

Women's Ordination: A Matter of Doctrine

PART I

News of women admitted to the priestly ministry in other religious convictions in international as well as local papers serves as a good reason to bring up the matter again and inform the faithful and the clergy as well of the salient points of the controversy. At the outset, it must be made clear that the issue is a matter of doctrine, i.e., a theological one. This point has been well enunciated in the Vatican Declaration of 1977, *Inter Insigniores*,¹ particularly in its theological reflections on the nature of the ministerial priesthood (articles 5 & 6), and recently affirmed by Pope John Paul II in his letter to Arch. Runcie of Canterbury.

1. *The Cultural Background of Inter Insigniores*

There had been claims that the prohibition against women from priestly ordination in the Catholic Church was rather *presumed* than *argued*.² More radical than these were claims that

¹ Published on February 28, 1977 in AAS, 49, n. 2 (1977), 98-116; promulgated, however, on January 27, 1977, and date of approval and signing by Paul VI, October 15, 1976.

² Cf. Haye van der Meer, S.J., *Women Priests in the Catholic Church? A Theologico-Historical Investigation*, translated by Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler from the German original *Priestertum der Frau?* (1969), (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973).

women's ordination was *not* a theological issue.³ Faced and challenged with these charges, the Catholic Church, through the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (SCDF), had to address herself to the then (and still) brewing issue and came up with the Declaration mentioned earlier. In this document, the Catholic Church confirmed its negative stand, but this time, equipped with a *theological argument*:

"The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith judges it necessary to recall that the Church, in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination."⁴

The proponents of women's ordination were not at ease with the decision. Instead, they controverted point by point the affirmations of the Declaration, hence, they might as well be called "controversialists". The controversy became a more heated one and it centered on the document itself, with special attention given to its theological argument for not allowing women to be ordained priests. From my readings of a considerable bulk of literature on the subject, I noted that the most common and frequent way of describing the ministerial priesthood was its being *representative* in character.⁵ From this general tendency, I gathered that the crucial theological problems revolved around two main points, namely, the *object* of representation and the *mode* of representation. One's convictions of these two points could help him or her out in the resolution of the *subject* of representation, i.e., who can or cannot be ordained.

Concerning the *object* of representation, the controversialists question in varied ways the Declaration's *christological* affirmations, in particular the theological significance given to the "male

³ Cf. Anglican Archbishop Donald Coggan's Letter to Paul VI, 9 July 1975 in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, September 2, 1976. In part it reads: "...inform you... of the slow but steady growth of a consensus of opinion within the Anglican communion that there are no fundamental objections in principle to the ordination of women to the priesthood."

⁴ The English text of *Inter Insigniores* as quoted here is taken from *The Order of Priesthood* (Nine Commentaries on the Vatican Decree, *Inter Insigniores*), Huntington, Indiana: *Our Sunday Visitor*, Inc., 1978, p. 3.

⁵ This is not inadvertence to the fact that *representation* and *signification*, a Scholastic sacramentological term, have a different shade of meaning. In this work, however, they are interchangeably used, as in the Declaration itself, and we presume they have the same meaning.

Incarnation" and the "nuptial image" (Christ as bridegroom and Second Adam) in the mystery of redemption, and hence, in the priestly ministry. Another point of contention concerning the *object* of representation is the question of the *primary* or *direct* object of representation: it is *Christ (in persona Christi)* or the *Church (in persona Ecclesiae)*? This is actually the perennial tension between the *christological* and the *ecclesiological* bases of the priesthood.

Concerning the *mode* of representation, the controversialists likewise question in varied ways the Thomistic principle of "natural resemblance" in sacramental representation or signification, most especially the apparent equation by the Declaration between "natural resemblance" and "sexual resemblance". The controversialists also disagree with the Declaration's affirmations on *sex-differentiation* and its relevance to the priestly ministry.

All these problems boil down to one main question: Is the ministerial priesthood by nature linked with sex, specifically "maleness"? In this study we will clarify that women's ordination is a matter of doctrine; that the question of who can or cannot be ordained priest is of doctrinal character which is intimately linked with the nature of the ministerial priesthood. At this juncture, it must be made clear that we are referring here to women's ordination to the priesthood or episcopacy, and not to the *diaconate*,⁶ nor to any kind of ministry (of which some are allowed now to women).

Before discussing any further, there must be a common understanding with our readers on what "ordination of women to the priesthood" means.⁷ Fr. John Hardon's descriptive definition, more or less, can serve as a working definition:

⁶ This issue is still under study by the *International Theological Commission*.

⁷ One must understand that this issue is but a portion of a greater problematic, i.e., the nature of ministry in general and priesthood in particular, oftentimes referred to as "identity crisis"; other terms used for ministerial priesthood are "pastoral office", priestly ministry; Ellen Sheehan, however, prefers to use the terms "presbyteral ministry" for the reason that it is more in keeping, according to her, with the NT development of ministry and ministries. She maintains that this phrase makes "ministry" as a noun central and it specifies a type; "presbyteral" as an adjective is given less importance. Cf. her article "Important Clarifications on Argument and

"The ordination of women in the Catholic Church to the apostolic succession in the presbyterate and (logically) the episcopate, deriving from Christ's ordination of the Twelve Apostles on Holy Thursday night, and conferring on them and their successors the threefold Messianic power of administering the sacraments, notably the Eucharist, of ruling the people of God in his name, and of authoritatively teaching His message of salvation."⁸

2. *A Structural Analysis of Inter Insigniores*

Inasmuch as after its publication the Vatican Declaration became the focal point of the controversy, and hence, our point of reference, it must be studied more closely in its content and structure. Moreover, a structural analysis of the document will help us in understanding in a better light the objections and criticisms of the controversialists.

1. *The Introduction (Proemium)*

As a whole, it hints at the positive approach taken by the SCDF in addressing the issue. It starts with the recognition of the important role women play in contemporary Church and in modern society.⁹ Here, the *reason* of the Church for addressing the issue is given. The Official Commentary articulates more clearly the reason:

"... it is difficult to leave unanswered any longer a precise question being posed nearly everywhere and which is polarizing attention to the detriment of more urgent endeavours that should be fostered."¹⁰

2. *The Two Major Parts of the Declaration*

a. *The Teaching(s) of the Declaration (articles 1-4) — The following are affirmed as facts:*

Authority", in *Women and Priesthood: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler, eds. (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 243.

⁸ John A. Hardon, S.J., *The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood* (Daughters of St. Paul Pamphlets: Boston, 1975), p. 1.

⁹ Cf. Raimondo Spiazzi, O.P., "Advancement of Women according to the Church", in *The Order of Priesthood*, loc. cit., pp. 51-62.

¹⁰ Official Commentary on the Declaration, in *The Order of Priesthood*, p. 24.

1st — *from the datum of Church's constant Tradition* — "The Church has never thought that priestly or episcopal ordination can validly be conferred on women." (article 1)

The Declaration offers the following explanation for the above statement or affirmation: The existence of women priestesses among the Gnostics seems to contradict the Church's constant Tradition. The Declaration refutes this, however, by saying that this practice among the heretics, in particular the Gnostics, was a deviation which the Fathers had condemned from the very start. If ever their writings were influenced by prejudices against women, the Declaration explains further, their spiritual and pastoral directions were not.¹¹ In the case of the medieval Fathers, they too had this conviction, even if their theological reasonings are no longer defensible today. The classic example given is that of St. Thomas who opposed women's ordination by arguing that "women are in the state of subjection" to men (*mulier in status subjectionis*).¹² This traditional conviction that women cannot be ordained priests is also observed by the Eastern Churches, the Declaration notes, even if they are separated from Rome.

2nd — *from the datum of Scripture*, concerning Jesus' attitude: "Jesus did not call any women to become part of the Twelve." (article 2)

Here, the Declaration answers some objections that are scriptural in nature.¹³ The first of such objections commonly pressed forward by controversialists is that Christ acted that way, i.e., his not calling any woman into the College of Apostles, because it was the dictate of the socio-cultural milieu of his time. The

¹¹ Cf. a related article against this by Michael Slusser, "Fathers and Priestesses: Footnotes to the Declaration", *Worship* 51 (September 1977), pp. 434-445.

¹² *In IV Sent.*, dist. 19, q. 1, a. 1, qa. a, ad 4um; *Summa Theologiae*, IIa, IIae, q. 177, a. 2.

¹³ The SCDF made a consultation with the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) and there were two questions taken up in the deliberations as reported in the *Catholic News Service*. The first was factual, i.e., that Scripture texts in themselves do not demonstrate that women can or cannot be ordained. The other question was a matter of opinion: does not the NT open grounds to justify the opening of ordination of women? Opinions given differed. Cf. PBC's Report: *Can Women Be Priests?*, in AAS 63 (1971), p. 667.

Declaration answers this by saying that this has no foundation because Christ, as a matter of fact, assumed an attitude toward women contrary to the Jewish customs.

To mention a few of these instances cited by the Declaration, they are as follows: Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman in public (Jn. 4:27); his pardoning of the woman taken in adultery (showing that one must not be more severe toward the fault of a woman than the fault of a man, Jn. 8:11); his being accompanied by a group of women like Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Chuza, Suzanna and several others who provided for him and the Apostles out of their resources (Lk. 8:2-3).

One indication of Jesus' attitude given by the Declaration is the fact that Jesus did not invest the Virgin Mary any apostolic ministry even if she was closely associated with him and even if she occupied an incomparable role.

3rd — *from the datum of Scripture* — concerning the practice of the Apostles: "The Apostolic community remained faithful to the example or attitude of Christ towards women." (article 3)

Here, the practice of the apostles is reviewed:

a. In choosing the successor of Judas Iscariot, the Apostles chose a man named Matthias (Acts 1:15f), not a woman, not even the Virgin Mary, who was also closely associated with them. Besides, not even the names of the two other disciples who were candidates to replace Judas are mentioned anywhere in the four Gospels.

b. On Pentecost, it is true that the Holy Spirit filled them all (Apostles, the Virgin Mary and the many men and women, Acts 2:1; 1:14), yet the proclamation of the prophecies in Jesus was made only by "Peter and the Eleven" (Acts 2:14).

c. When the Apostles and Paul went about preaching the Gospel, going beyond the Jewish world into the Greco-Roman world, they often had to break with Mosaic traditions, as the pastoral need arose, such as the charging of women to the apostolic

ministry to help them out in the apostolic task; but in fidelity to the Lord's example, they did not envisage ordaining women to the apostolic ministry.

d. Moreover, the *Acts of the Apostles* and the letters of Paul attest to the fact that certain women worked with Paul for the sake of the Gospel, yet there was not any question of conferring on them priestly ordination.¹⁴

e. Furthermore, exegetical interpretations of some Pauline expressions would establish two groups of ministers of different order or hierarchy. Paul used "fellow workers"¹⁵ to describe his co-workers, whereas he emphatically used "God's fellow workers"¹⁶ when referring to Apollos, Timothy and himself (I Cor. 3:9), in order to designate that they were directly set apart for the apostolic ministry and for the preaching of the word.

f. Lastly, the important role performed by the women on resurrection day, especially Mary Magdalene, did not prompt Paul and the Apostles to extend it to the official and public proclamation of the message since they had the conviction that it belonged exclusively to the apostolic mission.

The Declaration clarifies, however, that these scriptural facts do not make the matter immediately obvious, i.e., a purely historical exegesis of the texts cannot suffice to reach the ultimate meaning of Jesus' mission and of Scripture.¹⁷

4th — "The attitude of Jesus and the practice of the Apostles have a normative or permanent value." (article 4)

Here, this important question is tackled by the Declaration: "Could the Church today depart from the attitude of Jesus and the practice of the Apostles which have been considered normative by the whole of Tradition up to our day?" The Declaration offers a solution to some ordinances given by Paul which seem to have no normative value, in particular "the wearing of

¹⁴Rom. 16:3-12; Phil. 4:3. The most important of these women were Priscilla who instructed Apollos (Acts 18:26), and Phoebe (a deaconess?), Rom. 16:1.

¹⁵ In Greek, *synergoi mou* (ὁ συνεργοί μου)

¹⁶ In Greek, *synergoi Theou* (ὁ συνεργοί θεοῦ)

¹⁷ Refer to note 13.

a veil on the head" (I Cor. 11:2-16). The Declaration considers this as a "disciplinary measure of minor importance", and thus "transitory" in character as distinguished from certain prescriptions given by Paul which are "normative" in character, in particular these two:

— I Cor. 14:34-35, "... the women should keep silence in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate as even the law says."

— I Tim. 2:12, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men."

The Declaration endorses the common interpretation of these Pauline passages¹⁸ as *prohibitions concerning official function of teaching* in the christian assembly, and not as referring to prophesying which was permitted to them. At this point, the Declaration defends St. Paul from being branded as a misogynist by recalling his strong statement on the equality of all the baptized (Gal. 3:28), and by recalling the collaboration he asked from women in his missionary activities.

Another objection to the normative value given to Jesus' attitude and the Apostles' practice concerns the extent of the Church's power over the sacraments: "Since the Church later has been able to change or abandon prescriptions in the New Testament, why should it not be the same for the exclusion of women from ordination? Why does the Church not change her discipline on this matter, when the past proves that she has determined now and then the sign or she has fixed the condition for the administration of the Sacraments?"

The Declaration eliminates this objection by recalling and reaffirming previous magisterial pronouncements that define the limitations of the Church's power over the Sacraments,¹⁹ and by restating the real nature of the sacramental signs as "natural signs". As such, sacramental signs function not only as a response to the deep symbolism of action and things, but also as

¹⁸ It must be noted that the authenticity of these Pauline passages is controverted.

¹⁹ Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis*, AAS 40 (1948), 5-7: "The Church has no power over the substance of the Sacraments, that is, over what Christ, the Lord, as the source of Revelation bears witness, determined ..."

"link between the person of every period to the supreme event of salvation history." The Eucharistic symbols are given as examples to illustrate such function. The Eucharist does not only signify a fraternal meal, but also makes present and actual Christ's offering and sacrifice. By the same token, the pastoral office ensures the continuity of the powers related to the functions. Hence, adaptation to civilizations and times cannot abolish the constitutive elements of the Sacraments which are instituted by Christ.

