

SUMMARY

The gender or genderlessness Of incarnated Christ

By Constantinos Yokarinis

One of the most controversial issues during the past two decades in the Christian Church is the priesthood of women. The Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church are strongly opposed to the idea of ordaining women. However, both are now facing this modern challenge under the pressures of a changing world which is against their Tradition. Although both of them are not backing off from their long held views, which contribute to the rejection of women from the ordained ministries, they are approaching the issue from different theological perspectives for several reasons.

The allowance by the Church for woman to be ordained has become over time a significant issue within the Orthodoxy itself. This is due to the indirect influence of the other churches, but also to the combined effects of the profoundly changing place of women in modern society. The priesthood of women was examined extensively in my special theological research fifteen years ago¹.

The present research *"The genderless or sex of the Incarnated Christ"* is a theological contribution in the effort of the Church to overcome convictions, even prejudices, which can cause misunderstandings on the basic principles of Her Tradition. The Church is constantly being confronted with challenges from the world and if it is to show itself in its eternal youthfulness it must respond to the signs of the times. Of course this does not mean bending under pressure from the world, but rather, with the help of the Holy Spirit - thus in the tradition of the church - having serious profound and creative answers corresponding to the new realities of the human race on its way towards the kingdom of God, which is present since the incarnation of Son of God.

In examining the matter over the time, I have had access to both ecclesiastical and external testimony in order to establish the manner in which the consciousness of the Church congregation is shaped on the question of the necessity or importance of a priest's gender. I also attempt to determine the reasons for associating the biological form of a person's existence with undertaking the work of a priest.

In the framework of the above approach, I have attempted to present a woman's position, as determined by social and historical factors, but also on the level of religious life, based on the principle of interaction and mutual fulfillment of social institutions. I focused on the woman's position as it was created or transformed in the Christian Church under the "new creation", according to the New Testament, in an effort to find positive or negative elements to whether or not to allow women to receive the sacrament of ordination, the only one from which they are excluded.

Among the arguments of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church, the gender of the Incarnated God Word appears as a fundamental one that makes the female human being unsuitable to represent Christ. This is despite the aim of His incarnation and the sacrifice was exactly the restoration of unity of the divided human nature. It is evident that very serious theological questions can be raised as a result, such as the following one: a) what is the nature

¹ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥ Ν. ΓΙΟΚΑΡΙΝΗ, *Η ιερωσύνη τῶν γυναικῶν στό πλαίσιο τῆς Οἰκουμενικῆς Κίνησης*, ἔκδ. Ἐπέκταση Κατερίνη 1995, σελ. 600.

of the gender? b) how is gender connected with human nature? c) what is the reason and the function of gender? d) in what manner the gender can be a negative element in the selection of the bearer of priesthood? e) what is the meaning of the recapitulation of human beings and the entire world? f) how do we understand the eschatological character and course of the Church in the history, etc.

Within this framework I try to shed some light on the nature of the sacramental priesthood, so as to show first, that it is based on the principle of simple representation of Christ. Secondly, that it has been derived sacramentally from the priesthood of Christ, from the unique high priest and from the unique source of priesthood, since He is the sacrificial offering and function of the savior. Consequently, it is clear that the problem of priesthood is directly and substantially connected with Christology, a fact that necessitated the study of the whole subject in the Chalkedonian doctrine.

The question of the priesthood is not connected only to its particular sacramental nature, but is quite complex and as such takes a multi-faceted dynamic because it extends into the entire spectrum of theology (Trinitarianism, Christology, salvationism, ecclesiology, and anthropology). It is complex because from various Churches' approach to the matter, it appears to be founded on different traditions. Consequently, the priesthood has no common basis of its perception. This is something which not only makes the whole subject difficult to approach, due to the differentiation of the principle of the matter on the part of the interested members, but also less easy to solve due to the resulting disorientation.

The fact that in His incarnation the Divine Word took on a male form, an argument advanced by supporters of "male" priesthood for excluding women from it, has made it necessary to research Christian anthropology to find the significance of distinguishing humans into sexes.

