexamined or partial ideas of freedom and free will. Because of sin in the world, there may be a transitory, superficial relationship between Christianity, on the one hand, and feminism and democracy, on the other, but neither do justice to the Christian view which embraces their contraries, "submission" and "Kingdom."

Nietzsche knows himself to be so extreme in his views he sees himself to be anti-Christ. And he does dramatically demonstrate both the origin and logical end of the habitual philosophical premise of the evil one. In this, however, he is only a convenient whipping boy who is merely one among thousands - since the Enlightenment it has been a prevalent intellectual position.

This same distorted premise, alive and well in the 3rd century, explains Arius' inability to place the Son on an equal plane with the Father; and his insistence that the Son, though divine is not God, but an intermediate divine being. The underlying belief is that equality cannot be possible between the one who is obedient and the one who authorizes; that the dependent cannot be equal to the originator; that the sent cannot be equal to the sender. Basic to the premise is that service, obedience and submission are stances of slaves; slaves are inherently inferior and have equality only with others of degraded status. Thus the pervasiveness of the "master morality" mentality repeated baldly fifteen centuries after Arius by bedeviled Nietzsche appears again and again; that is, that in some indelible list of ultimate values, the place of power

is infinitely better than the place of service. Personified in Satan, it was this demonic insinuation that overturned created Perfection in the Garden of Eden. Until this same basic non-comprehension of Christian values is clarified in a Doctrine of Mankind, i.e. made secure in a Christian anthropology, Karl Stern believes Christianity is in jeopardy.

There exists a great deal of literature . . . which is diametrically opposed to this. Such an attitude arises out of the entire climate of modern times but all these, no matter how diversified, have one idea in common: any sense of dependence in Man is an early residuum and will eventually be overcome.⁶⁷

This, according to Christian tradition, indicates the androgynous nature of Godhead Himself - meaning, again, that here polarity in union is the expression of the fullness of being. . . . it is highly probable that there exists a sexual polarity independent of contingencies, which cannot be viewed other than against a metaphysical background. . . .there is something ubiquitous about it in time and space. . . .All this makes it so important to assimilate the wealth of recent findings on the nature of Man, in psychoanalysis and in phenomenology, to a Christian anthropology.⁶⁸

Interestingly, the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity that was forced into existence by the Arian heresy formulated the relationship of Persons in the Trinity and resulted in the early creed of Athanasius which we used extensively in Book I. Erupting with the same misconceptions as the Arians about a monadic reality, feminism may now be forcing into existence another formulation of the relationship of persons - this time the persons of Man.

Male Hierarchy on the Defensive

The Roman Catholic Church has been on the defensive because the ordained male alone holds the headship gifts; it is even on the defensive for having an authoritative hierarchy of any kind at all. For the past fifty years apologies have been the bishops' response to the militant feminists who press for a breaking down of patriarchy and hierarchy in the Church. There are many clamorous voices to quote on the subject, and most of the readers of this book have been painfully aware of the Catholic "theologians" teaching these anti-Church positions in the most prestigious Catholic institutions. Before the oncoming phalanx of those who would obliterate their position, the Church hierarchy has itself seemed for some years to retreat into

⁶⁷ Stern, op.cit., Flight from Woman,p. 298

⁶⁸ Ibid p.10

embarrassment at the very existence of male headship. It may explain the reticence of that office to frontally confront the miserable sex scandal. Headship lost its confidence in God's gift of authority. If we believe the media, it has become generally true that the faithful believe that patriarchy and hierarchy are merely cultural hangovers from a chauvinistic social order, and the bishops seem to have wondered about that themselves.

Apologies for patriarchy are not worthy of the bishops. Patriarchy, the governance by males, is part of God's revelation for His People; it is not sin. But sinful values (prestige, dominance, power) have attached to it – we call it clericalism, which demands reevaluation and radical alignment to the Gospel. Patriarchy itself will not be discarded, but its deeper meaning must be found so that confidence in the office is regained. In these early decades of the 21st Century, we may have turned the corner. In the meantime, it is true that prestigious use of authority (again, clericalism) which is far from Our Lord's command can be blamed for much of the unrest and revolt in the ranks of the faithful.

This apologetic stance of the bishops and the equivocation of theologians whose debate some assumed would lead to female ordination was decisively overruled by Saint Pope John Paul II's "On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone" of May 1994.

Wherefore, in order that all doubt may be removed regarding a matter of great importance, a matter which pertains to the Church's divine constitution itself, in virtue of my ministry of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32) I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.

In 2004, The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith furthered the instruction of this Apostolic Letter in "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World."

Faced with the abuse of power, the answer for women is to seek power. This process leads to opposition between men and women . . . which has its most immediate and lethal effects in the structure of the family.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World, May 31, 2004, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger Prefect. 2

With a full exploration of the further effects of this male/female struggle, the document goes on to examine the effects on society and the Church, concluding from Scripture and from the model of Mary the Mother of the Church with her “disposition of listening, welcoming, humility, faithfulness, praise and waiting,” that women “play a role of maximum importance in the Church’s life by recalling these dispositions to all the baptized and contributing in a unique way to showing the true face of the Church, spouse of Christ, and mother of believers.”⁷⁰

In this perspective one understands how the reservation of priestly ordination solely to men does not hamper in any way women’s access to the heart of Christian life. Women are called to be unique examples and witnesses for all Christians of how the Bride is to respond in love to the love of the Bridegroom.⁷¹

Failure in the Doctrinal Development

As the pressure on the Church for formulation of a doctrinal position on women reached a crisis point, there have been some notable failures. The Anglicans, as we have seen, have fallen to the pressure and the Anglican Bishops’ historic decision of September 17, 1976, for the ordination of women, has already completed the schism begun in the Sixteenth Century. As one part of the Anglican fellowship moves to a more Protestant pole, the decision has thrust others, more aware of the stakes, into the arms of Rome. Pope Benedict XVI in recognizing the moment, “with one fell swoop of the pen, opened the door for whole groups of Anglicans to reunite with Holy Mother Church.”⁷²

In response to the pressures, in 1985 the Catholic bishops in the U.S. began a process of hearing women’s views in order to write a Pastoral Letter on Woman. The process itself encouraged the negative. The listening sessions were caustic, disrespectful of the bishops and of any woman who would make a positive statement about the Church which was nearly impossible under the circumstances. Those who attended were handed lists of questions set in the language of dissent and encouraged dissent.

The response of 75,000 women to these meetings was not great, considering the 27,000,000 women in the Church in the U.S. In the words of a woman speaking for Women for Faith and Family about the first draft, “there is no room for you in this Pastoral if you are not in need of reconciliation and healing.” Therefore, it became evident that women were the problem,

⁷⁰ Ibid 16

⁷¹ Ibid 16

⁷² Nov 5, 2014 - Ordinariates for Anglicans, National Catholic Register

not the treatment of women. Many seem unable to differentiate between their psychological problems, “hurt, second rate, and belittled feelings” and reality. The “rights” age had raised confusions making it appear that a person with deviations from the norm should have a “right” to be comfortable with their deviation, and have it recognized as legitimate, rather than realizing a need for healing and change. It demonstrated what a psychologist has said, “What you call your religion is actually your neurosis.”

By 1993 the fourth draft, unpleasing to nearly everyone, was turned down by the bishops. The drafts took up none of the considerations presented in this writing. No doctrinal development was made beyond the statement of 1976 made by Rome in the “Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood,” which was roundly castigated or ignored, and in the drafts of the bishops’ failed pastoral letters treated apologetically.

When a doctrinal position is developed it must adhere to the root of truth already well grown in the Church as it lives by the Scriptures through 2000 years. When this doctrinal development is clear, as it begins to be in *Inter Insigniores (Declaration of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood)*⁷³, it will make eventual separation among Catholics inevitable. But the Church does not fear that; the Christifideles will joyfully concur because of their obedient heart. Those marked for, but not yet members of the Body will be drawn by the Truth; a new revitalization of the Church will be the result. The definition when it arrives will not be negative but positive; it will bear the marks of the Holy Spirit by infusion of His new life. No one person will be the bearer of the total insight; it will come again, simultaneously from the grassroots-faithful recognized by their obedience, from the Shepherds, and from the meditative theologian, and will be recognized by all those who have a heart disposed toward truth and obedience. This is occurring as thousands of Anglican/Episcopal priests have become Catholic since their church has ordained women, ordained a homosexual bishop, and a woman as head of that Episcopacy in the United States.

The Questions to Be Answered

Prior to the Anglican decision to ordain women, the Anglican and Roman theologians on both sides worked out propositions to be answered. In one of their collaborative papers these statements were made:

⁷³ Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith, 1976

In the current situation, the question of the ordination of women has raised issues which cannot be answered adequately by the mere citing of traditional practices and beliefs. Current discussion of the issue has shown that the traditional reasons for refusing ordination to women are not universally acceptable. It has further shown that the problems relating to the doctrine of God, of the Incarnation and Redemption are at least indirectly involved in the solution, so that any decision whether for or against the ordination of women, will in fact require the Church to explain or develop its essential Tradition in an unprecedented way. The Church, therefore, faces an issue which demands of it a new effort of self-understanding in regard to certain elements of its Gospel.⁷⁴

These important relationships of the Incarnation and the Redemption to female priesthood were not addressed by the Anglicans before their divisive decision, and they remain mostly unanswered by the Catholic theologians who, influenced heavily by feminism, continue the rustling of dissent. Early on, in 1976 at the Detroit Conference on Ordination which opened the subject on the American Catholic scene, George Tavard, a theologian at that time sympathetic to the ordination of women, also posed important questions which largely were ignored by the bishops in their attempts to frame the ill-fated Pastoral on Woman. Saint Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignatatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women) which is a pillar for this writing, finally put the bishop's effort to rest, though it may not have addressed directly these questions. His Theology of the Body⁷⁵ which has found its voice since, is beginning to fulfill the needed authority on the meaning of male and female. The timing of the demise of the bishops' pastoral and the pope's Apostolic Letter are another evidence of the promise Jesus made that the Holy Spirit would guide the Church into all truth. Father Tavard's questions asked in 1976 spoke in a way unchanged in the last thirty-plus years by feminism in the Church, though if *Mulieris* were studied, understood and accepted the answers would be forthcoming. There is an entrenched mentality of some in the Church that does not yield.

Does Christian anthropology see manhood and womanhood as distinct complementary ways of being that cannot be reduced to be one or the other? If so, one can make a good case for two functions in the Church. And in this case sacerdotal function goes naturally to the male, because *melio conditio possidentis*. (Because he already has it and possession of 9/10ths of the law). It is easy to refute the belief that women are inferior, but this does not take us very far, for it is not the view that one finds in ecclesiastical circles. The view is that there exists providentially predetermined roles for man and woman. And this is more difficult to refute. The alternative question remains: does a Christian anthropology see

⁷⁴ ARC papers op.cit.