At this juncture, the Declaration asserts again that the Church in the final analysis is the one which decides through the voice of her Magisterium what is mutable and what is immutable, and that when she judges she cannot accept certain changes, as that one of the subject of priesthood being extended to women, such judgment is based on her obligation to follow Christ's example, and such act is not one of archaism but of conformity to God's plan.

b. *The Reason(s) for the Teaching(s)*: The second part of the Declaration now bares the reason or reasons for the teaching or teachings as laid down in the first part. The reason or reasons embodied in its theological reflections on the nature of the ministerial priesthood (articles 5 and 6). The Declaration cautions us, however, that this theological argument is not a *demonstrative* one for the reason that matters of faith cannot be reduced into the pure rational plane. The argument, therefore, is one of *fittingness* (*ratio convenientiae*), i.e., a theological reflection on the data of faith is convenient because even after the faithful's acceptance of God's teachings and laws, their coherence with human reason is still encouraged to be discovered. This is more so when the theological reasoning of the medieval Fathers against women's ordination is no longer defensible today, i.e., that women are inferior to men. The SCDF, then finds the convenient explanation of the *fact* that only men have been exclusively called to the ordained priesthood and episcopacy in the *nature of the ministerial priesthood*. The Declaration expounds the nature of the priestly ministry in two ways: 1st, *as seen in the light of the mystery of Christ* (article 5); 2nd, *as illustrated by the mystery of the Church* (article 6).

aa. The Nature of the Ministerial Priesthood in the Light of the Mystery of Christ (article 5).

The Declaration starts its theological reflection by identifying the priest as one who acts *in persona Christi*, a classic formula consistently taken up in other significant ecclesiastical documents.²⁰ Now, the assumption of this role reaches its highest expression in the Eucharistic celebration, and consequently, the priest becomes the very image of Christ, most particularly in the moment of consecration. In view of this, the Declaration concludes that the priest who acts *in persona Christi* must be male to effect the highest mode of representation or signification.

The *natural resemblance* theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas is employed to explain the relation between the natural sign and the signified reality.²¹ If the priest acting *in persona Christi* is to be an effective sign, easy perception and recognition by the people is a necessary condition, otherwise it would be difficult for one to see the image of Christ in the female priest.

The Declaration identifies such *natural resemblance* in the *identity of maleness* of the priest and Christ, "who was and remains a man". This fact is grounded on two theological realities, namely, the *Incarnation mystery* and *nuptial image of Christ as bridegroom* (biblical typology). That Christ was born to the male sex and retains such identity and individuality even in the glorified state is considered by the Declaration as significant and relevant in the plan of salvation. It clarifies, however, that Christ's assuming of the male sex does not imply superiority of the male sex over the female sex. The Declaration also finds significance of Christ's male Incarnation in the mystery of redemption from biblical language and symbolism, in particular, Christ's designation as "loving, caring and sacrificing Bridegroom of the Church, the Bride." Hence, the connection between the ministerial priesthood and the mystery of the covenant is shown,²² and from

²⁰ St. Cyprian already used this formula in the 3rd century. Cf. Epist., 63, 14: *PL*, 397B; ed. Hartel, vol. 3, p. 713. He based it on St. Paul: II 5:20 and Gal. 4:14.

²¹ In *IV Sent.*, dist. 25, q. 2, qa. 1, ad 4um: "What is done in the Sacrament requires not only the reality (*res tantum*) but also the sign of the reality (*sacramentum tantum*).

²² Cf. the article of Gustave Martelet, SJ, "The Mystery of the Covenant and Its Connection with the Nature of the Ministerial Priesthood" in *The Order of Priesthood*, pp. 99-110.

the intimate connection between the two, one can immediately deduce that the priest following the significance of the symbolism, must be one with a male sex.

Some Objections Answered

The Declaration goes on by answering some objections, the first of which asks: "Does it matter who represents Christ inasmuch as at the general resurrection, men and women do not marry?" (Mt. 20:30). The Declaration answers this by saying that "the sex identity of the person is not suppressed even in the glorious state." A propos to the above objection is the denial of sex differentiation. The Declaration answers this by reaffirming that sex differentiation is God-willed (Gen. 1:27), and that "the influence of sex on human life is much deeper than that of ethnic differences."

The next objection, indicative of the emphasis on the ecclesiological basis of the priesthood, asks: "What the priest presides over liturgical and sacramental functions, he also represents the Church (*in persona Ecclesiae*) as enunciated by some medieval theologians.²³ Would it not be possible that representation of the Church be carried out by a woman, more so when the Church is symbolized as the Bride of the Church? The Declaration answers by simply quoting *Mediator Dei*: "If the priest represents the Church, he does it so, because first and foremost he represents Christ." It is this quality by which the priest presides over the Christian assembly and celebrates the Eucharistic sacrifice in which the whole Church offers and in herself wholly offered.²⁴

At the end of the fifth article, the Declaration recognizes that the controversy over the ordination of women serves as an invitation to further theological research on the mystery of the Church, the meaning of the episcopate and the priesthood, and the real and eminent place of the priest in the community of the baptized.

bb. The Nature of the Ministerial Priesthood as
Illustrated by the Mystery of the Church (art. 6).

²³ For instance, St. Thomas. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 82, a. 7 ad 3um.

²⁴ *Pius XII, Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 (20 November 1947), p. 528; Cf. Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*: AAS 57 (3 September 1965), p. 761.

Here, the Declaration explains the reason for the exclusive reservation of the priesthood to males by recalling the true nature of the Church.

The true nature of the Church — The Church is reviewed as a type of society original in nature and structure. Its originality and uniqueness consist in the *mode of empowerment*. While state government derive their authority or power from the peoples' spontaneous choice, ecclesiastical authority comes directly from God through the laying on of hands accompanied with prayers by the successors of the Apostles, called *ordination* wherein the Holy Spirit is given and by which the ordained is given power of ruling, of teaching, and of sanctifying. Hence, the Declaration states that "pastoral charge is normally linked to the Sacrament of Order."

The implications of the true nature of the Church upon the nature of the ministerial priesthood — The advocates of women's ordination often argue that it is a *right* of every person to have access to the priesthood. They base their assertion on the famous passage from Paul's letter to the Galatians, 3:28: "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."

The Declaration refutes this argument by saying that to consider the priesthood as a human right is to misjudge the true nature of the Church completely. This often quoted passage to justify women's ordination is a misinterpretation. It does not concern ministries, much less the priesthood; it only affirms the universal calling to divine affiliation which is the same for all irrespective of race, status or sex. However, baptism does not automatically confer any personal title or right to public ministry in the Church. Baptism merely confers lay priesthood which is common to all the baptized.

Closely connected with the true nature of the priesthood is the nature of *vocation* or *calling*. At this point, the Declaration addresses itself to those women who feel they have a vocation to the priesthood. It clarifies that vocation cannot merely be reduced to a personal attraction. Authentication by the Church is a necessary and constitutive element of vocation. Therefore, the priesthood is the object of a specific and totally gratuitous calling by Christ.

In conclusion to this theological reflection on the nature of the ministerial priesthood as seen from the ecclesiological perspective, the Declaration stresses that the priesthood cannot become the goal of social development and the "equality is in no way identity of functions" for the Church is structurally a differentiated body.²⁵

3. Conclusion

Here, the Declaration suggests two directions to be fostered: one is *doctrinal* and *spiritual*; the other is *apostolic* and *social*. As to the first direction, the Declaration exhorts all to seek after the best gift which is love; after all, it says, "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven are not the ministers but the saints." As to the second direction, the Declaration exhorts women to become more fully aware of their important role in the renewal of society.

4. Date of Approval, Confirmation and Mandate of Publication by Paul VI

The Date of approval or signing of the Declaration, October 15, 1976, is commonly interpreted as intentional because of the significance of the day, being the feast of St. Theresa of Avila, declared by Paul VI as a Doctor of the Church.²⁶ The date of signing is meant to avoid any interpretation that the Declaration favors a secondary status for women in the Church and to indicate explicitly the recognition of women's role and contribution to the Church.

5. Assignatories

The Prefect of the SCDF then was Franjo Cardinal Seper, and the Secretary is (now Cardinal) Jerome Hamer, O.P. To date the Prefect is Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger.

The second part of this series will deal with the first major point of controversy, i.e., the controversy over the *object of representation* (whom does the priest represent?).

²⁵ Rom. 12:4-9; Eph. 4:11-16; I Cor. 12:4; Col. 2:19.

²⁶ Paul VI in his homily on St. Teresa said that "in her case, Doctor of the Church was not a matter of title entailing hierarchical teaching functions." Cf. *The Pope Speaks* 15 (1970), p. 221; AAS 67 (1970), 594f.

PART II

THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE OBJECT
OF REPRESENTATION

The *object* of representation actually refers to the Christological and to the ecclesiological groundings of the ministerial priesthood which are very crucial in determining its nature. The controversialists disagree with the Declaration's affirmations on this point on many counts. Before we go into them, let us first make a brief review of the Declaration's *christological* affirmations in relation to the nature of ministerial priesthood. They can be summarized into two propositions:

1st — Being a sign, the priest must be a man (male) for "Christ was and remains a man". Here, the male-Incarnation is given a theological significance in the plan of salvation;

2nd — The relevance of Christ's maleness in the mystery of redemption, i.e., Christ's designation as a "Bridegroom" of the Church, the Bride.

This constitutes the bone of contention, so to speak, concerning the object of representation. Now let us see how the controversialists argue against these affirmations.

*The Controversialists' Position*1. *Against the Theological Significance Given to Christ's
Male-Incarnation*a. *Critical Objections*

aa. The main objection lies in the Declaration's ascription of theological significance to Christ's maleness in the plan of salvation (and hence, in the Christian priesthood), while not doing

the same to the rest of his physical features and to his socio-cultural circumstances.²⁷

bb. Controversialists interpret this emphasis on the maleness of Christ as a "misinterpretation" of the Creed, i.e., *homo factus est*. Sonya A. Quitslund, for instance, criticizes the Declaration for "giving untenable interpretation of the Creed by equating God-man with God-male,"²⁸ and Corrado Marucci, SJ, says it creates suspicion "for what the community professes is *homo factus est* not *vir factus est*."²⁹

Even prior to the Declaration, similar objections had been expressed. For instance, Rosemary R. Ruether had asserted that "the traditional understanding of the Incarnation never meant as its center the Incarnation of Jesus in the male sex."³⁰ "The real problem was," Jon Goman had also claimed, "how God could become a person at all, not whether he must be a male or female."³¹

This line of argumentation continued on after the publication of *Inter Insigniores*. R. Norris, Jr., a noted Episcopalian theologian, asserted again that the maleness of Christ is of no christological interest in Patristic tradition. He explains thus:

"The Fathers meant by Incarnation likeness to the word of God in his humanity to all those included within the scope of his redemption, and the epithet 'Son' as applied to the Second Person was acknowledged by the Fathers to be a 'metaphor' . . . To ascribe sex to God is to subject the infinite in its own being to created limitations and thus to substitute an ideal for God."³²

²⁷ H. van der Meer, SJ, *Women Priests in the Catholic Church? A Theologico-Historical Investigation*, tr. by Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler from the German original, *Priestertum der Frau?* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), p. 67.

²⁸ Sonya Quitslund, "In the Image of Christ", in *Women and Priesthood: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, (New York, Paulist Press, 1977), p. 260. This book is abbreviated henceforth as WP:CC-VD.

²⁹ Corrado Marucci, SJ, "Valutazione teologica degli argomenti sul controverso sacerdozio femminile", *Rassegna di Teologia* 17 (1976), 396-397.

³⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Male Clericalism and the Dread for Women", in *Women and Orders*, Robert J. Heyer, ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), p. 2.

³¹ Jon Goman, *The Ordination of Women: The Bible and the Fathers* (A Doctoral Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Theology, Claremont University, June 1976), pp. 185-186.

³² R. Norris, Jr., "The Ordination of Women and the Maleness of Christ", *Anglican Theological Review* (ATR), 6 (June 1976); reprinted in *Worship* 13 (March 1977); abridged form in *Theology Digest* 25 (Spring 1977), 11-14. All quotations are from Th. Digest.

Robert Hovda, a Catholic priest, paraphrasing Norris' view, adds:

"Any argument which pretends to find or invoke a christological faith dimension in the human fact of Jesus' maleness is not only a novelty in terms of Catholic tradition but also extremely damaging to traditional christology."³³

Finally, Arlene Swidler asserts that:

"One of the most dangerous examples of sexism is our translation of the old *homo factus est* as God become man rather than human, as the Latin said. After a few years of reciting the new creed, Catholics can easily come to believe that Jesus' maleness has a theological significance."³⁴

cc. Controversialists play down further the significance of Christ's maleness by asserting that it is a matter of *socio-cultural necessity* and a *linguistic accident*. Again, even before the Declaration came out, this had been put forward. For instance, Arthur A. Vogel, a noted Anglican theologian, had argued that "only male witnesses were juridically acceptable at that time", and that "Jesus came to bear witness to the Father", and these are sufficient grounds, Vogel explains, for the divine choice of the male sex.³⁵

When the Declaration came up, Rosemary R. Ruether pursued this reasoning, saying that "in the Hebraic framework, the Messiah can only be imaged as a male."³⁶ She then concludes:

"Theologically speaking, then, we might say that the maleness of Jesus has no ultimate significance. It has a social symbolical significance only in the framework of societies of patriarchal privilege."³⁷

³³ Robert Hovda, "Recognizing Christ in Women Priests", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 251.

³⁴ Arlene Swidler, "Why Are Women 'Sons of God'?" in *National Catholic Reporter* (1 April 1977), pp. 13-14.

³⁵ Arthur A. Vogel, "Christ, Revelation and the Ordination of Women" in *Towards a New Theology of Ordination: Essays on the Ordination of Women*, Marianne H. Micks and Charles P. Price, eds. (Sommerville, Mass.: Greeno, Hadden & Co., 1976), p. 44. Vogel admits, however, the inconclusiveness of his argument. He also acknowledges the theological significance of "parthogenesis" or virgin birth of Jesus wherein by biological or physiological necessity, he should have been female because of lack of male spermatozoa. This mystery can also be employed as argument against women's ordination.

³⁶ R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Christ's maleness as a *linguistic accident* is commonly argued by controversialists from the assumption that "masculine language about God is not absolute,"³⁸ because "male or female imagery," R. Norris maintains, "may be employed to characterize God's way of relating himself to humanity."³⁹

dd. Some other controversialists claim that undue emphasis on Christ's maleness leads to some extremes like the commission of "Christolatry" as Sarah Butler puts it.⁴⁰ It might also imply "superiority of man over woman" as Jon Goman maintains.⁴¹

b. *Alternatives Proposed*

As the object to the significance ascribed to the male-Incarnation, controversialists also offer other christological alternatives, i.e., other aspects of Christ that may be given equal or more emphasis in the act of representation without involving the question of sexuality, or at least, with sexual neutrality (either sex can represent). Noteworthy are the following:

- aa. the "risen" Christ
- bb. the "androgynous" Christ
- cc. the "feminine" attributes or qualities of Christ
- dd. the "female" Christ

ad aa) *The Risen Christ* — Finding the maleness of Christ irrelevant in the mystery of redemption, some controversialists strongly suggest that the *object* of representation is the "risen" Christ. Protestant controversialists are the foremost proponents of this. For instance, Hugh Montefiore, the Anglican Archbishop of Birmingham, maintains that:

"The priest is not a representative of the dead Jesus but of the risen and ascended Lord . . . In this risen Lord, sex

³⁸ Dr. W. Crockett, *The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood*, General Synod Resource Paper, 1973.