Within the framework of the Christological approach, the Lord's human nature is examined in terms of the significance of his male gender. This is done to evaluate the importance of the maleness in the Lord's human nature to the salvation so that we can provide the Salvationist perspective of the subject. A result of the above approach is the distinction between just how much can the human nature of the Divine Word be a definite clue and proof of the worthiness or appropriateness for the undertaking of the sacred bonds of the priesthood and whether it is a condition for one's exclusion because one is of a particular gender.

The anthropological view on the matter based on the "image" is of great importance because it clarifies the issue of equality between the sexes and coincides with the teachings of the Church about the person on a human and divine level. Thus, it investigates the doctrine of the Trinity to get a perspective for viewing the nature of people's interpersonal relationships based on gender. In addition, it points out any possible hierarchy between man and woman as persons, or any relationship of dominance and submission, analogous to the relationship between the Persons of the Holy Trinity depicted in humankind.

It is a fact that the Christian faith to One God is the cornerstone of Church's teaching. The principle of oneness is fundamental and dominant for the Orthodox Theology. In biblical anthropology the aforementioned principle is based on God's revelation that Man ($\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$) has been created in His image and likeness. If God is **one**, then Man is one as well. Therefore, any attempt to find out how and in what meaning the principle of oneness can be applied or seen has to be referred to triune dogma.

Because inter-gender relationships among the faithful are formed, determined and experienced in the "new testament", which the Church expresses as the beginning of the Kingdom of God, the subject of gender is also examined from an ecclesiological point of view based on the eschatological nature of the Church. This also proves to be the measure and criteria for overcoming every form of division and therefore that of humankind into male and female dealing with and living within the Eucharist communion.

Those who are supporters of the view that male and female are “equal but different” do not clarify the content of the difference between man and woman. If the biological characteristics and the different roles between them in the reproduction of human beings make them different, of course, this is obvious and of common knowledge. But, if it is so, then the gender itself must be considered not as an external element of human nature, as the Fathers of the Church believe, but a structural component of human nature. Such a view comes against the biblical witness and the Church’s tradition.

Some theologians observe that “the difference between men and women is a difference of being which is rooted in the very essence of creation and manifested in the particular expression of personhood. This view invokes not only physical differences between the sexes but also psychological and spiritual ones”. Of course, nobody can deny the existence of differences, but they serve biological needs. Living in Christ, as Apostle Paul explains² means another perspective of existence in the context of history, which is seen through the prism of viewing the subject of differences and not the genetically or biological ones. If Christ lives in the faithful, male or female, there is no division.

At this point it is necessary to remember that speaking about Christ’s Body, the Ecclesia which exists to serve the Kingdom of God, no form of division of human beings or the world can justify its existence because the unity of them is given, according to the Orthodox Tradition, in the person of the incarnated God. In particular, when we are speaking about the Eucharistic communion it is impossible to reference biological differences. In the Orthodox doctrine, the person is the theological basis of any reference to Christian anthropology and Christology, because “*there cannot be...man and woman, for all you are one in Christ*” (Gal.3: 27-28).

The views of the Orthodox Church

Among a number of arguments listed in the final conclusions³ at the Orthodox Conference in Rhodes (1998) is that the incarnation of the Logos of God into a male is an ontological necessity just as Christ has to be incarnated in a male, so only can the male represent Christ. This kind of male dominant Christology has emerged in recent years as the central argument for the exemption of women from the sacramental priesthood. On this basis, some Orthodox theologians came to the conclusion that priesthood is *a masculine(!) Ministry*⁴. At this point, I must say that in the Orthodox Church decisions with catholic validity and implementation can be taken only in Ecumenical Synods and never in theological conference or symposium. The supporters of the woman’s exclusion appeal to an unchangeable practice of the Church for two thousand years on the basis that Christ chose only males to be apostles. However, they forget that He also chose only circumcised Jews. Later, circumcision as a requirement under Jewish law was abolished as being a universally binding necessity (Acts 15: 23-29) and the ordination was open to gentiles, but not to women.

In addition, another example highlighting a progressive change within Christianity was the issue and morality of slavery. For eighteen or nineteen hundred years, most Christians were quite content to accept the institution of slavery as a fact of life. If it took the Church centuries to recognize the wickedness of slavery, why should it not have taken the

² Gal.2:19-20. “*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lived in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*”.