⁷⁵ John Paul II, Pauline Press (Boston 1997) and Christopher West, Pauline Press, 2003

womanhood and manhood as abstractions which imperfectly fit the living being called women and men? Does it hold that in practice each human being is in some ways and varying degrees both male and female, so that it is up to each one to define, before God, one's own self and one's own function in the Church and in Society? I personally think that on this basis we can make a much more solid argument for the ordination of women. This, I believe, should be the question before us. Until we have answered it, we cannot present a good case, whether for or against.⁷⁶

The whole scope of the diabolical influences that present their case without reference to the theological implications of this question can be read in the book "Ungodly Rage" by Donna Steichen.⁷⁷

The arguments of those committed to the ordination of women first began with discrediting the Scriptures which, if taken at its word, would make ordination of women clearly impossible. Such discrediting assumes the form of historical/sociological criticism, under the guise of *setzenleben* which may have validity if it is free of reductionism or deconstruction of Scripture. The studies of higher criticism may be excellent tools for understanding Scripture, but, as we explored earlier with Cardinal Bea (Book I) they are "very delicate and in using them there is danger of rash and subjective judgments."⁷⁸ In none of these arguments is there recognition that the Holy Spirit has had any pervading influence in the Church or that He still speaks through the Scriptures.

From casting doubt on the Scriptural word about woman, the arguments continue by proving that woman is equal to man, a proof which misjudges the meaning of equal and reduces it to "the same in all regards." If equality is to be seen in its fullness in the Trinity of Persons, such presumption is immediately obvious as error - the Persons cannot be confounded (confused or interchanged). There is diversity in the highest Unity where there is no monadic authoritarianism.

In the search for an egalitarian and quantitative justice, all love vanishes from the world and freedom becomes merely random. Then an uncovenanted community of alienated people emerges,

⁷⁶ Gardiner, *Women and Catholic Priesthood*, op. cit. p.52 ("Gender-ism" is on its way.)

⁷⁷ Published in 1991 by Ignatius Press. William Oddie, an Anglican priest has also written a perceptive book on the problem, "What Will Happen to God?" Ignatius, 1988; and Dr. Joyce Little's article, "Naming Good and Evil" in the May 1992 issue of First Things approaches some of these questions with excellent scholarship.

⁷⁸ Bea, op.cit. p.51

which quails before a god conceived as starkly omnipotent, a god whose absence is preferable to his annihilating presence.⁷⁹

The next step is to work on that ancient mischief embedded in Man's fallen consciousness, that to be ordained is to have power, and to have power or govern is the high prestigious position, even in the Church. Anything less than the rank of power is humiliatingly second class. Therefore, it is reasoned, to be regulated by someone else's rule is to be reduced to a demeaned position, all of which is unjust and cannot be God's will. In the Redeemed Order this misses the whole point of Salvation History and the Gospel message - it is a throw-back to the state of authority and obedience in the Fallen Order under Satan's jurisdiction, and is impregnated with his rebellion. Nor is there any re-assessment of the values of the power-hungry which also underlie his philosophy: "it is better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven."

Jesus clearly placed the humble and obedient, the unrecognized servant, at the head of his list of those in the Kingdom of heaven. How can these be-attitudes penetrate more completely the Christian consciousness? In the meantime, the emergence of a Doctrine of Mankind will bring down the arrogant and lift up those of low degree, giving answers to the deep question, "What is the meaning, Lord, of your creation of male and female in the beginning?"

Gender Language

The attack against the Bible's use of gender related language and on the instituted liturgical words in the Church is perhaps the most dangerous of all the inroads of a false philosophy of sexuality. The use in the New Testament of male terms (brothers, sons of God) is understood as legitimate when the principle of agency originating in the Holy Trinity is understood to be borne in human flesh by the male; and when one sees oneself, whether male or female, as an integral part of the one Body of Christ. Then these become unifying terms, the whole Body is the adopted son of God - the way we see ourselves through the head of the body, Jesus the Son of God.

To break down this language to that which differentiates the polarity, "sons and daughters," "brothers and sisters," may be appropriate depending on the reference; but when the reference is the total body to insist on polar terms emphasizes, not the unity of the Body, but the individual parts of the Body. To demand differentiation, "brothers and sisters" rather than a unified "brethren" attacks the unity of the Body. To be crossed with ashes on Ash Wednesday

⁷⁹ Carter, op.cit. III.6

with the words, “Remember, O woman, that you are dust and to dust you shall return,” removes the individual from the end of all Men and calls attention to the final end of this particular woman, now detached from the Body. She belongs in a much larger and more important context - to the community of Redeemed Men and will participate in the collective end of that community. It is appropriate that women submit even to the title of the community as “Brethren,” in the same way that it is fitting for a woman to give up her maiden name as a the sign of her total commitment to the union of her marriage. Both are indicators in keeping with a heartfelt desire for unity under the headship of Jesus Christ.

To recapitulate much of the three books preceding this one, Catholic faith begins at the beginning with the Original Order, where in the Garden of Eden Almighty God, Himself a Three in One, created man and woman to be perfect unity in one. The unity of the two was assured by the Person of the Holy Spirit, Third Person of the Trinity, who condescended to gift them with himself, thus making them a created three-in-one united in supernatural love in the very image and likeness of their Maker. As we have seen, that is why the Church has a Sacrament called Matrimony. In the Redeemed Order which is His Church, Christ re-established the Original Order now transcendently enhanced with himself, and here the two are not made one without him. All this is, presented yet again, strata in faith’s bedrock.

Together man and woman in this union are named *Adam*, that is, Man. Like God Himself there is solidarity, Oneness which is primary to their being, expressed by this one word, Man. They are not separate like fish and fowl, not two separate beings primarily identified by male and female characteristics. They are first of all One - two beings participating in a whole with one and the same perfection. Jesus will express it in his teaching on marriage in Matthew 19:6. “The two shall become one flesh. . .” - “let not man put asunder what God has joined.” Here Jesus tells us that God is the Third Person of their indissoluble union.

In this solidarity it is almost as the current debate has presented it, that there’s no important difference in the sexes at all – almost - but importantly, wait! It is true that man and woman’s characteristics are first and foremost those they both have equally and completely - it makes up their one common human nature. Only one word can demonstrate this absolute solidarity - what word do we want? Do we want “human” or “humanity”? Those have “man” in them without having the same personal unitive force. Do we want anthropod? “Anthro’ is simply “man.” Perhaps “mankind”? No, it won’t do - it still has “man” in it while not expressive enough of solidarity. “Mortal?” Aren’t all animals indistinguishable in their mortality?

Is there objection to a one word indication of their utter oneness? Do we object that Man has a second meaning, that the same word refers to the human male? And working backwards does it imply that the woman doesn't count? The disagreement lies with the idea that in this solidarity the unit has been given a name that is also the name of the male. That, we have been led to believe, is a put-down for the female.

Applying this conundrum to the Holy Trinity can be instructive. We call the One who is Creator, though He is Three, by one word "God." The word "God" applies to all three Persons equally, First, Second and Third; or Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Generally when we speak of God we are thinking of God the First Person, the Father, but not always. Yet, it is inconceivable to the point of absurdity that there might be suspicion or jealousy among the Persons of the Trinity over this supreme title. Does the Son resent being called God because generally the Father is first thought of as God? That, we would agree, is nonsense.

Yet, it may point up the destructive jealousy that is indicated when the generic term "Man" is rebelled against. It shows not only immaturity of understanding, but the chronic original sin manifested by envy and disobedience that began in the Garden of Eden. This original sin is another layer of substratum pre-faith. Shall we now reinstitute the original sin into the Redeemed community with our religious language? If we do, it won't any longer be the Catholic religion founded by Christ and the apostles.

So the first truth about Man, male and female, that is inherent in his creation is solidarity. The dictionary definition of solidarity, "an entire union of interests and responsibilities in a group," is not nearly strong enough to describe what John Paul meant by the word - it is a total identification of those in the group with all the others - a total unity and oneness. In perfection, before the Fall, this solidarity in love was the supernatural added gift of the Holy Spirit. So it was that God made Man - Man was perfect with an unblemished human nature enjoyed equally by male and female. It is interesting that in the Genesis account of the creation of Man, male and female, the same Hebrew pronoun refers to both the singular Man, and the duo, male and female, and may be translated either "him" or "them," so important is the concept of solidarity to the original inspired words.

We belong to one body in Christ - one body. We are growing up into likeness of the Son of God. We claim the redemption gained for us in the one man, Christ Jesus, the second Adam. That is the solidarity that our religious language must express. Shall we change it to two bodies -

sons and daughters - and forget our basic and original oneness in a rush to be accepted by the intellectual elite of the 2000's?

No, certainly not; describing that solidarity we must not divide what God has joined, which is all of us to, in and with Christ. The word is "Man" and it draws one pronoun, not two. The pronoun is "him" or "he." Certainly not "it." He or him is indicative of the head of this unit. This headship has been revealed in Sacred Scripture, and is not the expression of a backward social consciousness at all, but "the inspired Word of God " as stated by *Del Verbum*. The head of the unit is the male. But head is not more worthy than the other two parts of the union - not more worthy than the woman, and certainly not than the Holy Spirit who is the most self-effacing, and condescending of all. Head is simply a role of service and responsibility to the whole, and the Head listens to the Spirit for the guidance of himself and his spouse. Besides, we remember what Jesus said about those who had headship, "whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all."⁸⁰ Even though God stands revealed as pure spirit without sexuality (other than some metaphors, not a single scripture verse upholds any presentation of himself as "she"), God has revealed himself as "He" for our human understanding. Referring to Godhead as God-He makes the same connection with headship - the ultimate Head. But, in this regard, he has told us that he created man to image in physical flesh the spiritual principal of fatherhood in the Trinity. St. Paul tells us about the origin of the family. It is from the Father in heaven that all families on earth are named. (Ephesians 3:15) It is not anthropological, quite the opposite - the man was created to be father in order to image the role of the First Person of the Trinity; the very idea has come from God down, not from man up. In this, then the "He-ness" of God precedes the creation of a male who is simply made to image in physical flesh the principle of the First Person of the Trinity who is the Original, Subsisting, Generator of all creation.

From Adam we also have received damage to our human nature that is universal. Each and every human being has received the broken nature of the one Man Adam. We have solidarity in his sin as well as his humanity. The damaged human nature that resulted from Adam's disobedience is ours - we are fallen Man, each one of us and all of us together. In order to preserve the great solidarity of the human race - that we all, yes, everyone, descended from the one man Adam, we must maintain one word - Man, and it can only draw the one masculine

⁸⁰ Luke 10:42-43

pronoun. That one word alone encompasses the physical male as well as the created unit, Adam-Eve.