³⁹ R. Norris, Jr., *Op. Cit.*, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Statement she made at the Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA) Scholars' gathering on July 1984. Cf. *National Catholic Register* (July 1984), p. 8.

⁴¹ Jon Goman, *Op. cit.*, p. 186.

has no significance. In the resurrection, men and women are like angels (Mk. 12:25)."⁴²

George Tavard adds: "that the priest in some activities represent the risen Christ ought to be enough."⁴³

ad bb) *The Androgynous Christ* — To argue for sexually neutral representation, some other controversialists propose the "androgynous" Jesus. Starting with the proposition that "every person is potentially androgynous", Urban T. Holmes, III, maintains that "Jesus is androgynous".⁴⁴ Likewise, Leonard Swidler, after enumerating from Scripture the "masculine and feminine qualities of Christ", ascertains that "evidence shows overwhelmingly that Jesus had the full range of 'feminine and masculine characteristic' in all the categories."⁴⁵ For this reason, he declares that natural resemblance between Christ and the priest cannot be maintained in the physical level but in the psychological level.

Finally, R. R. Ruether sees in an "androgynous christology" the overcoming of the "split between maleness and femaleness on a spiritual plane", for the reason that "a male Christ alone cannot disclose the fullness of human possibility and divine nature as male and female."⁴⁶

ad cc) *The Feminine Attributes and Qualities of Christ* — Even if Jesus is biologically male, some "feminine attributes" and qualities have been ascribed to him. The most salient "feminine attribute" of Christ is his being the *persona of Wisdom* or *sophia*.

⁴² Hugh Montefiore, ed. *Yes to Women Priests* (Oxford: Mayhew-McCrimmon and A. & R. Mowberry and Co., Ltd., 1978), ch. 1, "Theology of Priesthood", pp. 3-4. He likewise maintains that the priest must also represent God, not only Christ, for the reason that the ascended Christ is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, p. 4.

⁴³ George Tavard, "A Theologian Challenges Margaret Farley Position" in *Women and Catholic Priesthood: An Expanded Vision*, Proceedings of the Detroit Ordination Conference. (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 54. Henceforward, this book is abbreviated as WCP: AEV.

⁴⁴ Urban T. Holmes, III, "The Sexuality of God", in *Male and Female, Christian Approaches to Sexuality*, ed. by Ruth T. Barnhouse and Urban T. Holmes, III. (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 264. Henceforth, this book is abbreviated as MF: CAS.

⁴⁵ Leonard Swidler, *Biblical Affirmations of Woman*. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), Part I, "The Feminine Imagery of God," pp. 21-72. Cf. his article, "Jesus Had Feminine Qualities, Too!" in *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR), April, 1977), p. 13.

⁴⁶ R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, p. 129.

Charles P. Price stands out in articulating this idea. He reasons out:

"If a man represents the female aspects of the Second Person of the Trinity to us, it does not seem inherently contradictory that a female could represent the male representative of the Second Person. In fact, a male priest might conceivably do better than a female priest could do those female aspects of the Second Person which Jesus incarnated."⁴⁷

Christ's "femininity" is seen in another perspective by Paul Lakeland, SJ, i.e., in his being the source and carrier of the life of grace in the Church. This way, Lakeland argues, the woman may represent him not only bodily but also theologically. He argues further:

"If a man can be priest yet exercise those functions which can be seen in the light of feminine symbolism, then it is no argument against women priests to say that they would have to perform certain symbolically masculine acts. In fact, their suitability for the priesthood as mediation and cooperation in the life of grace is far clearer than it is for men."⁴⁸

ad dd) *The Female Christ* — Although it is done non-verbally, and indirectly, the depiction of Christ in the arts as "female" makes a stronger statement. One case is the statue called "Christa" which is intended for exhibit all over the world.⁴⁹ Its connection with the issue can be gathered from remarks made by James Dark Morton, the Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City where the statue was exhibited:

"The effort to send a positive message to women had upset only the same people who oppose ordination of women."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Charles P. Price, "The Argument from Theology", in *Women Priests? Yes — Now!*, ed. by Canon Harold Wilson. (London: Denholm House Press, 1975), 59ff.

⁴⁸ Paul Lakeland, *Can Women Be Priests?* Theology Today Series No. 4. Edward Arnold, SJ, General Editor. (Dublin and Cork: Hercier Press, 1975), p. 68.

⁴⁹ *Christa* is a four-foot statue, 250 lbs., bronze work sculpted by Edwina Sandys, a granddaughter of Winston Churchill. She said that this work of art is a "portrait of women's sacrifices . . . I used Jesus Christ on the cross as a symbol of this". Cf. *Daily News* (New York), April 26, 1984, p. 4. Cf. also *Time*, May 7, 1984, p. 94.

⁵⁰ "Vexing Christa", *Time* (7 May 1984), p. 94.

2. *Against the Nuptial Image of Christ as "Bridegroom"*

This is the second bone of contention regarding the object of representation as affirmed by the Declaration. This is also a question of biblical symbolism or typology, and its theological value. It is necessary to distinguish here the objections presented *before* and *after* the Declaration:

a. *Before Inter Insigniores*

Already before the Declaration, H. van der Meer, SJ, had asserted that "the relation between the bridegroom and the bride in this context is not sexual in the biological sense." He maintained that the bridegroom and bride relationship between Christ and the Church is psychic-spiritual.⁵¹ He based his argument on the fact that the priest is also a member of the bridal Church and at the same time can also fulfill the bridal role of the Church. By the same token, he explained further, a woman can assume the bridegroom-role of Christ, especially so when biological sex is irrelevant to the relationship.

"The argument that the Church is the bride of Christ and that women cannot represent the bridegroom has immediate appeal and consistency. The argument is attenuated, however, when we go to consider that the existence of holy orders is co-terminal with the existence of the Church in this world... All orders stand within the Church and so all orders necessarily partake of the nature of the bride even when men are ordained to the orders."⁵²

b. *After Inter Insigniores*

After its publication, the Declaration was generally met with harsh criticism such as "The Declaration's nuptial symbolism argument is simply absurd!"⁵³

a. *"Too literal, too exclusive!"* — Peter Ellis, the source of the above remarks, finds fault with the Declaration in that it has

⁵¹ H. van der Meer, SJ, *op. cit.*, pp. 134 & 138. Paul Lakeland also argued that "Christ in the Gospels did not use the term for himself but preferred to 'Bridegroom and Wedding Guests'", *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁵² Arthur Vogel, *Op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁵³ "Fordham University Panel of Discussion on the Declaration", *NCR* (15 April 1977), p. 74.

a "shallow understanding of symbolism".⁵⁴ Likewise, Mary Sheehan, while acknowledging the Bridegroom imagery as a rich and important biblical symbolism, points out that "the Declaration errs in reducing it to a literal meaning."⁵⁵ She suggests that more nuance is needed to interpret this bridal symbolism and that many other symbols must be introduced "in order to criticize and correct the deficiencies of any one symbol taken too literally or taken too exclusively."⁵⁶

The same idea is expressed although in different terms by Margaret Farley, RSM: "The symbolism of bridegroom and bride is absolutized as an essential expression of God's relationship to the Church." She argues:

"Nuptial symbolism was never the only nor even the primary symbolism of the relationship of Christ to the Church and its continued value depends on its release from a stereotyped assignment of gender roles."⁵⁷

John Donohue, SJ, adds that the Declaration went a step further when it made a theological expansion or extension of the image found in the NT to priestly ministry. He claims that this imagery is applied in the NT "only to Christ and never to the ministry."⁵⁸

b. *Nothing sexual in the nuptial imagery* — Again, the asexuality of the nuptial image is brought about by some controversialists particularly from the biblical or exegetical viewpoint. The exegete, Carroll Stuhlmueller, CP, stands out in this endeavour. From his exegetical analysis of the Books of Hosea and Jeremiah, which are cited in the Declaration, he gives the following conclusions:

aa. "that the title of 'bride' and 'groom' as used by Yahweh, or Jesus, or the Church, do not immediately signify male and female, as they consecrate all people and

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Peter Ellis is one of the panelists.

⁵⁵ Mary Sheehan, "Important Clarifications on Argument and Authority", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 243.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Margaret Farley, RSM, "Vatican Makes Relative Symbols Absolute", in *NCR* (1 April 1977), p. 9.

⁵⁸ John R. Donohue, SJ, "A Tale of Two Documents", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 29.

God in a most intimate union. Marital union or merging of the sexes, not their differentiation and separation, dominates the biblical symbol";

bb. "that the Yahweh-Spouse or Jesus-Bridegroom image does not stress sexual difference but intimate, joyful and fruitful union of all persons; it rests on the psychological complexity of masculine and feminine genders in everyone, including God and Jesus;"

cc. "that biblical symbols modulate with amazing versatility and at key moments, break natural laws and resemblances."⁵⁹

Relating these conclusions to the issue, he maintains that:

"The image of the divine Bridegroom then does not dictate that priests in the Christian dispensation who represent Jesus must be clearly and apparently of the male sex. The image is far too involved for such a single-line application. In fact, a priesthood of men and women... would much more adequately represent the rich nuances of virginity and marital union, simultaneously overlapping in the symbol of God and Jesus as spouse."⁶⁰

Likewise, Dorothy Irvin sets against the Declaration the following conclusions from her exegetical analysis of the *Song of Songs*, *Hosea* and *Jeremiah*:

1st — There is nothing in them about the Catholic priesthood or about the ordination of women, or about Christ, or about the Church, or about marriage relationship of Christ and the Church;

2nd — There is nothing in them about marriage relationship between God and his people (Judah and Israel);

3rd — That not all analogies used to describe the God-people relationship in the OT have sex, i.e., some have, some others do not have.⁶¹

With these conclusions, she passes judgment on the Declaration rather critically:

"To insist that people in certain of these roles have the sex of the persons mentioned in the bible is self-serving

⁵⁹ Carroll Stuhlmueller, CP, "Bridegroom: A Biblical Symbol of Union, not Separation", in *WP:CC-VD*, 278-284.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁶¹ Dorothy Irvin, "Omnis Analogia Claudet" (sic), in *WP:CC-VD*, 271 & P. 273.

bias rather than respectful and attentive reading of the Scripture. It is also wrong because it is intended to deceive those who are uninformed . . . The inadequate scholarship of the Declaration, may act as a limitation to the historical study of men's as well as women's ministry."⁶²

At this juncture, it must be said that the preceding statements fairly represent the general tenor of the controversialists' objections against the Declaration's christological affirmations. One can readily see that they commonly devalue the theological significance of Christ's male-Incarnation, and propose an asexual representation, or at least a sexually neutral representation of Christ.

3. Corollary: *The Controversy Over the Primary Object of Representation:*

(Christ or Church?)

Another way by which the controversialists argue for an asexual or neutral object of representation is their espousal of the Church as the primary or direct object of representation. It must be made clear that both Christ and the Church are recognized as objects of representation. Here, it is a question of *primacy* or *priority* between the two. As explained in the first part, this is actually the perennial tension between the christological and the ecclesiological bases of the priesthood.

Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, very well pointed out the problem in his book, *Ministry, A Case for Change*.⁶³ Through an historico-critical analysis, he shows that in different periods of Church his-

⁶² D. Irvin, *Op. cit.*, 277.

⁶³ Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, *Ministry, A Case for Change* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1982). Here is a brief summary of his historical survey on the tension between the christological and ecclesiological groundings of the priesthood:

First Millenium (1 first 10 centuries) — emphasis on the ecclesiological dimension; *Second Millenium* — the ecclesial dimension faded into the background because of privatizations; *Fourth Lateran Council* (1215) — the ecclesial nature of ministry threatened to disappear because of the declaration that "the Eucharist can only be celebrated by the priest who had been validly and legitimately ordained."; the *Council of Trent* (1545-1563), the christological basis was very much emphasized in view of the "sacred character"; *Vatican II* (1962-1965), the ecclesiological dimension was equally stressed but then *representatio Christi* is located in the "person" of the minister and not formally in the "act" of exercising ministry.

tory, either one of the two has been given emphasis over and against the other, except in Vatican II, he says, where an equilibrium was somehow achieved. This equilibrium, he claims, has been abandoned by *Inter Insigniores*:

"The ecclesiological and pneumatological standpoint is abandoned and the priesthood is given direct christological foundation."⁶⁴

One can understand from this situation, therefore, why controversialists seem to emphasize the ecclesiological basis, or at least, why they want to give it equal emphasis with the christological basis. At the same time, they also want to suit their argument for women's ordination.

Controversialists argue for the ecclesiological basis in varied ways, the most notable ones of which are the following:

- a. Argument from the theology of priesthood;
- b. Argument from the historical development of the priesthood: its concept, the rite of ordination and its institution;
- c. Argument from the analysis of the levels of signification;
- d. Argument from the analysis of liturgical prayers;

ad a) *Argument from Their Understanding of Priesthood*—The view that priests are priests because they are personally consecrated to be representatives and active organs of the Church was articulated by R. C. Moberly, a leading Protestant theologian.⁶⁵ Banking on this theology, H. Montefiore argues that "the priest's role is representative rather than vicarial" and as such, "the priest certainly represents the Church."⁶⁶

This view is gaining adherence from Catholic scholars and theologians especially in their attempt to argue for women's ordination. Bernard Cooke and Pauline Turner, for instance, perceive the priesthood as "a power and function that Christians corporately bear, which they exercise corporately in the sacramental liturgies." In this perspective, the priest is "just a sharer and re-

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 67. Schillebeeckx proposes that preference must be given to the first millenium as a model for future shaping of the ministry.

⁶⁵ R. C. Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood* (Murray, 1899), 295f.

⁶⁶ H. Montefiore, *Op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

flector of the faith of the community" and one who "symbolizes the community that is celebrating the Eucharist."⁶⁷

ad b) *Argument from the Historical Development of the Priesthood: its concept, the rite of ordination and its institution:*

aa. *The term "priest"* — Through an historical analysis of the term "priest", controversialists show that it was only meant for the "whole community", and not for individuals with the exception of Christ. Again, Cooke and Turner drive this point emphatically:

"Historically, there was a shift away from early Christianity's communal understanding of 'priest' to an increasing application of the term to Church officials—by the third century 'priest' is commonly used for bishops—and the emergence of a group of professional priests, who acted upon rather with the rest of the community."⁶⁸

R. Ruether goes further by saying that "Jesus was not himself a priest in the meaning of the term in his own day", and that "in so far as Jesus is seen as establishing a new priesthood in the NT, this never was described as a new priestly caste similar to the old temple priesthood."⁶⁹ The noted Anglican theologian Julian Charley also adds that "the NT never called 'ministers' 'priests' in spite of the fact that the NT writers were very much aware or familiar with the term 'priest' as applied to the Jewish Levitical priests." Charley concludes, therefore, that "Jesus alone is priest and that his sacrifice and self-offering has made the Jewish priesthood redundant and superseded."⁷⁰

Finally, Joseph Kamonchak points out an apparent jump of terminology in that the word "Apostle" passes too easily to the word "priest", particularly when the context of this word concerns the Eucharist because of the lack of direct indications about who might preside over the Eucharist.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Bernard Cooke and Pauline Turner, "Women in the Sacramental Priesthood", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 249.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ R. R. Ruether, "Women Priests and Church Tradition", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 235.