³ GENNADIOS LIMOURIS,(ed.) *The place of the Woman in the Orthodox Church and the Question of the Ordination of the Women in: Woman in the Orthodox Church and the Question of the Ordination of Women: Interorthodox Symposium Rhodes, Greece 30 October-7 November 1998* (Tertios: Katerini 1992).pp.21-34.

⁴ *Women and the Priesthood*, Ed. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, N. York 1999, Thomas Hopko, “*Presbyter/Bishop, a masculine Ministry*” 139-164.

Church one or two centuries more to end its unjustifiable discrimination against women? If the Christian community was right to “innovate” in the one instance, why not on the other? ⁵

It is obvious that a conclusion as the one above that priesthood is by nature “male” must be examined in the context of the dogma of Chalcedon and under the light of Orthodox Tradition. Of course, it is not an easy attempt, taking in consideration that we are confronted with a mystery, the incarnation of God Word. The human weakness to conceive certain dimensions of the revealed truth states that our created intelligence could not manage to reach into the depths of divine infinity. For this reason our Lord is promising to send the Paraclet to His Church.

There are none of the issues in Orthodox theology which can be examined in isolation from the totality of the Church’s Tradition. The gender of the Incarnated God has to be approached in relation and reference to a multidimensional theological perspective as the Christian anthropology, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology and eschatology.

The complexity of the issue is obvious and it demands an exhaustive and detailed examination of the given resources of the Orthodox Tradition. Approaching our issue in the context: a) of the biblical anthropology, b) of Chalkedonian dogma and g) of the fundamental principle Oneness, we are listing the following findings from:

a) Biblical anthropology

The reader of Genesis 1:26 “*Let us make man (anthropos) in our image, after our likeness and created them (humankind) male and female” can notice that the conjunction “and” connecting two main sentences declares an additional action of the Creator, which according to the patristic understanding has a certain character and perspective. The first sentence refers to the archetype of man’s creation, which means the imprinted qualities of his divine origin –image-(κατ’ εικόνα-θεοειδέια) existing on human creature in a dynamic perspective (καθ’όμοίωσιν) But first of all, we have to specify the meaning of the term “human nature” and to make clear whether the gender is a component element of the human nature.*

According to the patristic understanding, the human nature is genderless (ἄφυλος)⁶ consisting by two elements, the soul (ψυχή) and body (σῶμα). This follows the creation stories of Genesis God creates Man (ἄνθρωπος) according to His image and likeness⁷. God’s decision expressed grammatically in plural - “Let us create...”- is an expression which presents the Triune archetype of man’s creation and manifests the principle of communion (κοινωνία) of the three holy persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The communion of the Holy Persons finds its expression in the second narration (Gen. 2: 26), when God extracts from the side of Adam a rib and He builds a human being, the so called woman.

A result of God’s action is Adam’s aloneness⁸. Adam could not be able to obtain his self-consciousness as a human entity, as a person. Adam’s surprise, when God presents Eve to him, is that it reaffirms the necessity of the presence of somebody else. When Adam sees Eve he recognizes himself, saying in the mirror: “*Then the man said; this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken*” (Gen.2: 23). The person as an ontological reality presupposes and declares the existence of another person, otherwise it remains simply an individual entity.

⁵ Women and the Priesthood, St.Vladimir’s Press,N.York 1999 , Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, *Man, Woman and the Priesthood in the Church*, pp. 29-30.

⁶ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΝΥΣΣΗΣ, *Περί κατασκευής τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, 16 PG 44, 188. «Ο πρῶτος Ἀδάμ οὐράνιος, ἀγνός καί ἀφυλος, ἔλαβε σῶμα διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας...». Note: Some Fathers believe the opposite considering Adam, the first human being, as male. But, they forget that the gender male or female appear at the same time as division.

⁷ Gen 1:26.

⁸ Gen. 2: « *Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner’* .

It is clear that the writer of the Genesis is aiming to make approachable the mystery of man's creation in understandable terms using anthropomorphic expressions for God, as the extraction from Adam's side a rib. The target of this kind of narration is to show that the two forms of the human being, man and woman, came to existence first by **One** creator and second from **one** and the same substance (οὐσία). Therefore the human nature is one and in my view is theologically wrong to distinguish it as male or female. It is a very serious inconsistency within the context of basic principles of scriptural anthropology.