To remove all these signposts of sexuality from our language is to destroy all of these primary and essential concepts from the revealed root of our faith. Just like that, through an elitist attack on language, more than four millennia of the Revealed Word coming to us from God's own patient teaching through to his final sacrifice for us is . . . washed down the drain.

To do otherwise than to hold securely to sexual language (in the end it proves to be the only inclusive language) wrenches apart not only the truth of our Created relationship to each other and to God, but it also wrenches apart and discards the unity of our Salvation in the one Man Jesus, the second Adam. It was the threatened loss of this important truth, foreshadowed in inspired ways in the Psalms that put the further inclusivization on hold by the American bishops. The determined feminist poets who translated the psalms for the New American edition did so with a bias that confronted the Bible reader at every juncture. Rome has first curtailed inclusive language with Norms for Translation in 1997, and then permitting the New Revised Standard Version with some corrections for lectionary use in Canada in 2007. It is unclear where the Church stands overall on inclusive language at this juncture.⁸¹⁸²

81

Cardinal Ratzinger perceived that the "inclusive" language of the proposed lectionary involved an erosion of doctrinally significant language in the biblical text, and that (despite the claims of liberal American bishops that such language was necessary on "pastoral" grounds) its main purpose was to give aid and encouragement to the increasingly heretical feminist element in the Church. Nevertheless, even after it became clear that the Vatican was resolutely opposed to the whole concept of "inclusive language" in the Mass, American bishops did not withdraw the proposed lectionary from consideration, and held out for a compromise.

The Vatican was not inclined to compromise on the issue. In 1995 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith drew up a set of guidelines called [Norms for the Translation of Biblical Texts for Use in the Liturgy](#),² which Cardinal Ratzinger presented to American bishops in confidential consultations at Rome. These "norms" amounted to a point-by-point rejection of the "inclusive language" guidelines adopted by the American bishops in 1990. The final resolution of the lectionary conflict was brought about in a series of meetings held in the Spring of 1997, as reported in the American *National Catholic Reporter*.

After years of back-and-forth negotiations, a special 11-member working group was convened in Rome from Feb. 24 to March 8, 1997, to hammer out the final text of the lectionary. Four American bishops, two officials of the U.S. bishops' conference, four Vatican officials and one outside adviser performed revisions that were eventually adopted by the U.S. bishops and approved in Rome.³

In June of 1997 the revised lectionary was sent, along with the Vatican "norms" which had guided the revision, to the American bishops for their approval. The revisions and the "norms" were the subject of indignant protests and much debate at their 1997 annual meeting (held June 19-21), but the lectionary as revised in Rome was approved by the American bishops, who recognized that there was no realistic hope of an "inclusive language" lectionary being approved in Rome at this time.

Every child of Adam is fallen like him, but is redeemed in solidarity with the Second Adam - Christ Jesus. But standing alongside of that second Adam is included the Blessed Virgin Mary as co-redemptress. There is no need to wonder that in the solidarity of the Redemption, which was her co-work, no heed is given to identifying her separately. Somehow being one with Him is sufficient. Do we see in the light of the Virgin Mother's holiness what we are called to? Or do we continue to insist that for every "he" there be placed a "she" identifying ourselves in the process more with Eve's envy than with Mary's obedience?

The Christian revelation, rooted in Jewish revelation, consistently emphasizes that God is bringing back his family into solidarity with himself. The Passover meal in both the Old Covenant and the New is a family meal of sacrificial food provided by the Father, which is for us the Lamb of God of the eternal sacrifice. Yet, in a slide into incomprehensibility, we are compelled to sing a hymn that has been gutted of all meaning. "With God as our Father, neighbors all are we." God as our Father doesn't make us neighbors. It makes us siblings of the same household of faith - Catholic Christians gathered around the sacrificial Eucharistic table. And again, to show the solidarity of that relationship that is intrinsically oneness, we are willing to drop the secondary differentiations and proclaim that we are brothers, or the brethren. "Brothers and sisters" is a dichotomy which points up not our solidarity but our singularity. Singularity has its place, an important place as we will see, but not at the Sacrament of Unity.

To see another aspect of the reduction of this all important solidarity, consider the practice of some priests who without authorization change the words of the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer. The prayer states:

Father, we acknowledge your greatness: all your actions show your wisdom and love. You formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world to serve you, his creator, and to rule over all creatures.

Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship you did not abandon him to the power of death, but helped all men to seek and find you.

Again and again you offered a covenant to man, and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation. Father, you so loved the

Any remaining expectations that the Vatican would eventually approve the use of artificial "inclusive language" were finally put to rest when in March 2001 the Vatican issued the comprehensive Instruction on translation known as [Liturgiam Authenticam](#), "the Authentic Liturgy." This document elaborated upon the 1997 guidelines, and is broadly opposed to paraphrastic renderings of all kinds. In April of 2005 Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI. Taken from an article by Michael Marlowe 2005

world that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior.

He was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, a man like us in all things but sin.⁸³

What confusion is wrought when “man” is changed to “us” to avoid the masculine noun and its pronoun? “Us” is purely tied to the present moment and the present situation; we are cut off in a small congregation (us) from the universal family. This word cannot carry to our minds and hearts the creation of Adam, his sin, and the generations of loving effort God has spent of himself to redeem his creature, Man, or of our connectedness to the great family that far exceeds the “us” in attendance at this mass. Solidarity with Adam and his descendants in the family of Man is intrinsic to these profound words, just as is Jesus’ solidarity with that family when he became “a man like us in all things but sin.” “A man like us” - here is the connection to the present moment. And it is impossible to change “a man like us” to suit the feministic inclinations of the men and women present - he did not become a de-sexed person, but *a* man and *the* man in both senses of the word.

Nor were St. Paul and the others writing to the Christians in apostolic times ignoring the women in the group when they addressed believers as “brethren.” They were simply appropriating the only conceivable way of addressing the family of God in one term of loving unity consistent with the whole revelation.

There is another aspect of Christian faith defaced by the language revisionist. It is the other side of the coin of solidarity. First and foremost we are One; one in Adam, one in Christ, one Man at the Eucharistic table. Only when that fact is cast in concrete at the base, can we build upon it that we are singular as male and female, and that this singularity is also an essential to be maintained. That’s the way the Genesis revelation tells it - the solidarity comes first, the singularity second.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him (as one being); male and female he created them (as two singular persons).⁸⁴

In making every reference unidentifiable as to sexuality, we are erasing the intrinsic soul difference of male and female that God addresses when He calls them to their particular place in His creation. Behaving as though male and female were ultimately indistinguishable is to be thoroughly ignorant of the uniqueness of their meaning and role in creation (as these books

⁸³ Fourth Eucharistic Prayer before Roman Missal 2011 Edition where it remains unchanged.

⁸⁴ Genesis 1:27

repeat over again). It is as disastrous to Christian faith to ignore sexuality's singularity as it is to ignore man and woman's total solidarity.

Going through the Bible or the liturgical texts and matching every masculine term with a feminine term, or eliminating the sexual term by supplying a non-sexual term is effecting an obliteration of the knowledge of God's truth written into Creation. Continuing to think in terms of power - accepting the fallen world's valuing of the masculine as powerful, all the while decrying it - that system of belief is behind this attack on the sexual language of the Church, which is a tactic of the anti-Word. We know ultimately he can't succeed, but individual souls may succumb, in fact, are succumbing to these lies. No exercise of power can gain the kingdom; it is the obedient and submissive who are first in the kingdom - people who model their lives after the Blessed Virgin Mary - the humility and obedience of the feminine. The brethren might rightly, to coin a word, be called the "sistern," except for the male headship of this unity by which it gains its nomenclature. There is transcendent meaning in sexuality, and therefore, in sexual language, because its origin is within the Holy Trinity.

Because Jesus is the Second Person of the Godhead, he could not come to his people in a female body. His physical body and human soul had signification - just as all men and women's bodies and souls do. The sign of His humanness had to speak of the Initiator and Creator of all because he is God. Mary's femaleness, essential to receive conception by the Spirit, also spoke of the human Church who would receive him as Bridegroom. Their sexuality mattered, not only for the mission that they were called to carry out, but for the statement that their sexuality made about the ultimate Kingdom of God.

All of this adds up to another essential truth of Catholic faith which is attacked by inclusive language. It is the marital imagery which is intrinsic to divine revelation from one end of the Bible to the other. Hard-line feminists are aware of this and have discarded the Bible as being "irremediably sexist." It is. Even the Hebrew verb for "to know", especially "to know God" is sexual in origin (Book two). To cut out the sexual terms, to balance them, to change them, is to obliterate the very heart and soul of the revelation. All our religious belief and practice depend upon this most basic human comprehension and experience.

Tampering with Biblical and liturgical language therefore threatens three crucial aspects of Catholic Christian faith - the solidarity of all people both in Adam's Fall and in the Second Adam's Redemption, the singular meaning and role of male and female in the economy

of salvation, and the marital relationship of God and Man consummated at every Eucharistic liturgy. Pope John Paul II in *Mulieris Dignitatem* writes with a language that assumes the solidarity of Man in Redemption, the singularity of the sexes, and relies on marital imagery.

There is the matter of order. Many good priests seem to have become convinced that order, that is first, second, third, etc., signifies rank, like it does in the army. This is evident as they comb the liturgical prayers to reverse the normal order; men and women, to women and men; brothers and sisters, to sisters and brothers; sons and daughters, to daughters and sons - consistently putting the feminine form first and the masculine second. A -B-C-D-E according to that reasoning, therefore, means “best, better, O.K., bad, and terrible” just like on a report card.

The Church and the Bible, revealing the Trinity, are strong on order, that is headship, and even stronger on the equality of every person before God regardless of position. The secondary character described of the respondent has nothing to do, as we have seen over again, with worth or value, but is simply essential order. Alexander Pope wrote somewhere, “Order is heaven’s first law.” And it is.

Being second, as the female sex is, has nothing to do with comparative value, but is merely an expression of God’s order. It does not assume female inferiority. To attempt to rectify this by naming the female sex first is not, therefore, an act of justice. Have those who are inclined to this change believed that women are less worthy than men, and for that reason are normally addressed second? Are they in reversing the normal order attempting to purge an entrenched *personal belief* in the inferiority of women?

Jesus, the Bible tells us, did establish order amongst his followers. He set one, Peter, as the head of the others in all his dealings with the twelve, and told him before his betrayal, “when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren”⁸⁵ words given to Number One. But he also made clear that his headship did not mean superiority. “You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them -

It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Luke 22:32

⁸⁶ Matt 20:25-28.

This is the King speaking! But the kingship He demonstrates is a kingship of service, not of domination.