⁷⁰ Julian Charley, "A Theological Commentary on the Agreed Statement on Ministry and Ordination", Bramcote, 1973, p. 22. The agreed statement refers to that of 1979 in Salisbury.

⁷¹ Joseph Kamonchak, "Theological Question on the Ordination of Women", in *WCP:AEV*, Appendix, p. 254.

bb. *The rite of ordination and the institution of the priesthood* — Controversialists assert that the rite of ordination supports their position. As Sonya Quitslund puts it, "a priest does not represent Christ immediately but only because he represents first the Church, first of all by the fact of ordination."⁷² She is referring to the theory of Schillebeeckx who claims that:

"The essence of ordination, and indeed the force of the old concept of ordination comprises the calling, the mandate or sending of someone by a particular Christian community (the people and its leaders) . . . This appointment was in fact made specifically by the laying on of hands with *epiclesis* or the prayer of the whole community."⁷³

R. Ruether asks, therefore, "by what right this caste of bishops regard themselves as the exclusive possessors of the power to ordain and those whom they have ordained the exclusive power to consecrate?" She then asserts:

"All ministry must be regarded as the historical creations of the Church . . . Any Christian community gathering together with the intention of being the Church of Christ has the power to celebrate the Lord's supper as an expression of their common life; the community has the power to designate persons to represent it in the sacramental actions of the Church itself, and to pastor the community."⁷⁴

This historico-critical analysis of ordination consequently puts the historical accuracy of the institution of the priesthood into question, i.e., the traditional belief that it was instituted at the institution of the Holy Eucharist during the Last Supper.

ad c) *Argument from the analysis of the levels of signification* — This sacramentological argument of approach is developed by the Jesuit priest, Edward J. Kilmartin. First of all, he criticizes the Declaration for assuming that in sacramental

⁷² S. Quitslund, *Op. cit.*, pp. 260-269.

⁷³ E. Schillebeeckx, *Op. cit.*, p. 39. He accepts, however, a priestly character in this sense: "... priestly only in the sense of service to the priesthood of Christ and the Church. He is servant of and in association with Christ the priest.", p. 70.

⁷⁴ R. R. Ruether, "Ordination: What is the Problem?", in *WCP:AEV*, p. 33.

celebrations, the mystery is directly signified and this assumption must be questioned. He proposes:

"The priest in liturgical activity *directly* represents the faith of the local Church of which he is the leader. Moreover, participating in the collegial office of the whole Church, priests *directly* represent the unity of the concrete liturgical communities through their communion with one another and so the common faith of the Church."⁷⁵

In this capacity, Kilmartin explains further, they represent in a special way the source of unity of the whole Church, Christ and the Holy Spirit. This is possible through an analysis of the "levels of signification", namely, *denotation* "which begins with what is more accessible and progresses toward what is ultimately signified", and *connotation*, the second level of signification, which "analyzes the actual process in which what is ultimately signified directs the whole process."⁷⁶ In reversing this process, wherein the ultimately signified directs the whole process, Kilmartin assigns a possible direct representation of Christ as Head of the Church.

In more concrete terms, Kilmartin is saying that all the activities of leadership of the priest (governing, teaching and liturgical presidency) are expressive of the faith of the Church and of his membership in the collegial body of the pastoral office. Furthermore, Kilmartin pinpoints the defects of the Thomistic eucharistic theology upon which the Declaration is based, and which gives direct christological representation, in particular, the moment of consecration when the priest pronounces the account of the institution. He asserts that this bypasses the first level of signification and that it is also based on a defective Middle Ages sacramentology "which confuses symbol with the reality signified", and which "neglects the epicletic character of the Eucharistic celebration."⁷⁷ In conclusion, he declares:

⁷⁵ Cf. Edward J. Kilmartin, SJ, *Church, Eucharist and Priesthood* (A Theological Commentary on the Mystery and Worship of the Most Holy Eucharist), (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 5; Cf. also Raymond Brown, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections* (New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1970); Thomas P. Rausch, "Ordination and Ministry Willed by Jesus", in *WP:CC-VD*, pp. 123-131.

⁷⁶ E. Kilmartin, SJ, develops this idea in the CTSA Report pp. 25-32. CTSA means the Catholic Theological Society of America.

⁷⁷ CTSA Report, p. 27.

"Only within a Thomistic theology of the priesthood, with all its seeming defects, can one argue to the exclusion of women from the ordained ministry because of the necessity of symbolic correspondence between the minister and Christ the male."⁷⁸

ad d) *Argument from the analysis of liturgical prayers* —

This liturgical way of arguing for direct ecclesiological representation by the priest is articulated by the noted liturgy professor, Ralph A. Keifer, in his article "The Priest as 'Another Christ' in Liturgical Prayers."⁷⁹ The assumption of this liturgical argument is *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Keifer tries to prove with this argument that emphasis on the christological basis of the priesthood incurs these inadequacies:

1st — it neglects the structure of the Eucharistic prayers of the East and the West;

2nd — it separates too drastically the cultic powers of the priest from the ecclesial dimensions of the ordained ministry;

3rd — it tends to make the Eucharistic celebration a "sacred drama".

ad 1st — *It neglects the structure of the Eucharistic prayers of the East and the West:*

Keifer claims that the Declaration overlooked the tradition of liturgical prayers by which the priest represents Christ only by speaking in the name of the Church. He specifically refers to the *Quam Oblationem*, the invocation made before the institution narrative.⁸⁰ This invocation by its very nature ("corporate in character") indicates the priest's direct representation of the praying and celebrating community. The *epicletic* character of the invocation also stresses the pneumatological dimension of the Eucharist.

ad 2nd — *It separates too drastically the cultic powers of the priest from the ecclesial dimensions of the ordained ministry—*

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

⁷⁹ In *Women and Priesthood's Future Directions*, Carroll Stuhmüller ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Press, 1978), 103-111. Henceforth, this book is abbreviated as *WP: FD*.

⁸⁰ CTSA Report, p. 31.

Keifer refers to this as the "major defect" of the Declaration in that "it speaks of sacramental signification as if it could be singled out in a particular moment of Eucharistic celebration and in that "it failed to recognize that in all liturgical actions, at all times, the priest represents simultaneously both the Church and Christ its Head and Shepherd."⁸¹ He explains thus:

"There is no moment in the eucharistic action when the priest represents Christ in any way apart from the Church. There is no liturgical prayer, in particular, there is no Eucharist which is not the action of the Church... at no point in the (eucharistic) prayer does the priest speak directly in the name of Christ. Even the institution narrative which quotes the *verba Christi* is spoken in the third person; it is a quotation within a narrative recital addressed as part of a prayer to God the Father, and it is encompassed within a prayer spoken in the name of the whole Church."⁸²

ad 3rd — *It tends to make the Eucharistic celebration a "sacred drama":*

Finally, Keifer says that the Declaration's view on "consecration" would reduce the sacramental sign to a dramatic pictorial tableau and to an enacted allegory. Such would devalue, according to him, the sign-value of the liturgical prayers.

Relating all these statements to the issue, Keifer concludes:

"Since on the level of sign the representation of Christ is grounded in the representation of the Church, it would seem that a woman could perform the priestly role of representing Christ as well as a man."⁸³

Having heard both sides of the controversy on this point, i.e., regarding the *object of representation*, what do we have to say about (for and against) the controversialists' views and proposals? This will be seen in the evaluation of the controversialists' position.

⁸¹ Ralph Keifer, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁸²

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

PART III

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CONTROVERSIALISTS' POSITION OF THE OBJECT OF REPRESENTATION

We have dealt with the controversialists' views and proposals vis-a-vis the Declaration's affirmations on the proper object of representation (christological dimensions of the issue). Now, a critical evaluation of their position is called for.

1. *Concerning the Theological Significance of Christ's Male-Incarnation*

a. *The Critical Objections*

Their denial of any significance of the male-Incarnation can be charged, generally speaking, to their understanding of Christ's "maleness" in a "material sense".⁸⁴ Now, to look at or to insist upon Jesus' humanity alone while being blind to his "maleness" is abstracting too much. Incarnation did not take place in a vacuum; rather, it took place in a concrete world and according to an already existing divinely established order: "male" and "female" humanity, two modes of concrete existence from which God had to choose to be able to carry out salvation for all. He chose to be "male" and there must be a reason. It cannot be without a purpose.

aa. To interpret the emphasis on Christ's "maleness" as a "misinterpretation" of the Creed is itself a misinterpretation. If ever the early Church Councils' christological pronouncements centered on the humanity of Christ, and not on his sex-identity, it is because of the nature of the heresies they were rectifying in those times. In stressing or affirming Christ's humanity, (against those who denied his divinity), his maleness was not excluded. It was not only included in the controversies or discussions. As

⁸⁴ The Official Commentary in *The Order of Priesthood*, p. 43.

the ITC declares now, "Christocentrism properly connotes Christology of Jesus of Nazareth, which taken in its more profound sense, expresses the 'singularity' of Jesus Christ."⁸⁵

Therefore, as his priestliness is co-extensive with his maleness, maleness is inseparable from his humanity.⁸⁶

bb. To set forward that the reason for Christ's maleness is a *socio-cultural necessity* and a *linguistic accident* is to take away the divine freedom and is to contradict a solid and consistent scriptural language about Christ.

Eric L. Mascall, a well-known Orthodox theologian, brings this point precisely, when he says that the male-Incarnation is not an accident because Christ came as a male for the reason that he is the Son and not the Daughter; because what was to be communicated was the relation he has to the Father. "He did not have to be a hermaphrodite", he explains, "to be fully human."⁸⁷

That the male-Incarnation is a free divine choice is very well pointed out by Fr. James Quinn, SJ. He writes:

"If there is no sex in God but only the qualities which give their origin to fatherhood and motherhood, there would seem to be no strict necessity dictating the maleness of Christ. But if there is some 'sign-value' in maleness of the language we use about the Father and the Son, even apart from Incarnation, his maleness may have been chosen to reflect that language. If the maleness is somehow 'sacramental' in regard to his unique position as God the Son, then it was by choice rather than by strict necessity that he was born male... the reason or reasons for such a choice may be equal or proportionately relevant to the sacramental system of the Church."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ ITC, "Theology, Christology, Anthropology", April 1983, Washington, USCC, p. B, 1.3. (Under the discussion on the relationship between *Theocentrism* and *Christocentrism*. This "singularity" or "particularity" of Christ is known in the controversy as the "scandal of particularity". Cf. John Boyer, "Some Thoughts on the Ordination of Women", *AVE: A Monthly of the Church of Mary the Virgin*, New York 41 (May 1972), 6-9.

⁸⁶ Cf. R. Antinarelli, SJ, "Will Women Be Ordained?", in *Homiletics and Pastoral Review* (henceforth known as *HPR*), (April 1977), p. 20; cf. also Vincent P. Miceli, "Woman and Priesthood", *HPR* (Aug.-Sept., 1976), p. 67.

⁸⁷ Eric L. Mascall, "some Basic Considerations" in *Man, Woman and Priesthood*, ed. by Peter Moore. (London: SPCK, 1979), p. 22.

⁸⁸ James Quinn, SJ, "Priesthood and Maleness", *HPR*, 85 (Nov. 1984),

Finally, as Fr. B. Lambert puts it, "The question has really nothing to do with socio-cultural framework where women were considered inferior."⁸⁹

cc. The allegation that over-emphasis on Christ's maleness leads to "Christolatry" is pushing the issue too far, and as a matter of fact, under-emphasis on it might lead to some ancient heresy called docetism, i.e., regarding Christ's maleness as if it is something in appearance only.⁹⁰

dd. Last but not least, the insignificance of the other physical attributes of Christ is due to the fact that "sexual differences" exercise an important influence much deeper than ethnic differences among human beings."⁹¹

b. *The Alternatives Taken*

The alternatives proposed by the controversialists have their own value as they enrich our perception of Christ's mystery. Moreover, they are very valuable in pastoral work for awareness on the part of the priest since these other Christian aspects help him in tending to the pastoral and spiritual needs of the male and female members of the parish. But then, each proposal has its own inadequacies or faults.

aa. *The "risen" Christ*, preferred as the object of representation is valuable in so far as it brings out the resurrection aspect of the paschal mystery. But the question is, does the risen Christ lose his maleness in the glorified state? The answer to this is very clear in the Declaration itself: Christ *was* and *remains* a man.

bb. *The "androgynous" Christ and his "feminine" attributes and qualities* — The tapping of Christ's "androgeneity" and "feminine" qualities and attributes are very helpful in the pastoral orientation of the priest, especially in dealing with the female members of the Church; but to use them as arguments for women's ordination would be an inadequacy for there are other things more important to consider.

⁸⁹ B. Lambert, O.P., *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Inter Insigniores*, art. 5. In *The Order of Priesthood*, p. 14.

Granted that Christ has "feminine" qualities, a more basic question still needs to be asked: "What is the subject of inherence of these qualities, is it a "male" or a "female" one? Furthermore, the tendency to over-emphasize these "feminine" qualities incurs the absurdity of "effeminating" Christ.

Concerning the attribute of Christ as the *Sophia*, its theological significance is played down with these conclusions of John Saward:⁹²

1st — "While it is true that Wisdom was an important christological term during the first three centuries, it never occupied a central place in the NT and the Patristic views of Christ";

2nd — "Moreover, there is no evidence of interest in the Incarnation of the peculiarly feminine qualities of an hypostasized *Sophia*. That only emerges among the Gnostics notably Valentinus who exploits the female hypostasization of Wisdom to the full";

3rd — "More importantly, Wisdom is primarily an attribute of the Trinity and not simply of the Son... Indeed, Wisdom has a plurality of ascription: it is applied not only to the Word Incarnate (I Cor. 1:24), but also associated with our Lady."

cc. *The "female" Christ* — Christ depicted as "sexually female" in art form is pushing the issue too far. In fact, the piece of art called Christa elicited more negative than positive reactions.⁹³

2. Concerning the Nuptial Image of Christ as "Bridegroom"

In general, controversialists are right in saying that there is nothing biologically sexual in the nuptial imagery especially when the Church as such has no genital sex. This is a good point they bring out. But then, to totally ignore a *generic sense* of the feminine symbolism of the Church and of the nuptial imagery can lead to a total devaluation of the biblical symbolism or typology which is a constitutive part of Revelation.⁹⁴ And to deny this

⁹² John Saward, *The Case against the Ordination of Women*, Third Edition. (London: Church Literature Association, 1978), 121-123.