In regards to the cause of Eve's creation:

a) "make him (Adam = χοϊκός) a helper" in correlation with Paul's views about the place and role of women became a controversial theological issue. As for female subordination in "the order of creation" let us remember that Gen.3: 16 represent the wife's subjection to her husband as a consequence of the fall, not of the creation itself.

b) The gender is an invention⁹ of Creator's providence in order for the humankind to meet the consequences of the Fall¹⁰.

c) The gender is a kind of division¹¹, which is a specific characterization of the fall and makes present the sin. For this reason the gender is impossible to be a point of reference for the human nature of the Incarnated God because the God Word did not assume the fallen human nature, but the perfect one, without sin, according the Chalcedonian dogma.

d) The gender is a sign for creatures well known as devoid of reason¹².

e) The gender, male or female, does not belong to the categories of the image of God, whose bearer is the human person. The gender is an external sign (δεσμάτινος χιτώνας, σχῆμα, ἐπενδύτης)¹³.

b) Chalcedonian dogma

Therefore, the gender itself cannot be used as a theological basis to establish and to reinforce theological arguments in reference to the divine incarnation and particularly with the sacerdotal priesthood for the following reasons, according to the content to the Chalcedonian dogma:

a) We confess the Incarnated Word, Jesus Christ as perfect in his deity and **perfect** in His humanity, true God and man truly, the same from rational soul and body of the same essence of Father in His deity and of the same essence with us in His humanity and the same with us in all without sin" ¹⁴.

The Fathers unanimously accept that the assumed human nature by God Word is the common specie (substance=οὐσία) of the most and different existence (hypostasis), namely whatever Adam¹⁵ had, the first one, without sin, which are body and soul rational and

⁹ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΝΑΖΙΑΝΖΗΝΟΥ, Λόγος 37, PG 36, 289B. «Διὰ τοῦτο ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ πάντα...προκατανοήσας τῇ προγνωστικῇ του δυνάμει ὅτι ῥέπει κατὰ τὸ αὐτοκρατέες του καὶ αὐτεξούσιον τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης προαιρέσεως ἢ κινήσεως, ἐπειδὴ τὸ ἐσόμενον εἶδεν ἐπιτεχνᾶται τῇ εἰκόνι τὴν περὶ τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ διαφορὰν, ἣτις οὐκέτι πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀρχέτυπον βλέπει, ἀλλὰ καθὼς εἴρηται, τῇ ἀλογωτέρῳ προσωκείωται φύσει».

¹⁰ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ, Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς τῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως, Περί παρθενίας, 4,24, PG 94, 1208A. «Ὡστε διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐκτριβῆναι καὶ ἀναλωθῆναι τὸ γένος ὑπὸ τοῦ θανάτου ὁ γάμος ἐπινενόηται, ὡς διὰ τῆς παιδοποιίας τὸ γένος τῶν ἀνθρώπων διασώζεται».

¹¹ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΧΡΥΣΟΣΤΟΜΟΥ, 84, PG 48, 595. «Τότε γάρ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη καθ' ἑαυτῆς ἐσχιστο φύσις καὶ πόλεμος ἦν ἄσπονδος».

¹² ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΝΑΖΙΑΝΖΗΝΟΥ, Λόγος 37, PG 36, 289B. «... περὶ τὸ ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ διαφορὰν, ... οὐκέτι πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀρχέτυπον βλέπει, ἀλλὰ καθὼς εἴρηται, τῇ ἀλογωτέρῳ προσωκείωται φύσει».

¹³ Γεν.3:21. ΔΙΑΤΑΓΑΙ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ, ΣΤ' XI PG 1,937A.