Karl Barth, the Protestant theologian put order amongst the sexes together neatly. Comprehending order as having nothing to do with significance in God's creation, he writes,

[Man and woman] stand in a sequence. It is in this that man has his allotted place and woman hers. It is in this that they are orientated to each other. It is in this that they are individually and together the human creature as created by God. Man and woman are not an A and a second A whose being and relationship can be described like two halves of an hour glass . . . Man and woman are an A and a B, and cannot, therefore be equated. In inner dignity and right, and therefore in human dignity and right, A has not the slightest advantage over B, nor does it suffer the slightest disadvantage. What is more, when we say A we must with equal emphasis say B also, and when we say B we must with equal emphasis have said A.

Barth goes on to consider the equality of man and woman. The early part of his essay is well worth studying. It is in order, or position that the two are not equal and cannot be exchanged. Yet as singular as their positions make them, he demands that we see them as equal in worth.

Man and woman are fully equal before God. . . in respect of the meaning and determination, the imperiling, but also the promise, of their human existence. They are also equal in regard to the necessity of their mutual relationship and orientation. They stand or fall together. They become and are free or unfree together. . . Yet the fact remains - and in this respect there is no simple equality - that they are claimed and sanctified as man and woman. . . in such a way that A is not B but A, and B is not another A but B. It is here that we see the order outside which man cannot be man nor woman be woman, either in themselves or in their mutual orientation and relationship.⁸⁷

In the rights age which has so confounded the meaning of order these words are liable to be misunderstood. Barth knew that well even though he wrote before the intensity of the present clamor. The very words used to characterize it from the Bible are *verboden* from the lecterns and pulpits of our churches. Ignorance of Christian things has allowed the establishment of a dictator.

Barth continues to assert:

But [order] exists, and everything else is null and void if its existence is ignored, if we refuse to recognize it as an element in

⁸⁷ Barth, Karl, Church Dogmatics III,4, pp.150-181

the divine command, if it is left to chance. If order does not prevail in the being and fellowship of man and woman - we refer to man and woman as such and in general, to the rule which is valid both in and outside love and marriage - the only alternative is disorder. All the misuse and misunderstanding to which the conception of order is liable must not prevent us from considering and asserting the aspect of reality to which it points. A precedes B, and B follows A. Order means succession. It means preceding and following. It means super- and sub-ordination. But when we say this we utter the very dangerous words which are unavoidable if we are to describe what is at issue in the being and fellowship of man and woman. Let us proceed at once to the very necessary explanation.⁸⁸

The explanation has indeed been missing because order is no longer taught or defended. The Fallen realm has impressed its definitions upon “super” and “sub-ordination” - the first to mean prestige and domination, and the second to mean servility and worthlessness. Those within the Redeemed Order must not accept either of these attitudes, nor these concepts as definitions for words which in God’s original plan meant no such thing. In the Redeemed Order which reestablishes God’s original plan, *first* means the service of authority, *second* means the service of enjoying the creativity and ecstasy of cooperating with that Holy authority. Our models again are the First and Second Persons of the Holy Trinity. Barth continues with his explanation,

When it is question of the true order which God the Creator has established, succession, and therefore precedence and following, super- and sub-ordination, does not mean any inner inequality between those who stand in this succession and are subject to this order. It does indeed reveal their inequality. But it does not do so without immediately confirming their equality. In so far as it demands subjection and obedience, it affects equally all whom it concerns. It does not confer any privilege or do any injustice. It lays a duty on all, but it also gives to all their right. It does not deny honour to any, but gives to each his honour.⁸⁹

Though our fallen world has impressed its upside-down values upon the roles of man and woman, we who attempt to live in the Redeemed Order must finally take reorientation to authority seriously, both those who serve the body of Christ in the role of authority, and those who serve the body of Christ in the role of obedience. One is not easier or better than the other when they are observed in the light of Christ.

Barth explains this as it affects the basic common denominators of authority and obedience, man and woman.

⁸⁸ Op.cit.

⁸⁹ Op.cit.

Thus man does not enjoy any privilege or advantage over woman, nor is he entitled to any kind of self-glorification, simply because in respect of order he is man, and therefore A. . . This order simply points him to the position which, if he is obedient, he can occupy only in humility, or materially only as he is ordered, related and directed to woman . . . The exploitation of this order by man, in consequence of which he exalts himself over woman, making himself her lord and master and humiliating and offending her so that she inevitably finds herself oppressed and injured has nothing whatever to do with divine order.⁹⁰

Though good priests by stating B before A are inadvertently planting suspicion about the partiality of order, equality before God is clear when St. Paul explains baptism to be exactly the same avenue of saving grace for man and woman, repeating that oft used and misused reference;

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. . . heirs according to the promise.⁹¹

Note he does not think stating order, that is first and second, needs correction to “female and male” in order to make their equality clear. Can this be communicated to those who have the same confused understanding about the meaning of order? Those who reverse this order are verifying their own devaluing of woman’s role by the address, ‘Sisters and brothers.’ It results in a back-of-the-hand to women who believe B to be their God-given role and fully worthy to A.

Jacques Maritain in the “The Peasant of the Garonne” put his finger on it;”

. . .when the (rational animal) begins to lose confidence not only in philosophic knowledge but in the spontaneous pre-philosophy which is for man like a gift of nature included in that indispensable equipment we call common sense . . . it means everyone is beginning to lose his head. . . It is not language that makes concepts, but concepts that make language.”⁹²

Women Teaching Women

In the prevalent climate of suspicion, it has been fairly impossible for men to teach these beautiful and true continuums of masculine and feminine - their meanings as signs,

⁹⁰ Op.cit,

⁹¹ Gal. 3:27-29

⁹² op.cit, p.14

and their holy origins. Since the Holy Father's letter, *Mulieris*, and the burgeoning interest in *Theology of the Body*, it should be less difficult for men without apology and dissembling to accept their roles of authority and governance with confidence that it is God's order they represent. It has been increasingly difficult to teach the God-centered values in a milieu which is thoroughly addicted to the opposing set of values, but this definitive stand by John Paul II should again open the way for the informed to do just that. By necessity, helping the faithful understand the greatness and importance of what is at stake may well, however, fall to women. Those waiting to be taught clearly and cogently about the meaning and role of sexuality are first of all women.

There is a great need for women to teach other women even as St. Paul tells us (Titus 2:3 is explained in Book II). Women who have glimpsed what is on the line, and who know in their hearts where the answer lies, have an enormous mission in the Church that can hardly be exaggerated in its importance. Proof, perhaps, of its origin in the Truth, in the eyes of many it will appear to be a small role, but the implications will percolate a vivifying understanding throughout the Church and will be attractive to those outside the Church who have the Virgin Mary already imprinted, perhaps without their consciousness, upon their souls.

A Final Sign of Envy?

A contribution to the emerging doctrine with the most interesting background is a paper written by Father Joseph Fessio SJ, peritus appointed by Pope John Paul II for the Synod on Laity. At the time, the turnabout at this Synod embarrassed the American delegation's agenda, which was to gain a new place for women at the altar, an opening to lead eventually to priesthood for women. In retrospect Fr. Fessio's paper, paralleling so much of the argument of this book, was the shield that turned away the importunate spear of feminism.

The source of all created being is the uncreated divine Trinity: one same God in three radically distinct persons. This foundation of all created reality and the foundation of the Catholic faith is a being in which are found both total and complete unity and

equal dignity in the most total and complete distinctiveness and diversity represented by the distinction of divine persons.⁹³

Sexual differentiation is manifested in what biologists call the reproductive system. And although this difference extends into every cell in the human body, it is expressed most obviously and visibly in the physical differentiation between men and women. But it would be a lapse into metaphysical dualism to think that these differences were merely physical or biological. By the principle of the incarnation, in which the invisible is intimately united with and expressive of the spiritual, these physiological differences are a manifestation of a mysterious but profound spiritual complementarity between men and women. . . it may be seen from the vantage point of the marital act, or by the reproductive act, as characterized by equal dignity and equally active participation, but diversity of role.⁹⁴

Mary, who is the symbol of all creation becomes. . .the symbol of the Church as Bride of Christ. God becomes man and specifically male, not arbitrarily, but because God has so created the real-symbolic world of men and women precisely to provide for himself a language in which he can speak to us.⁹⁵

In the arguments presented by the ordination-of-women party there is no recognition of the truth of these assertions that must be addressed before their voices can add anything to the debate. Nor do they grapple with the fact that woman as a priest is an anti- sign of the indifferentiation of the sexes, of monadic authority, competition and control, and therefore the elevation of a distorted masculine sign with a false devaluing of the feminine sign. This indifferentiation would have woman become the sign of something else - the destruction of the idea of singularity or diversity - a diversity that is an essential understanding of the principle which we observe within the marital relationship as initiative and response, or authority and obedience, which lies at the heart of things *ad intra* the Trinity. In the spiritual realm this envy is directly tied to the God-envy inspired by the usurping master, the evil one. She would epitomize mankind's turning in disgust away from the position that his creature-hood puts him, that of submission, a receptive servant who is then elevated by God to become the friend. She

⁹³ Fessio, S.J., Joseph, 'Reasons Against Women Acolytes and Lectors,' Synod on the Laity, II.A.

⁹⁴ Ibid II.D

⁹⁵ Ibid. II. E.

would be the sign of fallen Man's envy of the agent, the actor role in creation, and of his hatred of being the object. She would be a sign that rebellion had won out in the Church (Jesus promised hell would not prevail, but that does imply that it will *try* to prevail), and that the divine order of things designated for happiness is again overturned, but now, horror of horrors, among the redeemed – an end times Fall. Eve, not Mary, will be the sign in ascendancy. Woman then will be at the apex of her out-of-placeness, a sign not of Perfection, but of the other pole, the usurpation of Godhead by Man instigated by Satan. It brings to mind an enigmatic statement by Jesus in his apocalyptic prophecy, certainly not confined to the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in AD 70:

So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.⁹⁶

An unimaginable equivalent to this would be Jesus after receiving Baptism going into the desert for forty days of fasting and prayer only to succumb to the Tempter:

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me."⁹⁷

If Jesus, the Perfect expression of mankind had turned His face from God and worshipped Satan; if the woman, the expression of perfected mankind in the Redeemed Order, the monad of obedience to God in the basic human relationship of man and wife, were to fall for a temptation to take over the other "side" the sign of authority in the Church, perverting her symbolic meaning, we cannot conceive the results in the Body of Christ. With such confusion, how could Man ever image the Trinity as he is meant to image it? Who would model and make present to the world the obedient life of Man oriented only to God as he is meant to be?

⁹⁶ Matthew 24:15-17

⁹⁷ Matthew 4:8-10

CHAPTER V. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIFIDELES

Free, Confident, Responsible Action of God's People.