⁹³ "Vexing Christa", *Time* (7 May 1984), p. 94.

⁹⁴ B. Lambert, O.P., *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

biblical symbolism which is very important in transmitting the message, as the Official Commentary of the Declaration explains, is "to call into question the whole structure of Revelation and leads to the rejection of the value of Scripture and fails to appreciate the human value of nuptial theme in the revelation of God's love."⁹⁵

Against those who do not see any connection at all between this nuptial imagery and the ministerial priesthood, there are some respectable theologians who *do* see it, like Gustave Martelet, SJ, Louis Bouyer and James Quinn, SJ.

a. G. Martelet, SJ, sees in the *communication* between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church the Bride, the foundation of specific ministry that can be called "priestly" in the real sense of the word. Inasmuch as Christ no longer appears personally to affirm his irreplaceable 'Bridegroom'." And this visible sign, according to Martelet, is the ministerial priesthood.

Now, since it is a ministry that depends on the "identity" of the Bridegroom, a title which cannot be understood without basing it with the male sex, Martelet concludes that "the priestly service of the New Covenant should be carried out by men."⁹⁶

b. Louis Bouyer also sees by *anterior analogy* the ministerial priesthood as a being and function similar to that of Christ to the Church and as representative of the Father. This male function of the priesthood lies in the mystery of the Cross and the Eucharist. Christ has always related himself to the Church as its head by being the "Good Shepherd" who lays down his life for his sheep in such a way that his life is handed down over as their indispensable and ever available nourishment in the form of bread and wine. Hence, Jesus' humanity attains such supernatural fruitfulness through the Cross.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ The Official Commentary, p. 43.

⁹⁶ G. Martelet, S.J., "The Mystery of the Covenant and Its Connection with the Ministerial Priesthood", in *The Order of Priesthood*, 99-110.

⁹⁷ Louis Bouyer, *Woman in the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1979), tr. Marilyn Teichert from the French original *Mystere et Ministeres de la femme* (Paris, 1976). Cf. also his article, "Christian Priesthood and Women", in *Man, Woman and Priesthood*, ed. Peter Moore (SPCK: London, 1979), 63-67.

The analogy is based on human sexual act between man and woman. He recognizes, however, the danger of sexualizing the relationship, which is spiritual, between Christ and the Church. Refer to the *Epilogue* of his work by Prof. Hans Urs von Balthasar for further explanation, pp. 114f.

Bouyer concludes therefore that as the Son represents the Eternal Father, so also the representative of Christ, the "Good Shepherd", the Head of the Church and the "Bridegroom" must be male in order to portray realistically the role of "spiritual fatherhood". Prof. Hans Urs von Balthasar cautions us, however, that this is just an analogy. He explains further:

"Spiritual fatherhood which imposes on the priest his particular vocation, is not so far reaching that it can be scarcely equated with physical fatherhood and its particular responsibilities."⁹⁸

c. Finally; Fr. James Quinn, SJ, almost says the same thing but adds some new insights to the nuptial imagery. He writes:

"Here is an important theological theme with an overt sexual imagery. Is this image of Christ as Bridegroom merely poetic or is it intended to crystallize a 'sign', a 'sacrament' capable of generating doctrine? If it is a sign, it points to a theological theme of great importance: theme of Christ as the sacrament of the Father, revealing in its sexual imagery the lifegiving source of all supernatural life."⁹⁹

This imagery and relationship can be seen in the Eucharist, which Quinn calls "renewal of the covenant", and which he considers as the "joyful celebration of the marriage between the Lamb and His Bride, the Church".¹⁰⁰ Now, Christ comes in person as Bridegroom and as the Second Adam to renew on the part of God the new and eternal covenant with the Bride. But he is invisible, therefore, he requires a "sign" of his presence. It is here where the priest acts in the person of Christ, as the sacrament of Christ, representing the Bridegroom of the New Israel, the Second Adam, ratifying not only in his name but also in his person the eternal marriage-covenant with his people. As the mediator, the priest represents the Bridegroom. If he were not male, would there be the same sign-value in the sacramental renewal of the covenant? The controversialists must answer this question.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 119.

⁹⁹ James Quinn, S.J., *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 26-27. By "renewal" he means like the sense in which religious vows can be renewed from time to time.

Quinn makes a further analogy with the human marriage wherein the sexual identity of the parties is required, i.e., one must be male and the other female. A homosexual marriage would be a contradiction in terms.¹⁰¹

To sum up, the explanations given above on the "nuptial imagery" are commonly saying that there are indications that the priest should be *male*.

3. *Concerning the question of the primacy or priority between Christ and the Church as the object of representation*

While the legitimate emphasis on the ecclesiological (and pneumatological) basis of the priesthood must be acknowledged, especially with the intention of making all ministries Church-oriented, it must be also pointed out that an undue emphasis of it could also lead to some Reformation errors.

a. *Their understanding of priesthood* — There is a tendency among the proponents of the concept of priesthood as "corporate" in character to exaggerate the lay priesthood. One can readily see a Lutheran influence. Moreover, ordained ministry seems to be seen as merely as an extension of the lay priesthood. Indeed, this is again a recurrence of the delicate problem of drawing the line between the "ordained" and the "lay" priesthood.

There have been, however, magisterial pronouncements which decree that these two differ not only in function but also in *essence*.¹⁰² Inasmuch as this will be given more detailed treatment later on, it suffices at this juncture to quote Paul VI's message to show the primacy of the christological basis:

"To all priests, then we say: never doubt the nature of your ministerial priesthood, for it is not a commonplace office or service to be exercised for the ecclesial community, but a service which participates in a very special manner through the Sacrament of Orders and with an indelible character in the power of the priesthood of Christ."¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰² Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 20 November 1947: *AAS* 39 (1947), p. 255. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 10.

¹⁰³ Paul VI, *Message to Priests at the Conclusion of the Year of Faith*, (NC News Translations: DSP Edition, n.d.), p. 5.

b. *Historical analysis of the term "priest", the rite of ordination and institution of Holy Orders:*

aa. *The term "priest"* — It is true that the term "priest" (*hiereus*) which was exclusively applied to Jewish priesthood, in particular to a group who opposed Christ and his teaching from the beginning, was never applied to the Apostles and their successors. But then, as the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) rightly observes in its *Final Report*:

"Despite the fact that NT ministers are never called *priests* (*hiereus*), Christians came to see the priestly role of Christ reflected in these ministers and used priestly terms in describing them."¹⁰⁴

It is also true that the Christian priesthood has superseded the OT priesthood, but then a certain continuity is still retained between the two, not in the OT priesthood's *limitations* but in its *intentions*, i.e., as an institution of mediation service.¹⁰⁵

bb. *The rite of ordination and institution of Holy Order:* Schillebeeckx, being the foremost proponent of this theory of ordination as "appointment" by the community, needs a more thorough critique. Robrecht Michiels and George Duggan are the first to offer one.¹⁰⁶

Michiels criticizes Schillebeeckx on the following counts:

1st — "Schillebeeckx's theory or thesis that the community has a right to ministerial service is of first importance... but Schillebeeckx has interpreted 'ordination' as 'appointment' at the expense of its personal and sacramental dimension";

2nd — "Chalcedon (canon 6) does not prove that ministers were called by the local church or community, it merely says that they were ordained for it."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ ARCIC, *Final Report* (Oxford: CTS/SPCK, 1982), p. 35.

¹⁰⁵ Louis LeLoir, "Values of the Levitical Priesthood", in *Priesthood and Celibacy* (Editrice Ancora: Milano-Roma, 1972), 59-65. Henceforward, this book is abbreviated as *PC*.

¹⁰⁶ R. Michiels, "E. Schillebeeckx and Church Ministry", in *Theology Digest* 30 (Summer 1982), 106-110; George Duggan, "Catholic Priest or Presbyterian Minister?", in *HPR* 84 (Dec. 1983), 27-32 & 46.

¹⁰⁷ Canon 6 of the Council of Chalcedon (451) forbade absolute ordinations, i.e., "No one may be ordained priest or deacon in an absolute manner (*apolymenos*)... unless a local community is clearly assigned to him." Cf. *PG*, 104, 558.

Duggan also criticizes Schillebeeckx on certain points. He says that Schillebeeckx's theory on "ordination" has a Presbyterian undertone. He explains why:

"... all that would be needed for ordination in the christian ministry would be a call from a local congregation, the acceptance of this call from a local congregation, to a suitable candidate to become the leader of this congregation, the acceptance of this call by the prospective minister and the laying on of hands by the congregation, accompanied by the prayer to the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁸

Further, Duggan figures a Lutheran influence on Schillebeeckx's claim that the community has a right to the Eucharist, so that in certain cases, if an ordained minister is not available, the community can designate one of their members to preside at the Eucharist.¹⁰⁹

Michiels and Duggan seem to have been justified in their evaluation of Schillebeeckx when the SCDF issued in 1983 the "Vatican Declaration concerning the Minister of the Eucharist" which reaffirms that only the ordained minister can preside over the Eucharistic celebration and that the priest acts not on the mandate of the community but in persona Christi.¹¹⁰

Finally, John Paul II stresses this christological basis of the priesthood in one of his homilies:

"The priesthood constitutes a special ministerium, that is to say, 'service' in relation to the community of believers; it does not, however, take its origin from that community, as though it were that community that 'called' or 'delegated'... The sacramental priesthood is truly a gift from God for this community and comes from Christ

¹⁰⁸ G. Duggan, *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁹ Luther's work, *Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality* (1520) is meant here. He wrote: "Suppose a small group of earnest Christian laymen were taken prisoner and settled in the midst of a desert without any episcopally ordained priest among them and then agreed to choose one of themselves, whether married or not, and endow him with the office of baptizing, administering the sacrament, pronouncing the absolution, and preaching, that man would be as truly priest as if he had been ordained by all the bishops and Popes." (Quoted from Duggan, p. 29).

¹¹⁰ SCDF, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Certain Questions concerning the Minister of the Eucharist*, Vatican City, 1983. (Washington: USCC, 1983). Cf. "Vatican Stresses Sacramental Ministry", in *National Catholic Register* (25 Dec. 1983), pp. 1 & 9.

himself, from the fullness of his priesthood. In this gift-giving to his people, it is the divine giver who takes the initiative; it is he who calls one: 'He himself had decided on'."¹¹¹

Concerning the "historicity" of the institution of Holy Order, which of itself can be a subject matter for a doctoral dissertation, it suffices to quote here the SCDF:

"... the fact of institution cannot be considered only within the limits of the account arrived at by historical method; one must take into account the authentic interpretation of the Scriptures which pertains to the Church to make."¹¹²

c. *Kilmartin's analysis of the "levels of signification"* — To date, no one has yet commented on his theory. First of all, his distinction on the two levels of signification is simplistic and does not conform with the true nature of sacramental signification. Sacramental signification does not imply a "technical process" as Kilmartin describes it, so as to speak of "levels of signification" (level one and level two). Rather, by *essence*, signification implies a relation (*relatio*), i.e., between the sign and the signified. Hence, it is *relational* rather than *processional*, thereby allowing no intermediary step or level. The signification is instantaneous, that is, the sign instantaneously and immediately signifies the spiritual reality.

To exemplify, let us take the example given by Kilmartin himself: *baptism*. Here, the matter is natural water, whose very nature and use is solvent. Hence, it is a good material for cleansing. As a sacramental sign, (let us not forget, however, the element of divine institution), natural water immediately signifies "spiritual cleansing" (washing of original sin). One cannot see any process involved. The incorporation of the baptized into the community of believers (level one for Kilmartin) is theologically the same as the incorporation of the baptized into the

¹¹¹ John Paul II's homily in Philadelphia on October 4, 1979, Cf. *U.S.A. — The Message of Justice, Peace, Love*. Compiled and indexed by the Daughters of Saint Paul: Boston, 1979, p. 138. This idea is stressed again in *Dominicae Caenae? Holy Thursday Letter*, February 24, 1980, n. 8., par. 4.

¹¹² SCDF, *Observations on the Final Report of ARCIC* (London: CTS, 1982), n. 2.

mystical body of Christ (level two for him). Speaking of Holy Orders, therefore, the priest *is* the sign of Christ. The priest takes his place "sacramentally" to confer grace on the recipient of any sacrament. It is also in this sense that the priest represents Christ in the liturgical celebrations.

d. *Keifer's analysis of the liturgical prayers* — First and foremost, he must answer this question: when the faithful assemble (original meaning of *ecclesia*) for liturgical celebrations, who calls them? Is their coming together something spontaneous? From the very context of liturgical prayers, i.e., the worshipping community, one has to pinpoint the convoker in whose place the priest stands: CHRIST. This is very clear from *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7, which speaks of Christ as always present in the Church. His presence is made perceptible in the male priest.

Secondly, Keifer seems to view the Eucharistic celebration as a "momentary" celebration only. He fails to see that as a whole, it is *one sacrificial act and in continuity* with the first Holy Sacrifice. One must not lose sight of these two facts when speaking of the Eucharistic celebration as a sacrifice. Moreover, although the Church offers it as a whole, it is also a tenet of Catholic faith that the offering be made "through the priest in a sacramental way, not just mere recitation of the prayers and words of consecration."¹¹³

Thirdly, that singular moment when the priest pronounces the *verba Christi* is a glaring indication, contrary to what Keifer claims, that the priest stands for Christ, and that it is never a claim, that the priest's role is "disjuncted" from his role of representing the Church. This is very obvious in the words of consecration:

"THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP
FOR YOU."

"THIS IS MY BLOOD... WHICH WILL BE SHED
FOR YOU."

¹¹³ Ibid. This observation by the SCDF is due to the vagueness of the expressions used by the ARCIC in its *Elucidations on Ministry and Ordination* (Salisbury, 1979); "It is only the ordained minister who *presides* at the Eucharist in which in the name of Christ and on behalf of the Church, he *recites the narrative* of the institution of the Last Supper." These terms (underlined by me) may not necessarily mean, the SCDF observes, a "sacramental" role; they may only mean a "functional" role.

Now, while the priest acts in behalf of Christ in pronouncing these words, he is also acting in behalf of the Church, because the *reason* for the giving up of the Body and the shedding of the Blood is Church-oriented ("for you"). Here the dual representative role of the priest, i.e., *in persona CHRISTI* and *in persona Ecclesiae* is made clear and distinct: he represents Christ as the "author" of the sacrifice and he represents the Church as the "beneficiary" of the sacrifice.¹¹⁴ The priest acts, however, in behalf of the author of the sacrifice. One can also clearly see here that the dual representation is "simultaneous" as Keifer rightly states, but here, it is not a question of priority of *time* but of *nature*.