¹⁴ MANSIVIII,ACO II, 1, 2, 129 (325) ἐξ

¹⁵ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως, 3, 12, PG 94, 1029A.

mental¹⁶. This is the reason when the Fathers make a reference to the human nature of the incarnated Logos to use mainly the terms: “σαρξ-flesh», «σῶμα-body»¹⁷, «ἄνθρωπος-man»¹⁸, «ἄνθρωπότητα-humanity».

b) The human nature of the incarnated Logos of God is the beginning of new things, the new nature for the following reasons: 1) the Son of God assumes the nature of the First Adam, which He transforms it from the state of “in image” to “image” in the context of hypostatic union of divine and human nature in His personhood. In Orthodox theological terminology this is called “λόγωσις»¹⁹ or «ἀνακεφαλαίωσις» = recapitulation of the entire Creation. 2) He assumes the human nature from a virgin woman, in order to create the new man, because, if He would be borne through the postlapsarian procedure of reproduction, He would be a bearer of the fall’s results. So, He would not be the Leader and the offered of a new and life²⁰.

c) The divine incarnation had abolished the meaning and the role of gender in the context of conceives (σύλληψις) of God man from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Maria.

d) The distinction and difference of man into male and female secretly is abstracted through the divine incarnation in the context of hypostatic union in Christ’s personhood of the two essences (οὐσίαι), divine and human, because the human nature has been deified.

e) Without the restoration of unity of male and female in the personhood of God man, the woman would be left out of the salvation, because “τό ἀπρόσληπτον καί ἀθεράπευτον». The Incarnated Logos unifies in His person the double form of human nature, male and female, because the divine archetype is offered as impassive personal unity. This unity man was challenged to conquer in the context of “in his likeness”, overcoming the division, male and female, in the limits of his nature, but he fail. That’s why any form of division declares the presence of sin.

c) The fundamental principle Oneness.

The aforesaid arguments have been presented in the most comprehensive and simple way Gregory the Theologian: «*One is the creator of man and woman, one soil, both of them one image, one law, one resurrection*»²¹.

The reference of Gregory of Nazianzus to **one** God, the beginning and the end of Creation is the final answer to anyone who wants to produce ontology of the gender in the Orthodox theology. The effort to present the male form of the incarnated Logos as obligatory criterion and inevitable term for the eligibility of the future bearer of priesthood abolishes the fundamental principle of Christology, the recapitulation. The persistence of opponents to women’s ordination on the maleness of Christ as an identical component of the divine incarnation on the name of natural resemblance: a) reintroduces the dichotomy of the human nature, b) nullifies the soteriological results of the divine incarnation, c) rejects the Church’s keystone principle of oneness, one God, one Lord, one man, one Church, one baptism, one death, one resurrection, c) undervalues the fact that is one image of male and female, d) gives priority to biological characteristics instead of the person, which in the Orthodox Theology

¹⁶ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΔΑΜΑΣΚΗΝΟΥ, Ἐκδοσις ἀκριβῆς ὀρθοδόξου πίστεως, Περί ιδιωμάτων τῶν δύο φύσεων, 3,13 PG 94, 10,33^A.

¹⁷ Μ.ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ, Περί ἐνανθρωπήσεως, Λόγος Β΄ «(Ο Θεός Λόγος) λαμβάνει ἐαυτῶ σῶμα καί τοῦτο οὐκ ἀλλότριον τοῦ ἡμετέρου...» .

¹⁸ ΕΙΡΗΝΑΙΟΥ, Ἐλεγχος ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως , Βιβλίον Γ΄ ΧΙΙΧ ΒΕΠΕΣ 5,150. «Εἰς τοῦτο γάρ ὁ Λόγος ἄνθρωπος ... ἵνα ὁ ἄνθρωπος τόν Λόγον χωρήσας καί τήν νόθεσιαν λαβών, υἱός γένηται Θεοῦ...».

¹⁹ Μ. ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ, Κατά Ἀρειανῶν 3,33 PG 26,152.

²⁰ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΠΑΛΑΜΑ, Ὁμιλία ισ΄, ΕΠΕ 9,430. «περιβαλλόμενος ἀφρά- στως καί συναφθεῖς ἀδιαίρετως τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει καί τεχθεῖς Θεός ὁμοῦ καί ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ γυναικός μὲν, ἵνα τήν παρ’ αὐτοῦ πλασθεῖσαν φύσιν, ἐκ παρθένου δέ ταύτης, ἵνα καινόν ποιήσῃ τόν ἄνθρωπον...».

²¹ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ ΝΑΖΙΑΝΖΗΝΟΥ, Ὁμιλία 37, 6, PG 36, 289B.

comes first and e) refuses any initiative of the members of the Church to overcome divisions in the context of history as an ontological transformation. A male-dominant Christology attempting to interrelate maleness, Christology and priesthood, in fact makes a reference to an anthropomorphic deity.