Certain rights and duties fundamental for the Christifideles are given to each individual in Baptism. For the hierarchical structure to function in the manner God intended, these rights and duties of the faithful are to be taken seriously. Just as a woman cannot be inert in her role, but exercises actively her rights and duties in her obedient position¹, so does the Christifideles Laici, in relationship to the spiritual authority of the Christifideles Clerici (who themselves as Christifideles must exercise these same rights and duties in their own place in the hierarchical order). These rights and duties hardly make of the obedient Christian a passive or powerless person: they demand a great deal of confidence in his equality with the hierarchy within the Body of the Church. Even as we have seen in the man and woman relationship, each lay Christian must have the inner strength to speak freely, surely but respectfully to the Christifideles Clerici.

The Laici in its prayer often acts as a guide to the formation in the Church of “sensus fidelium” and must be heard if the Clerici are to govern aright. It was this right and duty that John Henry Cardinal Newman made much of in On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine, which though received with some hesitancy and suspicion in his own time, was vindicated by Vatican II.

The overall rights and duties of the Christifideles are these:

1. The right and duty to observe, profess and defend the faith,
2. The right and duty to use the abundant spiritual goods of the Church,

¹ it is crucial to understand the word passivity” used psychologically about woman in the previous books not to be confused with inactivity; hers is a role that demands her full participation.

3. The right and duty to active participation in the liturgy,
4. The right and duty to active participation in the mission and apostolate of the Church,
5. The right of one's own form of spirituality in leading a life of holiness and the duty to lead that holy life in conformity with the teaching of the Church.
6. The right to freely exercise one's rite and the duty to do so in stability.
7. The right and duty to seek Christian Education and formation,
8. The right to investigate the sacred sciences and make known the results of study, and the duty of submission to the Magisterium of the Church in these investigations.
9. The right and duty to make known one's spiritual needs and to express one's opinion on matters concerning the spiritual good of the Church.
10. The right and duty to take initiative in certain situations and to employ personal charisms.
11. The right and duty to freely choose one's Christian State of Life.
12. The right and duty to order free Christian associations and assemblies to the ultimate good of the Church.
14. The right to one's good name and reputation as a fully incorporated Christian in the Church, and the duty to respect the reputation of others and avoid giving scandal.
15. The right to recourse for the protection of Christian rights and the duty to have recourse in certain instances and to abide by Ecclesiastical decisions properly and justly made.²

The revised Code of Canon Law expands the role of the laity, although this will never include celebrating Mass or hearing confessions, it does permit designated lay people to witness marriages, preside at funerals, and help other Catholics prepare to receive the sacraments if no priest is available. The new Code allows women to act as diocesan chancellors, judges on tribunals, and members of diocesan synods.

The Church also guarantees Catholics the right to defend all the rights granted to them as members of the Church. Canon 221 states:

² Kinney, op.cit.

The Christian faithful can legitimately vindicate and defend the rights which they enjoy in the Church before a competent ecclesiastical court in accord with the norm of law.

It should be noted that a foundation has been established to defend the rights of faithful Catholics in this day of flouting the teachings of the Church and the neglect of bishops when these abuses continue. In accord with the equality of Christifidelis two complementary roles, *clerici* and *laici*, the rights of the *laici* may be vindicated before ecclesiastical courts in Rome with the help of the St. Joseph Foundation³ which exists wholly to defend the rights of faithful Catholics by providing expert advice and assistance in canonical procedures necessary to vindicate those rights. When militant feminism or any other ‘ism’ (New Ageism) has twisted the life and worship of the local church, there is a right of the *laici* to have relief, and if the local bishop, as has happened, compounds the problem, the laity may appeal for help through this foundation.

A Classic Example

Though many men and woman live and have lived out these rights and duties, the classic example that comes to mind of their proper exercise is given by a woman, St. Catharine of Sienna.

St. Catharine ‘was very often in ecstasy, in constant communication with God, animated by the spirit of prophesy this great seer seemed to descend from a sort of Sinai to lash princes, to read a lesson to cardinals and to counsel popes.’⁴

Often used by feminists to model the assertive woman of the post Vatican II era, this woman actually can model what the Christifideles role is in the Church. Inspired by God to do so, she spoke as an equal to those in authority because she was. Yet, she also writes continually of her obedience and submission to those over her, and the necessity for all Christians to maintain submission to the Holy Father. She, a woman of verve, did not count this obedience to be a denigration of her gifts and abilities; she stands today honored as a Doctor of the Church.

Woman Helped by the Church to Exercise Her Rights and Duties

Is it necessary to reiterate that these rights and duties are given to each one in Baptism? As a member of the body of Christ, the woman has full rights and duties not different from any man’s. This, for any person of the Christifideles *Laici*, male or female, does not include the right or the duty to teach, preach or govern. By “teaching” is meant the kind of ecclesial teaching that is the realm of the Bishop alone. When she teaches catechesis, RCIA, seminars, or Bible classes, she

³ St. Joseph Foundation 11107 Wurzbach Suite 601B · San Antonio, Texas 78230-2570
Telephone: (210) 697-0717 · Fax: (210) 699-9439 See their webpage for important information

⁴ Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality II* op.cit., p.206

does not “teach” in the sense of promulgating doctrine. When using approved materials, she is only extending, as a servant of the Church, what has already been taught. For a woman, all she does, in carrying out these rights and duties, is under the headship of her husband or other designated authority (her priest); this, in order that the basic order of God’s perfection not be violated. If this order is violated, if the woman does not fulfill her rights and duties in obedience, the Church will not be edified by her and her soul will be endangered. “If you love me, obey . . .”

The Church, especially the headship of the Church, can help woman in several ways: first of all, by being secure in the sign and justice of ordained male headship and by affirming the meaning of the masculine in its origins. This is to reflect the principle as it is revealed in the Holy Trinity. The Church, especially the *Clerici* of the Church, must allow the Holy Spirit to form it, the godly masculine, ever more in agape love so that the *Laici*, the feminine of the Church, feels the care of true headship.

The woman also needs the headship of the Church to give moral and spiritual support for her role as wife and mother in the family. Pope John Paul II has already elevated true womanhood with *Mulieris Dignatatem*. Sound teaching and counseling in accord with orthodoxy, and adequate to the task, can only come from those imbued with Scripture and Church Tradition. Often she has been seriously undermined by the bishops who have looked away while blatant anti-woman propaganda has gained control of much of the teaching arm of the Church. The headship of the Church must take seriously how desperate her situation is, and why she is tempted to follow false leads in a milieu of deliberate confusion. She requires the constant protection of the Church against the evil one - often she feels the persons who could do so are too uncertain to defend her.

Standing alongside the Blessed Mother depicted in the vision of Revelation, Chapter 12, she encounters the serpent spewing floods of falsity after her everyday. His intent is to sweep away her witness that is so vital to the whole community of Man. The Church is meant to be her “wilderness place prepared by God” for protection from these intense propaganda onslaughts. Instead, during these early decades of the Twenty-first Century, those in authority seem too often to harbor and encourage the harrassement, or in their own confusion, turn away.⁵

The headship of the Church alone is able to make available to her a ministry where the healing promised through the Sacraments is freely and believingly given, with further prayer

⁵ Documented in detail by Donna Steichen in Ungodly Rage, Ignatius Press California 1990

offered for healing of painful memories, the healing of her sexuality, and the deliverance from the oppressions and depressions of the Enemy (Book III). Then, the Church must help woman by seeking her out, by teaching her aright (Saint Benedicta's (Edith Stein) Woman would be a place to start), by instructing her in her rights and duties within the Church, encouraging her to use her unique gifts within the fellowship, and by allowing her the elbow room to experiment within bounds so she may find her own place.

Most of all these days the woman needs affirmation of her very femininity, the appreciation of it, and the proclamation that she, in her submission and obedience, and in her fruitfulness, is a sign for all to emulate. She may need a prayer fellowship with other Christian women in order to grow in an understanding and commitment to the meaning of her femininity. An offering for women is Johnnette Benkovic's Women of Grace Foundational Study Series which has high promise.⁶

True Feminine: Pseudo Feminine

When we begin to see things falling into order; when wives to husbands, Christifideles Laici to Christifideles Clerici, begin to find, in their ob-positional roles, the happy union in the Holy Spirit, then the Bride will be approaching readiness. Jesus will be cleansing her in the power of his Body and Blood for his return. The whole description of St. John in Revelation of Holy Church, Jerusalem, descending from heaven as Bride should be read from chapter 21, here is a portion:

Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And in Spirit he carried me away to a high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. . .⁷

Jerusalem, used consistently through Scripture as the home place for the People of God, Yahweh's beloved spouse, and understood by Christians as the perfected Church, is in St. John's vision the portrait of the Bride-made-ready. To make her even more beautiful in the eyes of the faithful, he contrasts her to the sobering vision of her opposite. The ancient, evil city of Rome is described in a grotesque representation as the fallen woman. Those swept away by the rebellion in the world, which Jesus himself prophesied would culminate in woman's rebellion against her own

⁶ Servant Books 28 W.Liberty St., Cincinnati, OH45202, www.AmericanCatholic.org 2004

⁷ Revelation 21 :9-21

nature, are brought before our imaginations in an image of what total disobedience to God is, the pseudo-feminine:

I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet (the colors of royal authority) and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; and on her forehead was written a name of mystery, "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of the earth's abominations." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.⁸

So the woman, potent sign on earth of either salvation or damnation, must be aware of the stake in her daily choice. What of all of God's signs is so crucially bound, for the sake of humanity, to hold its integrity as woman is? In experiencing a rise in consciousness, the woman can intelligently and willfully choose to live out her meaning before God and Man. She waits to be recognized as a whole woman, holy and wholly given to her call. That "call" is a mission to be *sent under*. To the world it appears like foolishness and weakness - like the Cross, but to the Church it is discerned as the way of Jesus. Her time is now. Now God waits for her to answer more deeply, more profoundly than ever before, because he has brought her to a maturity which can phrase the question, seek out the answer, assimilate it, and then act.

The release by the Church of her children into adulthood is timed to allow her this maturity. Restlessness is simply one symptom of the great need of woman to exercise her maturity. She now has possession of herself in the total freedom to do with herself what she chooses - there certainly is a clamor of competing voices vying for her attention. The answer to her restlessness, however, must be a godly answer, a fitting answer to the furtherance of Salvation History. She needs help in discerning the two forces, the one that pulls to destruction, and the one that pulls toward construction of the Kingdom. A woman would not deliberately choose evil - though viewing radical feminists on the march one wonders. We recall all the "good" reasons Eve had at her fingertips for her disobedience. The godly alternative at this point often seems vague to her. It is so totally gospel it takes Christian minds, trained, disciplined, and immersed in its particular world view to understand the choice toward God. After the fiat, the full life of the Holy Spirit is given to be lived out. To be wholehearted in this choice, the woman needs to gain understanding. This is the urgent task of the teaching authority of the Church today.