Lastly, in answer to the objection that emphasis on the priest's representing Christ directly in the Eucharistic celebration might give an impression that it is a *sacred drama*, anyone must admit that somehow, it is indeed a *sacred drama*, for the reason that it is a "re-enactment", or a "re-presentation" or a "renewal" of the first sacrifice, whose main *dramatis personae*¹¹⁵ is Christ, and whose role is assumed by the priest. Even in theatrical plays, a female assuming the role of a male is not only a mimicry but also an anomaly. As Duggan rightly puts it:

"It would be anomalous to invite a female to play the title role of Hamlet."¹¹⁶

Final Remarks

In this controversy over the proper object of representation, we have seen that it is a complex one and it is actually a reflection of the current christological problems. However, it is more tenable to affirm that Christ's male-Incarnation has a theological

¹¹⁴ By "beneficiary" I do not mean the passive role of the Church only; the Church also has an active role inasmuch as the Holy Sacrifice is also an act by which the "Church wholly offers and is wholly offered." Cf. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter, *Mysterium Fidei* 3 (September 1965); AAS 57 (1965), p. 761.

¹¹⁵ This is the original meaning of *persona*, i.e., the mask worn by an actor. Later, it was meant to refer to the role he plays in the stage, and finally it was applied to any character on the stage of life, i.e., any individual. However, there is no certainty of its etymology. It is said that the Latin word *persona* is derived from the Greek word *prosopon* (προσωπον). Cf. The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., s.v. "Person."

¹¹⁶ G. Duggan, *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

significance in the plan of salvation than to exclude it, for that would be ignoring biblical symbolism or typology, not to mention the contradiction of a *fact*, i.e., that Christ was and remains a man. Moreover, to push aside Christ's basic quality of being of the male sex and then set forward other sexual qualities like his "androgeneity" and "femininity" as christological aspects of representation appears unsound.

Another attempt to water down the significance of the male-Incarnation is the controversialists' espousal of the ecclesiological basis of the priesthood (*in persona Ecclesiae*). While the attempt to make an equilibrium between the christological and the ecclesiological bases of the priesthood is legitimate, it would not be a guarantee to ordaining women because the nature of the priesthood must be anchored in Christ, not in the Church for the Church herself owes her priesthood to Christ, the High Priest.

Finally, one's answer to the question of *object* of representation gives some substantial indication to the proper "subject" of representation. The Declaration's answer indicates a "male" representative and its answer has more weight and more feasibility than that of controversialists'. For the next part, we will deal with the "mode" of representation: how does the priest represent Christ?

PART IV

THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE MODE OF REPRESENTATION

Intimately connected with the question of the *object* of representation is the question of the *mode* of representation. This actually refers to the relationship between the *representative* (the priest) and the *represented* (Christ, established as the primary object of representation in part two). In question-form, it asks: "In what way or manner does the priest represent or signify

Christ?" The Declaration's answer is "by natural resemblance", a Thomistic sacramentological principle:

"Sacramental signs represent what they signify by natural resemblance."¹¹⁷

Moreover, the Declaration extends the application of "natural resemblance" to *person*, not only to *things*,¹¹⁸ and this person-sign must be "easily perceived and recognized by the faithful."¹¹⁹ In the case of the Eucharistic celebration, it would be difficult to see the image of Christ if it were not celebrated by a male priest because Christ was and remains a man. By *natural resemblance*, the Declaration apparently means most significantly "sexual" resemblance, i.e., *maleness*.

The controversy over the "mode" of representation, then, is heavily an *anthropological* question, and two main points are the topics of controversy on this matter, namely, the *meaning of understanding of natural resemblance* and the *unicity or differentiation of the sexes*.

The Controversy over Natural Resemblance

1. The Controversialists' Interpretations

Owing to their varying fields of specialization, the controversialists question the theory of natural resemblance in varying ways, most of which can be categorized as *biblical*, *psychologico-moral-spiritual*, and *theological approaches*.

a. Biblical Approach

Representative of these controversialists who question the theory of natural resemblance from the biblical perspective is Fr. Carroll Stuhlmueller, OP. His main objection lies in the fact that Jesus never exercised any sexual activity with the Church.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ St. Thomas, *In IV Sent.*, dist. 25, q. 2, qa. 1, ad 4^{um}.

¹¹⁸ *Int. Ins.*, art. 5, in *TOP*, p. 12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Carroll Stuhlmueller, CP, "Bridegroom: A Biblical Symbol of Union, not Separation", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 278.

Hence, there is no "natural resemblance" involved at all in the relationship, and if "natural resemblance" were pushed to its extreme, Stuhlmüller goes on to explain, then the symbol of Hosea's marriage would require that Jesus himself and all priests not only be married but also be victimized by unfaithful wives.¹²¹

He proposes then that the priesthood must not be too tied to excessive natural resemblance but rather be considered in its "unity and variety",¹²² and in this way, extension of the priesthood would follow those biblical norms and accentuate the "mysterious presence of Jesus, wondrous Spouse of the Church."¹²³

In this same perspective, Leonard Swidler claims that the exclusive reservation of the priesthood to males in virtue of their natural resemblance with the male Christ is "the grossest sort of misreading of the Gospels" and "produces a radical distortion of the Gospels."¹²⁴ He bases his assertion on his speculation that the Gospels show Christ as possessing both "feminine and masculine traits." Swidler asserts further that "natural resemblance" cannot mean "physical resemblance" because "the male organs are never visible while the priest is functioning as a priest."¹²⁵

b. *Psychologico-Moral-Spiritual Approach*

In this perspective, controversialists, going beyond or skipping the physical, interpret "natural resemblance" in a psychologico-moral-spiritual sense. Already before *Inter Insigniores*, D. van der Meer, SJ, had hinted at a "pure psychic and spiritual representation of Christ,"¹²⁶ and Paul Lakeland, SJ, also had proposed "a mere metaphorical" representation of Christ.¹²⁷

The same line of interpretation carried on even after the Declaration's publication. Elizabeth Carroll, RSM, for instance, equates "natural resemblance" with "moral resemblance" inferred from her statement:

¹²¹ Carroll Stuhlmüller, O.P., ed., "Culture, Leadership and Symbolism in the Old Testament", in *WP:FD*, p. 43.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

¹²⁴ Leonard Swidler, "Jesus Had Feminine Qualities, TOO!", in *NCR* (1 April 1977), p. 13.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹²⁶ H. van der Meer, SJ, *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹²⁷ P. Lakeland, SJ, *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

"People see a 'natural resemblance' to Jesus in the love conveyed, the service rendered... the self-shared, much more than they look at the physical characteristics like sex."¹²⁸

Likewise, F. W. Dillistone interprets "natural resemblance" in the moral or spiritual sense when he maintains that it is the "imitation of Christ, an essential part of vocation, that counts and such would qualify no one from playing roles."¹²⁹ Sonya Quitslund goes even further in her interpretation for saying that Christ's presence in the priest is a "mystical" rather than a sexual one in view of the fact that Christ is the real celebrant of the Sacraments and the Church with the Holy Spirit is the "corporate subject" of Eucharistic celebration.¹³⁰

c. *Theological Approach*

Some other controversialists argue against "natural resemblance" in truly serious theological perspective, most importantly from the following viewpoints: *anthropological theology*, *sacramental theology*, in particular *Eucharistic theology*.

aa. *Anthropological theology* — Directly commenting on the Declaration in this aspect is Thomas P. Newbold, CP.¹³¹ After descriptively enumerating the three current approaches or views on human sexuality,¹³² he makes some critical observations on the Declaration's affirmations among which is the alleged espousal of "stereotypical reductionism" for concluding that the fact of Christ's "male personhood", being the archetypal symbol of the priesthood requires an exclusively male priesthood. He explains why:

¹²⁸ Elizabeth Carroll, RSM, "Women in the Life of the Church", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 63.

¹²⁹ F. M. Dillistone, "Male-Female Symbolism", in *Yes to Women Priests*, H. Montefiore, ed., pp. 30-47.

¹³⁰ Sonya Quitslund, *Op. cit.*, p. 263.

¹³¹ Thomas M. Newbold, CP, "Symbolism of Sexuality, Person, Ministry and Women Priests", in *WP:CC-VD*, 133-141.

¹³² The three approaches he mentions are: 1st, the purely biological; 2nd the socio-cultural approach; 3rd — the symbolic (androgynous) approach. More details of this will be discussed in the controversy over "sexual differentiation".

"The natural resemblance of a natural symbol does not require that the symbolic person or function or object be a literal copy of the person or object symbolized."¹³³

If "natural resemblance" does not lie in sexuality, where then? Newbold's proposition, as most proponents of women's ordination do, suggests "personhood", since this covers, according to him, "a larger and more adequate context than the limited sexual-anatomical perspective of 'natural resemblance' indicated by the Declaration, thereby making it appear a sexist document," and one that "emphasizes sexuality over humanity."¹³⁴

The Theologians at Berkeley University in California also strongly propose that "the sacramental sign necessary to act *in persona Christi* is to be located within the *human person* rather than within the masculine or feminine sexuality." They also stress that the "exclusion of women from priestly ordination does not enforce the image of Christ but rather symbolizes sexual discrimination."¹³⁵

bb. *Sacramental theology (Eucharistic theology)* — A critical analysis of the theory of "natural resemblance", not only as employed by the Declaration but also as expounded by St. Thomas himself, is undertaken by Christopher Kiesling, OP. First of all, he disapproves of the Declaration's act of extending "natural resemblance" to *persons* in sacramental signification, because "the sacramental signs should be considered impersonally as a few words, gestures and perhaps even objects constituting the matter and form of the sacrament."¹³⁶ Secondly, Kiesling pinpoints some apparent "inconsistencies" of St. Thomas in expounding the theory of natural resemblance as presented in some of his treatises:

aaa. *Treatise on the Eucharist (Summa III, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3)*. Here, St. Thomas explains why the priest and the victim are the same:

¹³³ Ibid., p. 139.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Joseph Tetlow, SJ, *et al.*, *Op. cit.*, p. 205.

¹³⁶ Christopher Kiesling, OP, "Aquinas on Persons" Representation in the Sacraments", in *WP:CC-VD*, p. 253.

"The priest... bears Christ's image in whose person and by whose power he pronounces the words of consecration."¹³⁷

Now, Kiesling observes that the use of the term "image" here is contradictory to that of ad 2 in the same treatise where he describes the celebration of the Eucharist as "an image representing Christ's passion" (*image representativa passionis Christi*) and "the altar represents the cross" (*est repraesentativum crucis ipsius*).¹³⁸ He questions, therefore, the implication of Christ's *image as maleness*.

bbb. *Treatise on the Image of God (imago Dei) in man* (*Summa*, I, q. 93, a. 1) — St. Thomas defines here *image* as "something expressed or squeezed out of another" (*quod sit ex alio expressum*). An image, therefore, would be one that comes forth from another. An egg, for example, no matter how it looks like another egg, would not be an image of that other egg, for it did not come from it. In this case, the priest would not be the image of Christ for he did not come from him but from his father. The maleness of the priest does not come from Christ but from his will.¹³⁹ The priest's maleness, therefore, is only a "condition" but not the "basis for constituting him as Christ's image."

So, Kiesling asks, "what precisely constitutes the priest's image of Christ? Is maleness an absolutely necessary condition for receiving that constitutive element?" He seems to find the answer in St. Thomas' treatise on *character*.

ccc. *Treatise on character* (*Summa*, III, q. 82) — Here, St. Thomas answers the question whether the priest's proper duty is the consecration of the Eucharist:

"Whoever performs an act in place of another person necessarily does so through a power granted by another."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 83, a. 1., ad 3.

¹³⁸ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 83, a. 1, ad 2.

¹³⁹ Kiesling stresses that this is precisely the problem: God's willing it or not.

¹⁴⁰ *Summa*, III, q. 82, a. 1: "Quicumque autem aliquid agit in persona alterius oportet, hoc fieri per potestatem ab alio concessam".

St. Thomas calls this empowering as the "sacramental character of Order" which the priest receives at ordination. It is the empowering to consecrate in Christ's place. Now, Kiesling deduces from this explanation that it is not "maleness" but the *sacramental character* which constitutes the priest's image.

ddd. *Treatise on women as subjects of the priesthood* (In IV Sent., dist. 25, q. 2, qa. 1, sol. I: *Summa; Suppl.*, q. 39, a. 1) — In this treatise, St. Thomas answers the question whether or not a woman can be the subject of the priestly power (sacerdotal character), so as to become "Christ's image". His negative answer is based on "woman's inability to signify some degree of eminence or superiority,"¹⁴¹ because of her being in the state of subjection to man" (*in statu subjectionis*).¹⁴² Now, Kiesling criticizes St. Thomas in this case on two counts: first, for extending the sacramental sign to the person involved in the sacrament; second, for the incorrect concept of womanhood (being in the state of subjection) as the immediate reason for barring women from the priesthood.¹⁴³

eee. *Treatise on sacramental signs and their institution* (*Summa*, III, q. 64, a. 2) — Here, St. Thomas designates "natural resemblance" as the condition for sacramental signification. Kiesling objects to this for it is *divine institution* not *natural resemblance* that ultimately constitutes a sacramental sign. It is God who chooses certain things from among others to convey a special significance of the sacrament. Kiesling caution us, therefore, to avoid over-emphasis on natural resemblance, for it could play down the element of divine institution which is constitutive of the sacramental sign and to which *natural sign* is subordinated. He suggests then that the divine choice be discerned from divine

¹⁴¹ "Cum in sexu femineo non possit significari aliqua eminentia gradus . . . ideo non potest ordinis sacramentum suscipere".

¹⁴² "Quia mulier habet statum subjectionis". Kiesling points out also that a woman's inability to signify some degree of eminence does not lie in her being of the female sex but in her state of subjection. However, Kiesling is also aware that St. Thomas recognizes that a woman may be superior to man in her soul.

¹⁴³ As said earlier, this argument is no longer tenable. Hence, the Declaration argues from the nature of the ministerial priesthood.

revelation, for instance, Gal. 3:28, which could instruct us, he says, about the *subject* of Holy Orders.¹⁴⁴

All the preceding criticisms and objections seem to agree on one thing: that "natural resemblance" should not be located and limited to "maleness". A term with more extension and less discriminatory is being proposed, namely, "personhood" or "humanity".