Consequently, a vital question arises: is the restoration of unity of man and woman possible in real terms in the context of history? If yes, then in what way and in what kind of activities? Of course, we do not refer to a form of desexualisation of the human beings. We have to recall the second element of the Triune archetype, which is presented in the bible of Genesis, "God said: *Let us create man...in our likeness*". The existential unity as it is imprinted on our humanity, according to the triune and Christological archetypes, is the basis of understanding the oneness of God.

The humans, males and females, have lost their unity, firstly on ontological level which means that in the context of their liberty their revolutionary energies against the absolute Love had destroyed the inner ties. So in the same way and on an ontological level it could be possible to enjoy the restoration of unity of the human being.

The Church as an eschatological human society has to be inspired by those values and principles which can make the Kingdom of God as present. The transfiguration of a human person is possible as a result of the Jesus Christ crucifixion and resurrection in the context of history. The salvation is a dynamic existential course towards the eschaton of history. Changing at the present time and place attitudes, intentions, and actions towards each other across all levels of our life it could be possible to establish a path of unity and at the end it could be possible to meet and unite ourselves with our Creator.

In the Orthodox Theology the principle of Oneness has a dominant presence. It is a structural element of Church and it can be experienced in the Eucharistic function of Christian community. It is more than clear that "Ὁ τρώγων μου τήν σάρκα καί πίνων μου τό ἐν ἐμοί μένει καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ». The question which can be raised is in what terms: as God Logos or as male God man?

Furthermore, the faithful has to remember the oneness in every chapter of our faith: in Holy Trinity, in Baptism, in Christology, in Salvation.

Finally, the male form of the human nature of Logos is unsuitable for any theological foundation for the place and the role of woman in the Church and particularly for her exclusion from the sacramental ordination. According to the findings of the theological research presently, there are not sufficient reasons and concrete theological ground to exclude women from the sacramental priesthood. Of course, the issue needs a long and an exhaustive theological study. That's why it has to be left open. Of course, the final word belongs to an Ecumenical Synod.

The only reasons, which can justify the opposing views for ordination of women presented on behalf of Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church in their historic course, are:

- a) the imperative need to defend the true faith against the actions of heretics as Montanists, who were in favour of women allowing them to be ordained, something which contributed to the rebirth of idolatry,
- b) the appeal to tradition: the praxis of the Church for two millennia, which has been dictated by social, political, and religious reasons and conditions. It has contributed to the institutionalization of what has been kept as ecclesiological custom,
- c) the weakness of faithful people to see the incarnated God as God Word and not as flesh, explained by Maximos the Confessor,
- d) The androcentric structure of the communities; although so far certain steps have been made towards a reduction of the existing inequalities between the two sexes; even today in the beginning of the third millennium.
- e) the human weakness to see the incarnated God man as Logos and to understand His crucifixion as sacrifice of the human nature and not the male form.

Maximos the Confessor has the final word on the issue in the most convincing way as following:

“For those who are searching as flesh the God Word, the Lord does not go up to his Father. But, He goes up to his Father for those who are looking spiritually with high visions. Let us do not keep him forever down here, who came to us as philanthropist. But, let us go up with Him to His Father, leaving on earth and the earthy things if we want no to say us what He said to Judaic people, I go where you cannot come”.

In conclusion, I believe that nothing can be stronger than the tradition and praxis of the Church. Therefore, the Church as the body and the fulfilment of the Truth, if she has been convinced so far that the tradition of “male priesthood” has to remain unchanged, then the entire issue remains in under Her domain and She must have the comfort to keep the long standing practice without any attempt to seek theologically unbiased arguments, which destroy the charismatic life and communion. The members of Christ’s Body differ only on the level of their existential particularity and in their receptivity of the Holy Spirit gifts, but in no way on the level of equality either in terms of nature or in God’s image creation. On the other hand, the exemption of women from the mystery of Priesthood in no way has reduced the charismatic life of Church. The issue is based on the challenge to the Church to overcome the creativity of human beings in order to be in line with her eschatological destination towards deification of the human entity created in the image and likeness of God.



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