⁸ Revelation 17:3ff parenthesis added

CHAPTER VI MARY: MOTHER AND MODEL FOR CHRISTIFIDELIS

. . .the mystery of Mary and the mystery of the Church penetrate and illuminate each other. . .that neither can be correctly situated and explained without the other. . .

The Fathers . . .realize that Mary is the type of the Church, not as a mere “foreshadowing” . . . but as an archetype, that is, as the perfectly, unsurpassably realized “Idea” of the Church. Accordingly, the Fathers see Mary as the only one person who, without losing her own personal action within the communion of the saints, is therein perfectly adequate to, and coincident with, the action of the Church as Christ’s “helpmate”.¹

Through Mary all the faithful members of the Church body are born. This statement has been well supported through the three books preceding this one. The stance, therefore, of every individual, male and female, in that Bride-Body is summarized, epitomized in her. Though she has a delegated realm over which she rules as Mother, from her we humans gain our understanding of what Christian obedience and dependence really are. We are not those who have been frustrated in our attempt to wield power and so have forcibly succumbed to submission, as the enemies of Christ in the intellectual world have assumed. To live in the way she lived, in response to God, is to be functioning as a vital, whole woman or man, with every faculty of whole humanity called upon. Strength, resourcefulness, assertiveness and decisiveness are exercised for obedience to the Will of God and life in his Kingdom. The results are abundance of fruitfulness and suffering as well. Suffering is not without meaning, but is offered for the good of all.

The Model of Obedience

. . .the Church learns concretely what she is and is meant to be by looking at Mary. Mary is her mirror . . .²

¹ Von Balthasar, *op.cit.*, p. 141-142

² Ratzinger , *op.cit.* p. 66

It is clear why the Church has encouraged the faithful to approach Jesus and the Father through Mary. As her children we find true humility. To approach through Mary means to pray in the attitude - the wholesomeness, confidence, purity and the faith of Mary. Why do this when we can go straight to the Father? Because, the Father is most attentive to the one he has made accepted from her conception, and the one he has given to all for Mother. (Book II) It is her pure acceptability which he offers to all his people and which alone pleases him. How foolish to go to him in our stained garments when he offers us the glowing white wedding garment which is Mary, first of the Beloved. This may be the true interpretation of that strange figure given by Jesus in his parable of the guests invited to a wedding feast.

But when the King came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."³

To refuse the gift of the Father to be rightly clothed and made acceptable by his action, choosing instead to wear our own unseemliness, is an act of foolish pride. To go to the Father in Mary does nothing to idolize her; and it is not miraculous. Rather we express our desire to come to the Father looking like her - to have wrapped ourselves in the gift of her merits. We strongly desire those merits to be ours and the merits of all who are coming to perfection. That is what it means to come to the Father through Mary.

We can come to him with pure heart and soul only through Mary because she is that. To share in his glory is to come to him clean. A woman wants to be clean to go to her man, she perfumes and cleans her hair for her husband. We want to come to the Lord this way. Mary is pure and holy and full of grace. She will bring us before the Lord with boldness.⁴

Helper and Intercessor for All, but Especially for Woman

Though Mary is the model for all men and women, in our time acidic toward real femininity, women especially need her motherly help and intercession. Because a woman is connaturally identified with her, when unimpeded by mistaken idea, Mary's graces will become hers as she grows spiritually.

³ Matthew 22:11-14

⁴ Lukosh, Garnette, RIP mother of twelve, from a personal, unpublished letter.

That is why an intimate bond exists between Mary and ourselves. She loves us, she knows us, she exerts herself to bring each one of us into the closest possible relationship with the Lord . . . Of course, this is true for all humanity, but most particularly for women. The maternity and bridehood of the Virgo-Mater is continued. . . in their maternity, natural and super-natural, and in their life as brides of Christ. . . as the heart sustains the other organs of woman's body and makes it possible for them to function, so we may genuinely believe there is. . . a collaboration of Mary with every woman wherever that woman is fulfilling her . . . (and) a collaboration of Mary with us in all works of the Church. . . Those women who wish to fulfill their feminine vocations . . . will most surely succeed in their goals if they not only keep the . . . Virgo-Mater before their eyes and strive to form themselves according to her image, . . . also entrust themselves to her guidance and place themselves completely under her care. She herself can form in her own image those who belong to her.⁵

The woman who sincerely seeks to live in the Redeemed Order finds Mary, her Mother in Christ and her sister in the Lord, a great channel of strength and love. She goes to Mary as her intercessor with the Father. Mother Mary's heart is open to woman's plight because she knows first hand the tactics of Satan against her. Therefore, her intercession for women is more powerful than we can imagine. So often misunderstood, she yearns for her children to apprehend her motherhood and its source in God so that she may be the instrument to reestablish a holy people who are God's holy family.

The core of Marian devotion will be correct if, in whatever form, it is an entry into, and a training in, the right understanding of all the articles of faith.⁶

Mary and the Fathers of the Church

The Holy Spirit from earliest times has guided the Church to present Mary to her children as their human model and intercessor. The Spirit has raised in the devout an ardent affection for and attachment to Mary in every part of the world as the gospel has been preached. This is not by the plan or propaganda of any human agent.

The theology of the feminine - either Mary or Eve - and its relationship to the obedience or disobedience of the faithful, has been found very early from east to west, from north to south, in Christianity. We may readily believe that the woman of every century and clime has found her true femininity manifested in Mary. Just as it came from the hearts of the faithful who early

⁵ Stein, op. cit. p. 234

⁶ von Balthasar, op.cit. p.116

found the wedding garment to be Mary, the Fathers of the Church expressed their devotion to her. Note in the following excerpts the variety of these locations and cultures, and the extraordinary agreement of theological thought that can only be attributed to the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and to direct apostolic influence in its development. This makes the truth of Mary and her place a prime universal belief among the doctrines of the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church.

It is of momentous significance that with the schism of the Sixteenth Century, the place of Mary, and the love of her, was slowly dissolved in the minds of the adherents in the reformation churches. Mary brings forth children to one body only, the Body of Christ. It is a mark of those churches to this day that Mary is treated with suspicion, or at least, neglect. Rightly so from their point of view, because if she were honored the schism would heal. As a result those churches are unrelievedly masculine⁷, even though in our day and age they ordain women. The women who are ordained aspire to the masculine role which they do not feminize, nor is there any illusion of Mary there, because that role is Christ's alone. She never did, nor would she have stood where they attempt to stand. The women in these churches can only be confused and misled about their meaning in God's economy. From here comes the upside-down family and the disintegration of covenantal truth that disfigures society.

John Henry Cardinal Newman went to the sources and gathered them for us in his book, The New Eve.⁸ He points out that the belief about Mary's deeper significance to the Christian life grew up in three geographical areas of the Church simultaneously and spontaneously. In each of these abbreviated but pregnant quotes the esteemed role of Mary with insight into the plan of God for her and for her sex is built solidly into the very foundation of the Church from which it cannot be extracted except upon the collapse of everything we know to be Christian and Church. For this book, Woman and the Church, these writers, so early inspired by the Spirit, teach all the essentials.

Very early in Palestine (120-165AD) St. Justin wrote,

We know that before all creatures, he came forth from the Father by his power and will and he became man, being born of the Virgin, so that disobedience caused by the serpent might be brought to an end the same way that it was

⁷ Karl Stern's assessment

⁸ Newman, John Henry Cardinal, The New Eve, (Westminster 1952)

started. For Eve, till then an uncorrupt virgin, conceived the word spoken by the serpent and gave birth to disobedience and death; but the Virgin Mary, being filled with faith and joy (when the angel brought the good news to her, telling her that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and that therefore the Holy One that was born of her was the Son of God), answered, "Be it to me according to Thy Word."⁹

St. Irenaeus (taught by St. Polycarp who sat at the feet of St. John), influential in Asia and Gaul from 120-200AD, wrote concerning her:

It is fitting then, that we should find the Virgin Mary obedient in saying, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word!' Eve was disobedient while she was still a virgin. She having Adam as her husband, but herself still a virgin . . . was disobedient, and brought death upon herself and upon the whole human race.

Similarly, Mary, bearing the predestined man, yet still being a virgin, was obedient and so became the cause of salvation both for herself and for the whole human race. . . For this reason the Lord said that the first shall be last and the last first. . . Thus the knot formed by Eve's disobedience was untied by the obedience of Mary. What the Virgin Eve tied through her unbelief, the Virgin Mary untied through faith.¹⁰

Tertullian writing from 160-240 AD, influenced by and influencing Christians of Africa and Rome, wrote about Mary:

God won back his image and likeness, which the devil had seized, by an action which rivaled the devils. The word which established death found its way into Eve while she was still a virgin. Similarly the Word of God which established and built up life entered also into a Virgin. But this was done so that what the female sex sent to destruction should be brought back to salvation by the same sex. Eve believed the serpent; Mary believed Gabriel. The fault which the one committed by her unbelief, the other by her belief blotted out.¹¹

Newman notes that this doctrine grew up as "received doctrine" in the writers' respective times and places, and that the writers were after all witnesses of facts and beliefs of the Christian communities. "Moreover, the coincidence of doctrine which they exhibit and again, the antithetical completeness of it, how that they themselves did not originate it," speak of a

⁹ Ibid. p.14

¹⁰ Ibid p.15

¹¹ Ibid p.15 Tertullian later was swept into heresy by the persuasions of two women whom they inspired and bolstered into error, and all of whom refused submission to their bishops. Thus the second great heresy was introduced into the Church, the Montanist, a "Holy Spirit" movement gone awry because of the disobedience of women.

supernatural, Spirit-dictated origin. Before 200AD these beliefs were found over a wide area. It is necessary to note the proximity to apostolic times. It seems very likely, therefore, that these beliefs originated among the faithful as “the *sensus fidelium*” which was well based in apostolic preaching. St. Justin was very close to the school of St. John, (we recall the close association of John with the Blessed Virgin Mary). Newman continues:

Only suppose there were so early and broad a testimony to the effect that Our Lord was mere man, the son of Joseph; should we be able to insist upon the faith of the Holy Trinity as necessary to salvation?¹²

At this early time there was no consistory of elders governing the local churches, and each local congregation was not an independent church. The Universal Church was thriving with priests in charge of congregations. And such was the concordant verdict of the undivided Church as the centuries proceed. Among the spokesmen: St. Cyril in the 4th Century, St. Ephrem Syrus, also the 4th Century, St. Epiphanius in the 5th Century, the latter who writes:

Eve became the cause of man’s death . . .but Mary the cause of his life, life eliminating the death which came from the woman. That Life is none other than he who, through the woman, has become our life.¹³

St. Jerome in the 5th Century established the proverb, ‘Death by Eve, life by Mary,’ also in contemplating Mary’s free gift of herself as model of the virginal life, he writes, “High wage is due something which is not given under command but offered.”¹⁴ St. Augustine in the 5th Century writes movingly of his contemplation on woman’s role in our redemption - that both Jesus and Mary were necessary for our liberation from the devil:

It is a great symbol that just as it was through a woman death was born to us, so through a woman life was born to us, so that either sex, male and female, the baffled devil could be tormented, rejoicing as he was over his deceiving both of them. Indeed his punishment would have been slight if both sexes had been liberated in us without our being liberated by both.¹⁵

Writes the Bishop of Ravenna, the golden orator, St. Peter Chrysologus, one of the chief authorities at the Fourth General Council (The Third had declared Mary to be *Theotokos* - the God Bearer):

Heaven feels awe of God, angels tremble at him, neither a creature nor all nature can contain him. Yet one girl so takes him, receives him and entertains him, as a guest within her heart that she asks for and obtains,

¹² Ibid, p.18

¹³ Ibid, p.19

¹⁴ Ibid, p.19

¹⁵ Ibid, p.20

in payment for her home and her womb, peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, a heavenly parentage in place of an earthly, and the union of God himself with human flesh.¹⁶

In the 6th Century St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe, in Africa writes with great wisdom and insight into the meaning of woman and Mary's help "to all women who fly to her:"

Come, ye virgins to a virgin;
 Come, all who conceive, to one who conceived;
 Come, all in labour, to one who was in labour;
 Come mothers to a mother;
 Come all who suckle, to one who suckled;
 Come young girls, to a young girl.
 For the Virgin Mary has taken upon herself in Our Lord
 Jesus Christ, all these sides of our nature for this reason -
 so that she can help all women who fly to her. By preserving her
 virginity, she, the New Eve, can restore the whole race of women ...,
 just as the man Jesus Christ, the new Adam, has restored the whole
 race of men.

In sanctity Mary holds the office in the Redeemed Order that Eve held in the Original Order. Eve who was innocent, sinless, and had a heavenly gift of grace, the divine principle of the Spirit, was in a state of integrity. Was Mary less endowed than Eve? She who was to cooperate for the world's redemption? Why then do some consider it rash to say that Mary was filled with indwelling moral grace and was born free of original sin? Thus the angel's salutation "full of grace." Newman commenting on these beautiful early doctrinal statements of the Fathers, carries them on logically in words that should be at hand for everyone:

Undoubtedly this is the right one (the right form of address rather than "favored one" of many translations), as soon as we resist the common Protestant assumption that grace is a mere external approbation or acceptance, answering the word "favour," whereas, it is as the Father's teach, a real inward condition or superadded quality of soul.

If Eve had this supernatural inward gift given her from the first moment of her personal existence, is it possible to deny that Mary too had this gift from the very first moment of her personal existence? This is the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. It simply means that together with the nature inherited from her parents, her own nature, she had a superadded fullness of grace . . . from the first moment of her existence. Catholic wise, original sin (the sin incurred by the Fall) cannot be called sin, in the mere ordinary sense of the word "sin;" it is a term denoting Adam's sin as transferred to us, to the state to which Adam's

¹⁶ Ibid, p.20

sin reduces his children; but by Protestants it seems to be understood as sin, in much the same sense as actual sin. We, with the Fathers, think of it as something negative, Protestants as something positive.

Protestants hold that it is a disease, a radical change of nature, active poison corrupting the soul, infecting its primary elements, and disorganizing it; and they fancy that we ascribe a different nature from that of her parents, and from that of fallen Adam.

We hold nothing of the kind; we consider that in Adam she died, as did others, that was included together with the whole race in Adam's sentence, that she incurred his debt, as we do; but that for the sake of him who was to redeem her and us upon the Cross, to her the debt was remitted by anticipation, on her the sentence was not carried out, except indeed as regards her natural death, for she died when her time came, as did the others. All this we teach, but we deny she had original sin; for by original sin we mean, as I have already said, something negative.

Why do not the sacred writers mention Our Lady's greatness? I answer, she was, or may have been alive when the Apostles and Evangelists wrote; there was just one book of Scripture certainly written after her death, and that book does canonize and crown her.

If this be so, it really is the Blessed Virgin whom Scripture represents as clothed with the sun, crowned with the stars of heaven, and with the moon as her footstool, what height of glory may not be attributed to her? And what are we to say to those who, through ignorance, run counter to the voice of Scripture, to the testimony of the Fathers, to the traditions of East and West and act contemptuously toward he whom the Lord delighteth to honour?¹⁷

Is it clear that the one word that sums up and brings together all the threads of this writing - all four books, is the name of Mary? For that reason she is woven into it from beginning to end, often in the hiddenness to which she is accustomed, rather than explicitness which she flees. She only acquiesces to be in the light because of the need she sees in her sisters and her daughters, those women who grope for the meaning to their lives.

When we consider the full implication of the feminine in the Church we must refer to Mary. She was the daughter of the eternal God, her Father. She was the spouse of the Holy Spirit, who in turn made her to be the Mother of God the Son. A woman from among us, she is also the sister of the Lord. We each of us individually and together as mankind are called into

¹⁷ Ibid, Ps. 21-33. More than this condensation of Newman's book must be read for full appreciation. But no manual such as this would be complete without a splash of these early Fathers and their understanding of the role of Mary in the Church.

living out each of these relationships. If we love him and obey the will of God, Jesus said, we are his mother, his brother and sister.¹⁸

It is then with an eye that is single that we observe Jesus and Mary, applying what we see, in the light of the Spirit, to man and woman in our own disturbed time. Speaking of these times, never could it be imagined that Mary would appear in locutions and visions to so many people in so many diverse places all over the world as she seems to be doing in the late years of the Twentieth Century and early Twenty-first. What the meaning of so many apparitions is can only be guessed as Christianity passes its 2000th birthday. St. Louis deMontford, an apostle of Marian devotion of the 18th Century prophesied, as we will see in the next chapter, that there would be a Marian Age before the Second Coming of Christ. Is the Holy Father in his encyclical Dominum et Vivificantem suggesting something about Mary and the end of the age when he writes:

In the time leading up to the third millennium after Christ, while “the Spirit and the bride say to the Lord Jesus: Come!” this prayer of theirs is filled, as always, with an eschatological significance which is also destined to give fullness of meaning to the celebration of the great jubilee. It is a prayer concerned with the salvific destinies toward which the Holy Spirit by his action opens hearts throughout the history of man on earth. But at the same time this prayer is directed toward a precise moment of history which highlights the “fullness of time” marked by the year 2000. The church wishes to prepare for this jubilee in the Holy Spirit, just as the Virgin of Nazareth in whom the Word was made flesh was prepared by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

¹⁸ Matthew 12:48-50

¹⁹ op.cit. The Holy Spirit in the Church and the World, 3.6.66

CHAPTER VII THE MARIAN AGE

(Mary) is the only human person who completely fulfilled God's plan on earth, and whose being and life perfectly corresponded to the idea that God wished to realize in her, so that she could truly say of herself to St. Bernadette: "I am the Immaculate Conception!" For in her was God's conception realized immaculately!¹

Woman at the Crossroads

Standing at the crux of the modern dilemma, woman must choose, and on the basis of that choice the separation of woman from woman will be as dramatic as the depiction of Jesus' parable of separation of sheep and goats. But in those lives where knowingly or unknowingly, the choice is toward Mary, toward obedience and its fruitfulness, a full ecumenism is being worked out by the Holy Spirit. Where the choice is away from Mary, by either Christians or non-Christians², the unity of the Spirit cannot be given. Ecumenism will engulf us as a wave of submission when all its implications are accepted, for unity cannot come without submission of individual wills, just as unity between God and Man cannot come on some egalitarian basis. When women, even in ignorance, turn to Mary and all she is, though they would not even know to call her by name, they are bringing their husbands and children into the one Church where they will by grace learn to know her.

Mary has not brought forth and could not bring forth the children of Christ otherwise than in one faith and one life; for "Is Christ divided?" We are all bound therefore to live the life of Christ in order that in one and the same body "we may bring forth fruit for God." It is necessary therefore that his same Mother, who has received from God the gift of giving birth to a holy progeny, should again bring forth to Christ as many as have been cut off by unhappy circumstances from this most holy unity. This is undoubtedly a result which she herself most ardently desires on account of her most welcome garland of prayer which we offer her, she will invoke the help of the "vivifying Spirit" more abundantly for them.

As is the Mother of Christ, she is also the Mother of all Christians, since on Calvary, amid the unspeakable sufferings of

¹ Boylan, This Tremendous Love, op.cit.,p.328

² Perhaps there is hope here for Muslims to come to Christ because Mary is honored by Islam.

the Redeemer, she brought them forth. There stood by the cross, Mary his Mother who moved by an immense love for us, and in order to receive us as sons, herself offered her Son to the divine justice, dying in her heart with Him, pierced by a sword of sorrow.³

Many Christians of the Protestant denominations who experienced the charismatic movement of the 60's and '70s found themselves drawn to desire unity with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. In many instances the women learned Biblical submission to their husbands in these groups, and without any intention of doing so, found that obedience flowered in the joint desire of husband and wife for the unity and headship of the Catholic Church.

Mary the Only Entrance to One Church

The truth of Mary is being discovered today by those who see through feminism's falsity. The truth of her must be discovered; if she is hidden even in the gospels, it is for our sakes. The Holy Spirit reveals her; it is significant that only the Eastern and Roman Catholic Churches hold her so central to their doctrine. Without Mary there is no comprehension of the True Church.

The Council has confirmed that, unless one looks to the Mother of God, it is impossible to understand the mystery of the Church, her reality, her essential vitality. Indirectly we find here a reference to the biblical exemplar of the "woman" which is already clearly outlined in the description of the beginning (cf. Gen 3:15) and which proceeds from creation, through sin to the Redemption. In this way there is a confirmation of the profound union between what is human and what constitutes the divine economy of salvation in human history. The Bible convinces us of the fact that one can have no adequate hermeneutic of man, or of what is "human," without appropriate reference to what is "Feminine." There is an analogy in God's salvific economy: if we wish to understand it fully in relation to the whole of human history, we cannot omit, in the perspective of our faith, the mystery of "woman": virgin-mother-spouse.⁴

She is the Virgin mother, whose obedient heart calls to those inclined to ultimate obedience - which is the mark of true femininity. The rebellious neither understand her nor find a place for her in their lives. Mary will be revealed to those who have the right heart condition,

³ Leo XIII ,Pope, *Adiutricem populi*, 1895 (Boylan, op.cit.,p.331)

⁴ op. cit., Mulieris VI. 22.

and she will lead them to the One Church. It is true that to be a child of the Church, one is first a child of Mary. To be in Christ, one is first in Mary, his mother and our mother.