2. *Evaluation of the Controversialists' Position*

We follow the same order in which the objections and propositions were presented:

a. *Biblical approach* — There is a general tendency among them to interpret *literally* the nuptial imagery in terms of "natural resemblance" like the sexual relation or activity supposed to be performed between Jesus and the Church, who are Bridegroom and Bride respectively, or the "infidelities" committed. An exegete like StuhlmueLLer should know better than that when it comes to scriptural interpretation. His emphasis on the "nuptial imagery" as "a symbol of union and not of separation" is indeed very helpful in fostering marital unity and indissolubility, but to employ it to argue for women's ordination seems insufficient. Moreover, even in marital intimacy, the sexual diversity of the man and the wife is presupposed for there can be no real "union" without "sexual distinction."

Swidler also tends to literalize "natural resemblance" in asserting that the priest must also display both the "feminine and masculine traits", as he gathered from the Gospels. Granted that Christ has both traits, Swidler has yet to answer one more question: What is the subject of inherence of these traits, a male or a female? The obvious of course is male. That Christ was and remains a male is a fact that the Declaration states beyond any reasonable doubt. Moreover, as E. Mascall rightly asserts:

"It is misleading to say that there are female characteristics in men and male characteristics in women, on the

¹⁴⁴ Kiesling acknowledges that God uses "natural resemblance" between sensible things and the mysteries of grace signified.

ground that men can be gentle and women can be courageous, for example; I would not admit that gentleness is basically a female virtue, or courage is basically a male one. What is true is that there is a male way of being gentle, and a female way of being courageous."¹⁴⁵

b. *Psychologico-Spiritual-Moral Approach* — This way of interpreting "natural resemblance" is very useful in terms of the moral and spiritual life of the priest. But this is not the issue here. The element of "visibility" which is an important element of a sacrament seems to be lacking. Furthermore, the exclusion of the physical or biological level and the exclusivity of the psychic and spiritual has a quasi-Manichaean touch.¹⁴⁶

c. *Theological Approaches*

aa. *Anthropological theology* — It is indeed very true that "personhood" or "humanity" is a term wider in extension. But the question here is one of "limitation" not of "extension", and there must be a reason for the limitation of the extension to maleness and not to personhood or humanity. Moreover, "personhood" taken in its theological sense cannot be the basis of "natural resemblance" for Jesus does not have a "human personhood" but only a divine personhood. Humanity as such is a very general and abstract term. A concrete quality of Christ's humanity and of the priest's must be the basis so as to fulfill the requirements of "perceptibility" and "visibility" in sacramental signification. This quality of *being* (maleness) is more necessary when it comes to the reception of the "sacerdotal character" as we will explain later on.

Furthermore, Newbold cannot accuse the Declaration of "stereotypical reductionism" because there is more to "male priesthood" than stereotyping, i.e., it is a matter of doctrine. Stereotyping suggests a kind of unreasonable or chance conformity of figures or images, and to say that the Declaration does this in teaching "male priesthood" is asserting too much.

¹⁴⁵ Eric L. Mascall, "Some Basic Considerations", in *Man, Woman and Priesthood*, Peter Moore, ed. (London: SPCK, 1979), p. 21.

¹⁴⁶ E. L. Mascall, *Women Priests?* (London: Church Literature Association, 1972); he is commenting on van der Meer.

bb. *Sacramentological approach (Eucharistic theology)* — A critique of Kiesling's critique of St. Thomas and the theory of "natural resemblance" is called for at this point. Firstly, it seems that Kiesling misread St. Thomas on several counts; and secondly, he fails to give a better solution.

aaa. *"Image of Christ" and "image of God" confused* — Here, Kiesling seems to commit the fallacy of "equivocating the middle term", i.e., the application; the meaning and the context of "image" in both phrases are different. St. Thomas is speaking of "image of Christ" in the context of priestly representation in the Eucharistic celebration on one hand, while he is speaking of the "image of God" in the context of creation or generation on the other hand. Properly speaking, one cannot speak of the priesthood as the imaging of God; rather it is the imaging of the God-man, i.e., Christ. His priesthood; although it has its foundation from eternity, was effected at the moment of Incarnation. He became a priest in his human nature, and hence, in time. It is in this human nature that he performs his priesthood.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, every human being is the "image of God", while not everyone can image Christ in the context of Eucharistic celebration.

Kiesling's assertion is that there is a contradiction in the use of "image" in the expression *imago repraesentativa passionis Christi* and in the expression *est repraesentativum crucis ipsius* vis-a-vis the priest as the "image" of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration. There is no contradiction, however, inasmuch as St. Thomas is using "image" in two different cases. In the first case, "image" is used in reference to *things* (the Eucharistic celebration as the image of Christ's passion and the altar as the image of Christ's cross), while in the second case, it is used in reference to *persons*, i.e., the priest is the image of Christ; the real celebrant of the Mass.

It is for this reason that sacramental signification does not only lie in the *things as signs* but also in *persons as signs*. Hence, St. Thomas is right in saying that the Eucharistic celebration as a whole (thing), is a sign or the image of the passion (thing)

¹⁴⁷ *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967 edition, s.v. Priesthood", p. 775.

of Christ; and that the altar (thing) is the sign or image of the cross (thing) of Christ. Obviously, the priest (person) is the sign or image of Christ (person). It would be ridiculous to hold a Eucharistic celebration without a *visible sign* of Christ, and this *sign value* can be found in a *male-celebrant*.

bbb. *The "image" of Christ in the priest* — Kiesling's statement that it is sacerdotal character that constitutes the priest as the "image of Christ" is inadequate for he fails to distinguish between what *formally* and what *materially* or *substantially* constitute the priest as the image of Christ. The sacerdotal character given at ordination is that which *formally* constitutes the priest as "image" of Christ, otherwise known as *configuration* in Vatican II's terminology,¹⁴⁸ and the priest's *maleness* materially or substantially constitutes him to be Christ's image. This is so because sacerdotal character is something *spiritual* and *invisible*. As the Official Commentary rightly observes:

"Obviously, it is the character received by ordination that enables the priest to consecrate the Eucharist and reconcile penitents; but the character is spiritual and invisible (*res et sacramentum*). On the level of sign (*sacramentum tantum*), the priest must have both received the laying on of hands and take the part of Christ. It is here that St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure require that the sign should have natural resemblance."¹⁴⁹

ccc. *The "status subjectionis" of women* — Kiesling is correct in assessing that St. Thomas' reason for barring woman from the priesthood, i.e., being in the state of subjection to man, is inaccurate. The Declaration itself admits that it is no longer tenable today. However, as the Official Commentary explains:

"Although St. Thomas gave as a reason for excluding women... the state of subjection, he nevertheless took as a starting point the principle that 'sacramental signs represent what they signify by natural resemblance... and since a sacrament is a sign, what is done

¹⁴⁸ LG, #10; PO, #2.

¹⁴⁹ Official Commentary in TOP, p. 41.

in the sacrament requires not only the reality but also the sign of the reality."¹⁵⁰

ddd. *The element of divine institution* — Kiesling is right to point out the element of divine institution as a necessary element and not be played down in emphasizing "natural resemblance". I disagree, however, with his suggestion that the subject of priesthood can be discerned in Galatians 3:28, for this passage, as we will discuss later, has nothing to do with priesthood but with baptism. Moreover, Kiesling seems to forget that Tradition, not Scripture alone, is a part of Revelation and is also a source of some strong indication of who is the proper subject of priesthood.

I do not agree also that "natural signs" are subordinated to the divine choice of sacramental signs. I would say that both are co-determinants because the divine choice, although it is free, is based on the nature of things. This is a clear application of the theological dictum: *gratia perficit naturam* which literally means grace perfects nature. Moreover, God respects nature, his creation.

In other words, sacramental signs are not purely natural signs of invisible grace because their being signs also depends on God's will, nor can they be regarded as purely conventional or arbitrary signs because they are also deeply significant of grace by their very nature. As St. Augustine rightly posited:

"If the Sacraments did not possess some kind of to the things which they signify, they would not be sacraments."¹⁵¹

We will now tackle the problem of sex differentiation, and its relevance to the priesthood.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁵¹ St. Augustine, *Ep.* p. 8, 9 (Bonif.)

PART V

THE CONTROVERSY OVER
SEX-DIFFERENTIATION

Corollary to the controversy over "natural resemblance" is the controversy "sex-differentiation". Granted that "natural resemblance" is "sexual resemblance", is there really a difference between the sexes? If there is, is it ontological or existential? Is it essential or accidental? Intimately connected with this is the question of "sex roles". Thomas M. Newbold states the question quite precisely:

"Are there any particular or special roles and functions which are closed or should be forbidden to any human person by reason of his or her sexual anatomy? Or more precisely, does the sexual anatomical fact intrinsically imply a destiny of inclusion or exclusion from any of the roles and functions of a human person?"¹⁵²

1. *Preliminaries*

a. *A Review of the Declaration's Affirmations* — It goes without saying that the Declaration affirms sex differentiation, and such differentiation is effected by the divine will and it affects the human personality much more deeply than any other form of differentiation among human beings.¹⁵³ These affirmations are based on biblical revelation and not on the conclusions of human sciences. This is due to the fact that the problem of sacramental theology, particularly the ministerial priesthood, cannot be resolved by human sciences, no matter how valuable their contribution may be in their own domain.¹⁵⁴

Concerning the appropriate "sex roles", in particular the assumption of the role of Christ by a male, the Declaration ex-

¹⁵² Thomas M. Newbold, CP, *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

¹⁵³ *Int. Ins.* 5, in *TOP*, p. 14.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

plains that it does not stem from any personal superiority of the latter in the order of values but only from the difference of fact on the level of functions and services. The Declaration explains further that:

"Equality is in no way identity, for the Church is a differentiated body in which each individual has his or her role. The roles are distinct and must not be confused; they do not favor superiority of some vis-a-vis others, nor do they provide an excuse for jealousy."¹⁵⁵

b. *The Three Approaches to Human Sexuality* — to understand more fully the differing views between the Declaration and the controversialists in this regard, a descriptive enumeration of the three approaches to human sexuality is called for. Irrespective of their opinions, Thomas M. Newbold, C.P., and Mary Aquin O'Neill, RSM, do the best critical summary of the three.¹⁵⁶

aa. *Biological approach* — emphasizes difference and complementarity, and the psychology of man and woman is viewed as derivative of the physical and thus, all areas of personal functioning are sharply and irrevocably defined. The Freudian dictum, "Anatomy is destiny" seems to express vividly this view.¹⁵⁷

bb. *Cultural approach* — maintains that the psychology of human sexuality is derived from and shaped by the influence of "cultural traditions" rather than the determination of biological structures and endowments. Conditions of society define and determine the masculine and the feminine. Hence, masculine and feminine traits can change as culture changes.¹⁵⁸ This approach has two forms. The radical form totally disregards biological differences; role differentiation based on these differences are created and imposed by unjust male standards. The *milder* form

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁵⁶ T. M. Newbold, CP, *Op. cit.*, p. 135; Mary Aquin O'Neill, RSM, "Toward a Renewed Anthropology", in *Woman, New Dimensions*, Walter Burkhardt, ed. (New York/Toronto/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1977), 149-160.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, James Strachey, ed., (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1965), pp. 124-127; 135.

¹⁵⁸ The main proponent is Margaret Mead. Cf. her work, *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World* (New York, 1949); Cf. also Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology* (NY: Norton & Co., 1967).

admits biological difference but the cultural facts prevail over the biological ones.

cc. *Symbolic approach* — attempts to balance the first two approaches by correcting the rigid restrictions of the biological approach and the excessive claims of the cultural approach.¹⁵⁹

This approach is greatly influenced by Carl Gustave Jung's theory of "contrasexuality" which maintains that every person has elements of the opposite sex. Hence, the masculine is not the exclusive concern of the male and the feminine is not the exclusive concern of the female.¹⁶⁰ The feminine element in man is called *anima* and the masculine element in woman is called *animus*. These are "archetypal" principles and patterns of the human psyche.

This phenomenon is also known by a more famous term, androgyny, from the two Greek words *aner* (aner) and *gune* (gune), meaning male and female respectively. This must not be confused with the physiological abnormality, *hermaphrodite*, a case of one having both the male and the female genitals. If androgyny is taken symbolically, Newbold maintains, it means "a mode of individual existence in which a complete integration of the masculine and the feminine is possible."¹⁶¹

2. *The Controversialists' Position*

Controversialists find support for their arguments the emphasis on sex-differentiation from 1) *Scripture* and 2) from contemporary human sciences, in particular the Jungian theory.

a. *Scriptural arguments* — The main question to resolve here is whether or not from the story of creation (Genesis, 1

¹⁵⁹ Accdg. to Newbold, the biological approach tends to reduce all the differences between men and women to "anatomical endowments" and the derived possibility of male and female functions; the cultural approach tends to look upon any admission of difference as discrimination; the symbolic approach, while recognizing biological differences, does not restrict personal role and function to sexual anatomical differences.

¹⁶⁰ C. G. Jung, "Psychology and Alchemy", in *Collected Works*, tr. by R.F.C. Hull (New York: Pantheon, 1967), XII, p. 144. Cf. also "Mysterium Conjunctionis", in *Collected Works*, XIV, 1963, 89f. Cf. also Ann Belford Ulanov, "C. G. JUNG on Male and Female" in *MF*"CAS, pp. 117-120.

¹⁶¹ T. M. Newbold, *CP*, Op. Cit., p. 137.

to 3), and from the problematic passage, Galatians 3:28 (as far as its citation as a proof of women's ordination is concerned), it is God's intention that man must be different from woman, with fundamentally different roles, and whether or not this difference has a theological significance at all.

aa. *Genesis 1-3: The Story of Creation of Man and Woman and the Order of Creation*

The controversialists' interpretation of the narrative of creation of man and woman generally stresses "unity and equality" of the sexes rather than their differentiation. Typical of this approach is Thomas L. Thompson,¹⁶² who maintains that both the creation narrative (Gen. 1) and the Garden Story (Gen. 2-3) stress the unity of the sexes. Here is how he interprets them:

"God takes a bone from the *human* and out of that, makes a woman. When he takes the woman to the human to be identified, the human approves with a series of sayings which affirms the likeness and *identity* of men and women: like comes from like, bone from bone, flesh from flesh, woman (*issah*) from man (*is*). This identity is exemplified in marriage (here not understood as hierarchical as in Paul) wher *the two become one*."¹⁶³

Before the Declaration, however, a radical interpretation of the creation story was given by Paul Lakeland. Referring to the Yahwist-tradition account, he asserts that:

"...adam, man refers primarily to mankind, and is innocent of any sexual differentiation. Man is one, in solitude and loneliness... he needs a helper fit for him... The creation of woman from Adam's rib is not then a complete new creation but an extension of man into the creation of woman (*issah*)..."¹⁶⁴

Again, Lakeland, referring to the Priestly-tradition account of creation, claims that "it postulates an original non-sexual human which is differentiated into male and female." As to the

¹⁶² T. L. Thompson, "The Divine Plan of Creation: I Cor. 11:7 and Gen. 2:1824", in WP:CC-VD, p. 210.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 211.