Indeed she is clearly the mother of the members of Christ since she cooperated out of love so that there might be born in the Church the faithful, who are members of Christ their head. Therefore she is also hailed as the preeminent and altogether singular member of the Church, and as the Church's model an excellent exemplar in faith and charity. Taught by the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church honors her with filial affection and piety as a most beloved Mother.⁵

In the most holy Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle (cf Eph 5:27_ . . . Devotedly meditating on her and contemplating her in the light of the Word made man, the Church with reverence enters more intimately into the supreme mystery of the Incarnation and becomes ever increasingly like her spouse. Mary unites and mirrors within herself the central truths of that faith.⁶

In the 18th Century, Saint Louis deMontfort with intense vision and devotion to the Blessed Virgin prophesied that the last age would be a Marian age. It is fitting to place this change in consciousness of woman in our times, amoral in itself, against this prophecy. Then we see that the deepening of woman's self-knowledge is to give her the Spirit-power and the will to live out the obedient life of Mary. The wrenching dislocation of the feminine in society is (we might say, "a plot" of the enemy) to keep this truth from being discovered. A rift is therefore splitting women into two persuasions. These are the birth pangs of a new understanding in the Church which heralds the fulfillment of de Montfort's vision.

Jesus' Last Prophecy

Though in one of the earlier books in this series the last prophecy of Jesus figured importantly, it finds its full explicatory place here at the end. Jesus prophesies the role that women will have in the End Time. The scene is acutely, painfully recalled. Jesus staggers down the Way of the Cross unrecognizable from the ferocious flogging, the blood streaming from his pierced forehead, and the smashed face caused by the falls on the stone street. All along the way, he is met by taunts and mocking laughter except for one small group of women who clinging to each other wail out their grief for him. Swimming into his bleared vision, Our Dear Lord gathers himself to speak his last prophetic words to them.

⁵ Lumen Gentium I.53

⁶ Ibid I.65

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck! Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us.' And to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?⁷

In our previous presentation of his agonizing last walk, we focused on Jesus meditating on the prophecy of Hosea which is evident. But the more important truth emerging here is the forecast he makes that women will, as a sign of the end time, deny the very function of their female bodies. The women of Jerusalem, the fruitful women of God, to whom he spoke would find those words incomprehensible. St. Luke himself may not have grasped them. From the beginning, women knew the fruit of their bodies to be the very sign of God's love. No woman was content being barren. They prayed, they begged, and many times God answered with a beloved child. History was dotted with stories of God's stooping to answer the prayer of the barren. What day would it be if women ever lauded barrenness, blocked the womb, and used breasts for mere enticements? "Ahh," come the slurred words from the broken mouth, "it will be portent of cataclysmic times, the end times. Rebellion against God brings me to death on a Cross, but this is just the beginning – the wood is still green. In time to come the rebellion will reach down to the very common denominator of obedience, the woman, and then the wood will be dry. What a conflagration it will be – "Mountains fall on us!"

Is there a sign of our times more in keeping with this prophesy than contraception and abortion, with sex flaunted for empty profligacy? Will this sign be countered by a revival in the Church of the true Marian woman of obedience and fruitfulness? It must be.

The Last Age Before Christ's Return

An Age of Mary would necessarily precede the return of Christ. The Church waiting for the consummation with her Bridegroom, will be epitomized by the Blessed Virgin - yielded love, expectancy, attentiveness - a human being wholly willing and receptive.

The Son places Mary in the care of one of the apostles and thus inserts her into the apostolic Church. In so doing, he gives the Church her center or apex: an inimitable, yet ever-to-be-striven-for embodiment of the new community's faith, a spotless, unrestricted Yes to the whole of God's plan for the salvation of the world. In the center and apex, the Church is the bride

⁷ Luke 23:27f

“without spot or wrinkle”, the immaculate, as Paul expressly calls her (Eph 5:27), not only in the eternity to come, but already now.⁸

This Marian Age begins in the hearts of the women of the Christifideles. Many have a devotion to her that is ever more interiorized. This interior acceptance of the Mary life is communicated to family and husband, and then to the whole community by total self-giving. It lies behind what St. John records that the apostle John, Jesus’ beloved disciple, when given Mary as Mother, “took her into his home.” This implies a deep heart acceptance. He later writes in Revelation that he is one of those children⁹ of hers whom the dragon makes war upon - “her offspring who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.”¹⁰

Preparing for the year 2000, Pope John Paul II wrote his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* to usher in the advent of the new millennium appropriately with a Marian season.

In contemplating this, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger wrote about the “sign of woman.” This writing has been an attempt from the beginning to enter the realm of the “sign of woman.” To explicate what that sign has been from the beginning in Eden, through the Old Testament, and its fulfillment with Mary and The Church has been our hope.

. . .the Marian year signals the Pope’s intention to present the “sign of woman” in this hour of history as the essential “sign of the times”. It is on the path shown by this sign that we follow the trail of hope toward Christ, who guides the ways of history through this sign that points the way.¹¹

As yeast in the lump of dough, slowly but irrevocably, the Marian Age has begun, the last age, the age before the return of Jesus Christ in history. No wonder we see such rage in a last fitful attempt of Satan to subvert the inevitable. One sees the Church, an oasis in a dying world, full of people who are Mary’s children, “those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus,” as St. John defined them.

Perhaps the most prescient of the saints in seeing Mary’s role in the last times is St. Louis Marie de Montfort. In True Devotion to Mary he wrote powerfully about the necessity of all

⁸ von Balthasar, op.cit., p.110

⁹ Revelation 1:2,

¹⁰ Revelation 12:17

¹¹ Ratzinger, op.cit., 53

men to have devotion to Mary in order to work out the salvation of their souls. He described the latter times with these descriptions:

In these latter times Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, power and grace: *in mercy* to bring back and welcome lovingly the poor sinners and wanderers who are to be converted and return to the Catholic Church; *in power* to combat the enemies of God who will rise up menacingly to seduce and crush by promises and threats all those who oppose them; finally, she must shine forth *in grace* to inspire and support the valiant soldiers and loyal servants of Jesus Christ who are fighting for his cause.¹²

Pope Francis promoted the first step of mercy¹³, St. Louis goes further adding power and grace so those returning to the combat will be like soldiers, bringing into focus how it will be with those who love Mary, those who are the pure Church, the true disciples of Jesus Christ:

. . .imitating his poverty, his humility, his contempt for the world and his love. . .they will have the two-edged sword of the Word of God in their mouths and the blood-stained standard of the Cross on their shoulders. They will carry the crucifix in their right hand and the rosary in their left, and the holy names of Jesus and Mary on their heart . . .But when and how will this come about? Only God knows . . . ‘I have waited and waited.’”

We are waiting and waiting. “Come Lord Jesus!” Begin the banquet feast of the King with your Bride! With eunuch-like concern for the wishes of the King, the hierarchy, mere part of the Bride themselves, will turn over the charge of the immaculate Bride to her Lover and Husband.¹⁴

And then, the King cometh, awaiting his Bride’s greeting. Your divine throne endures forever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity. . Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father’s house; and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your Lord, bow to him . . . The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes; in many colored robes she is led to the king, with virgin companions, her escort, in her train. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.¹⁵

¹² St. Louis de Montfort, God Alone, p. 304 (Montfort Publications, Bayshore NY 1987) From True Devotion to Mary

¹³ Misericordia et misera 2016 Apostolic letter, Pope Francis

¹⁴ Celibacy for the hierarchy seems an important sign of the right ordering of the Christifideles Clerici, because it is not they who fructify the body, they do not initiate the Spirit life, but they are merely servants of the King whose Bride they prepare.

¹⁵ Psalm 45:6-15

CONCLUSION

“What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it.” With this quote from *That Hideous Strength* used several times in these four books, C.S. Lewis was just stating the truth about Jesus. He comes in all of His Godhead to be Bridegroom to the Church, His Bride. The Church has always known in her heart that woman is analogous to her own being in three dimensions. Just like her prototype, Mary, she is the daughter of God, and the spouse of God, and in bringing Christ to the world, the mother of God. She is virgin and mother, no human agency accounts for her procreation of the children of God, the Father. As Godhead cannot be feminine in relation to her in any way, she cannot be masculine in her relationship with Him, and such attempt to reverse the meaning of things would recreate the Fall.¹

This same truth echoes throughout the *Christifideles*, the body of the faithful in Christ, and the same symbolism for that truth continues. *Christifideles* has one common existence with two poles. Like the Triune Unity one existence is found in two roles, Laici and Clerici, united by the Holy Spirit. The Laici are governed by the Clerici, and have a feminine to masculine relationship. The Clerici hold the governing role of the headship of Christ for the visible body. *Christifideles* Clerici exercises the authority principle. *Christifideles* Laici, exercises the feminine principle at work among the people of God in living out the conclusion in the Christian community that male and female are made in the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. When a submissive heart that trusts in God is descriptive of the Laici, and Godly authority held in humility and service by the Clerici, a union in the Holy Spirit brings great fruitfulness to the Body, and joy to each participant.

As a sign of the authority side of things in Perfection, the agency given to the male, the Clerici maintains the biological sign appropriate to its role. As celibate males the Clerici follow in Christ's footsteps, bringing to the cognizance of the world (albeit unconscious) that all fruition among the Redeemed is God's, no earthly agent is anything

¹ Changes in gender language may, overall, weaken the continuance of Truth.

but a eunuch who has temporary custody of the Bride, preparing her for the return of the King. Such a sign has a power in the witness of celibacy, which is hardly optional in a priesthood of the highest order. It witnesses not only to personal devotion and total dedication, but also to the return of God in history.

The choice for woman is made clearer by the anti-sign of feminism. By clearing away hypocrisy and unreasoned continuance of mere form and custom, Christian woman's choice of the life of the Cross allows the Spirit to work effectively to leaven the whole lump. Such leaven ushers in the Marian Age for the Church. As the Church is leavened by the obedient woman, St. Louis deMontfort's prophecy of such an age shall come to be. That the Marian Age follows the Age of Spirit repeats the historical sequence of the Spirit's overshadowing Mary and the conceiving of Jesus. Likewise a Marian age will be the last before the return of Christ and the culmination of Salvation History. For through the Marian Age the Bride will reach that perfection of spirit, that holiness of obedience that the process of Salvation was meant to eventuate.

The culmination of history shall be as the Church has always known, when she shall be embraced eternally by her Maker, her Husband. Come, Lord Jesus!

Thanks to the living power of the divine Spirit, the paradise
belonging to the beginning of time will break out once more in
the glory of the eschatological new creation.²

In ecstatic union with Him she shall coexist eternally. The marriage shall be consummated and the fruits shall be to God's glory and Perfected Man's eternal good. The Church is wooed and won; surrendered to her Lover, she receives Him gladly. In the fullness of their eternal union, the past is healed; the future no longer exits because it is held in the present- Eternity. Praise to the Eternal Three-In-One!

THE END

2 Robert Koch, Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, op.cit., p.882