¹⁶⁴ P. Lakeland, SJ, Op. cit., pp. 41-42-.

phrase "male and female he created them", it means, according to Lakeland, "to serve as an apposition to the pronoun *him* (referring to *adam*) immediately proceeding it." In other words, sexual differentiation into male and female "was not part of being in God's image, but was a means to sharing an expression of God's image."¹⁶⁵

bb. *Galatians* 3:28

"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's Jesus."

Now we focus our attention to this controversial Pauline passage which is almost always quoted or cited by controversialists as a scriptural basis for the irrelevance of sex differentiation in the priestly ministry.

Again, before the Declaration, Paul Lakeland had interpreted this passage to mean that "certain natural classifications of humanity no longer have any meaning;"¹⁶⁶ for Virginia Molenkott, it means that Paul was "envisioning a breakdown of stereotypical behaviour" and "partnership and harmony between the sexes".¹⁶⁷ Hewitt and Hiatt, connecting this passage to the effects of the fall, said that "a new order which reverses order had freed mankind", according to them, from the bondage of all sinful conditions like the subordination of woman to man and sex distinctions."^{167a}

The same line of interpretation was carried on even after the Declaration. Representative of the controversialists' interpretation is that of Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM:

"Except for the theological declaration in Galatian 3:27-28, that all natural distinctions, including that of sex, are

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁶⁷ Virginia Molenkott, "Woman and the Bible" A Challenge to Male Interpretations", in *Mission Trends*, No. 4, G.H. Anderson and T. F. Stran-sky, CSP, eds. (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist Press and Grand Rapids, 1979), p. 230.

^{167a} E. Hewitt and S. Hiatt, *Op. cit.*, p. 56. The analogy they make is that "as one man's act led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men." (Rom. 5:18)

transcended by the unity of the baptized in Christ, the NT says nothing about men *qua* men, or about women *qua* women . . ." ¹⁶⁸

One can readily see that the controversialists have interpreted Galatians 3:28 in such a way that their arguments for women's ordination are suited to it, i.e., total eradication of *all* natural distinctions, sex included, so that, as a result, sex is irrelevant when it is a question of sacramental representation or signification.

b. *Arguments from Contemporary Human Sciences* — A great number of controversialists invoke upon the conclusions of human sciences to discredit the Declaration's affirmations on sexual differentiation and sex roles as well. Subsequently, they contend that the evidence from the human sciences should be taken into consideration in theological discussions. Nadine Foley, is quite emphatic on this point. She says:

"This raises the issue of appropriate theological method and the relation of human sciences to theological reflection in the matter of sex role differentiation, as in all other areas of theological concern. Not only do the Vatican pronouncements on women appear to be made in isolation from such sciences as anthropology and sociology, but they are also made in isolation from insights of modern biblical scholarship." ¹⁶⁹

The following contemporary sciences are invoked by the controversialists to support their position:

aa. *Anthropology* ¹⁷⁰ — In the controversy, two kinds of anthropology are being espoused, as analyzed by the Catholic Theo-

¹⁶⁸ Sandra M. Schneiders, IHM, "Women in the Fourth Gospel and the Role of Women in the Contemporary Church", in *Biblical Theological Bulletin* (BTB) 11 (April 1982), p. 35.

¹⁶⁹ Nadine Foley, O.P., "Woman in Vatican Documents 1960 to the Present", in *Sexism and Church Law*, James Coriden, ed. (New York/Ramsey/Toronto: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 102. Cf. the CTSA Report, p. 38 "The human sciences are important to ecclesial discussion . . ."

¹⁷⁰ *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967) generally defines *anthropology* as the science of man and his works and distinguishes two branches, namely, physical anthropology which studies man as a biological organism,

logical Society of America (CTSA) Report. They are the "single-nature" anthropology and the "dual-nature" anthropology; the first views human nature as one and the human existence as the same for both sexes, and the latter views human nature as sexually differentiated and human existence is different for each.

Furthermore, "single-nature" anthropology, which is obviously advocated by the controversialists, considers sexual differentiation "accidental" in a sense,¹⁷¹ for beyond the reproductive functions, persons are essentially the same and are free to adopt modes of living appropriate to any human being. The "dual-nature" anthropology apparently advocated by the Declaration, according to the CTSA, has "unsound assumptions,"¹⁷² "uncritical acceptance of patriarchal structures as natural and ordained by God rather than as human historical norms" and "legitimizes discrimination".¹⁷³

bb. Biology — Controversialists also appeal to the biological sciences to disprove that "gender roles" are based on biological sex. Concerning the sex act, for instance, the same CTSA Report claims that "contemporary biology proves that the woman is not merely receptive or passive" and that "the equally active role of the female and the receptive role of the male cautions us against the use of biological dualities in the theological discussions."¹⁷⁴

A more specific biological experiment is also put forward by Rosemary R. Ruether, i.e., the inconclusiveness of the experiment purporting to show that there is more laterized brain development in males and more integrated brain development in females. The

and cultural anthropology which studies man's works, social behaviour, beliefs and languages. *Theological anthropology*, another branch, studies man not in himself but in relation to God. Hence, it studies man in-his-being-in-relation, Vol. I, s. v. "anthropology", p. 597f.

¹⁷¹ This portion of the Report is authored by Anne Car, BVM, a member of the CTSA team. She is aware, however, of oversimplification in her classification, p. 32.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 40. Cf. Mary Buckley, one of the panelists in the discussion on the Declaration held at Fordham University (New York); *NCR* (15 April 1977), p. 24; cf. also R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, ch. 4: "Anthropology: Humanity as Male and Female", pp. 93-115. One of the assumptions mentioned is the "inferior status of women".

¹⁷³ Discrimination is nuanced by the controversialists because of the Declaration's emphasis on sex-limited dualities, on feminine psychology, and the male's headship.

¹⁷⁴ Examples of these dualities are rational/intuitive, structural/personal, active/passive for male/female.

recent research on bicameral brain showing that the right brain specializes in intuitive, musical, relational and spatial capacities, while the left brain specializes in linguistic and mathematical thinking is also questioned by Ruether, saying that it cannot be the basis for sexual differentiation since both males and females have both sides of the brain. She then concludes from these data:

"There is no necessary (biological) connection between reproductive complementarity and either psychological or social role differentiation. These are the work of culture and not of nature."¹⁷⁵

Referring to the recent studies on human development, Sidney Callahan likewise maintains that "the sexual differentiation can be seen as a fairly minor part of an incredibly complicated growth process, unless a culture chooses to exaggerate the difference."¹⁷⁶ She is referring to the lack of sexual differentiation in the early embryo, in infants and in small children, which is manifested again in old age. In short, Callahan is saying that biological science shows that we begin and end endrogynously. The only moment, brief and temporary, when sexual differentiation is most manifest in our cycle is *sexual reproduction*.

In view of all these, Letty Russell asserts that:

"A lot of theology in the past has discussed human sexuality under guise of what is 'biologically natural'. Such discussion often turns out to be rather *uninformed about present biological studies on human development* and tends to read longheld theological doctrines into the discussion without re-examining the new biological, sociological or psychological perspectives."¹⁷⁷

cc. *Sociology* — is another interrelated human science invoked by some controversialists. With the new sociological researches on the changing roles of women in society,¹⁷⁸ they argue that it is not anatomy or nature that differentiates man from woman, but rather cultural and societal standards.

¹⁷⁵ R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, p. 111.

¹⁷⁶ Sidney Callahan, *Op. cit.*, p. 292.

¹⁷⁷ Letty Russell, *The Future of Partnership* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), pp. 81-89.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Lloyd, *Adolescent Sex Roles and Social Change* (New York: Co-

It is Letty Russell who strongly asserts that gender role is based on the dictates of culture and society. The role develops according to the ongoing psychological influences that help define for each what sort of actions, thoughts and self-identity are associated with being male and female in a particular culture.¹⁷⁹

Likewise, the CTSA Report cautions anyone in assuming that the nature of women can easily be determined by an appeal to the patterns of the past, such as the inferior status of women in a patriarchal culture, inasmuch as one culture is as good as another.¹⁸⁰ Eleanor McLaughlin, for instance, recalls how woman was reduced in family and society to her biological being in the Middle Ages. She puts the blame on the Christian adaptation of Greek philosophy which had associated women with fleshliness and emotion, man with rationality and spirit, and especially the Greek physiology that woman is a misbegotten male. McLaughlin writes:

"One must recognize that 'this difference between sexes', this subordination of 'self-giving', 'receptiveness and responses' ... has historically in fact, been inseparable from inferiority ... The Church has defined the way in which God may validly speak to women!"¹⁸¹

Considering the social and economic changes and their effects upon the traditional family structure, in particular the role of woman, Nadine Foley, OP; again takes this up to undo traditional sex roles is subjected to the pressure of rapidly changing economic structures."¹⁸² One such family structure set-up is the so called "dual-career", an arrangement where both husband and wife pursue careers, thus making them both "heads" of the family. Foley says that it is not only a situation of dual careers but also one of dual family responsibility. She explains:

"Both men and women, in the dual-career family, have both career and familiar roles, and with the exception of pregnancy and childbirth, there is no assumption that any

lumbia University Press, 1984).

¹⁷⁹ Letty Russell, *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁸⁰ CTSA Report, p. 39.

¹⁸¹ Eleanor McLaughlin, "Male and Female in Christian Tradition: Was There a Reformation in the 16th Century?", in *MF:CAS*, p. 41.

¹⁸² Nadine Foley, O.P., *Op. Cit.*, p. 101.

of the activities are inexorably sex-linked. This is not say that there are no categorically or biologically sex-linked differences in the capacities of man and women to perform special activities, e.g., 'mothering'.¹⁸³

dd. *Psychology* — It seems that this science is the one most frequently invoked by controversialists to prove their point. In general, the CTSA Report asserts that the evidences gathered from this science "would caution us against unproven assumptions about 'feminine psychology' or specifically feminine qualities and virtues, or assumed fundamental psychological differences between man and woman."¹⁸⁴

The Jungian *theory of contrasexuality* seems to be the strongest argument employed by most feminists¹⁸⁵ and by most controversialists against sexual differentiation. In fact, Ulanov, an ardent follower of Jung, and Newbold find high hopes in it. According to Ulanov, this theory promises the "fullness of being human" and that "it can guide us through the danger of being caught up in a stereotype sex roles on the one hand or in a formless lack of identity on the other."¹⁸⁶ Newbold shares the same optimism in the "androgynous" human existence inspired by this Jungian theory, since "it adds an essential dimension to our understanding and appreciation not only of human sexuality but also of the human person generally, whether that person be male or female."¹⁸⁷

What they are trying to say is that "the holistic view" of humanity offered by the Jungian psychology illustrates that the Declaration "has an inadequate understanding of human persons,¹⁸⁸ "misunderstanding sexuality"¹⁸⁹ and bases its affirmations on "assumptions"¹⁹⁰ concerning sexual differentiation and roles.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ CTSA Report, pp. 38-39.

¹⁸⁵ Feminists like Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, tr. M. H. Parshley, (New York, 1952); Elizabeth Janeway, "The Weak are the Second Sex", in *Atlantic* (Dec., 1973); Dr. June Singer, "The Age of Androgyny", in *Quadrant* 8 (Winter, 1975).

¹⁸⁶ Ann Belford Ulanov, *Op. Cit.*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 208-09.

¹⁸⁷ T. M. Newbold, *Op. Cit.*, p. 136.

¹⁸⁸ Margaret Farley, RSM, "The Dialogue Continues", in *WP:AEV*, p. 60.

¹⁸⁹ Sidney Callahan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 292-293.

¹⁹⁰ CTSA Report, p. 38-39.

Finally, Leonard Swidler adds, "a division of characteristics by sex role is artificial, false."¹⁹¹

*A Specific Objection: Emphasis on
Sexual Differentiation and Roles Implies Discrimination*

We cannot end the discussion on the controversy over sexual differentiation and sex roles without touching on specific objection arising from it: that emphasis on sexual differentiation and sex roles implies *discrimination*. This accusation is commonly made by the controversialists against the Declaration for barring women from priestly ordination because of their sexual identity.¹⁹²

The common claim is that women have the *right* to be ordained, or at least, to have their call to the priesthood be *tested*. It is Margaret Farley, RSM, who makes a critical analysis of the Declaration in this regard in almost all works.¹⁹³ Firstly, she made an apparent contradiction in two statements made by the Declaration concerning the priesthood: that on one hand, the Declaration says that "the priesthood does not imply any personal superiority", and on the other hand, it speaks about "the real and eminent place of the priest in the community of the baptized". Farley does not see how the Declaration "could fulfill the principle of equality" even if there are good reasons for opening the office of the priesthood to one class and not to another on the basis of sex."¹⁹⁴

Secondly, she asserts that sexual differentiation constitutes discrimination, for aside from the fact that the Declaration fails to specify the characteristically "feminine qualities"¹⁹⁵, which are not fit for sacerdotal ministry, it seems to have a "double stan-

¹⁹¹ Leonard Swidler, "Jesus Had Feminine Qualities, Too!", *loc. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁹² Cf. T. M. Newbold, *Op. Cit.*, p. 139; J. Tetlow, *et al.*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 205: "The exclusion of women from priestly ordination symbolizes discrimination"

¹⁹³ Margaret Farley, RSM, "Discrimination or Equality? The Old Order or the New?", in *WP:CC-VD*, pp. 310-315.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

¹⁹⁵ She is referring to Paul VI's "Women/Disciples and Co-Workers" *Origins* 4 (1975), 718-719, and the SCDF's "The Role of Women in Evangelization" wherein some feminine characteristics are said to make women suitable for all ministries not sacerdotal, upon which the Declaration is implicitly built.

dard", i.e., if those characteristics are found in men, there is no question of their exclusion from ordination, whereas if they are found in women, they are considered unsuitable for the ordained ministry. In conclusion she asserts:

"The Declaration's efforts to hold together the principle of equality and sexual differentiation in Church ministry finally fails. We are left with clear inequality of opportunity, an inequality that is not justified by morally relevant factors. This is to say that we are left with sexual discrimination, the violation of rights and an overall unjust order in the Church."¹⁹⁶

To sum up the controversy over *sexual differentiation* and *sex roles*, one can readily see a difference of emphasis and a difference of methodology. The Declaration emphasizes sexual differentiation as theologically significant, while the controversialists emphasize unity and equality of the sexes, and they consider sexual differentiation theologically irrelevant. The Declaration bases its affirmations on divine revelation, whereas the controversialists base their affirmations on the conclusions of contemporary human sciences, or at least, want to integrate these findings into theological discussions. Hence, there is a conflict of emphasis and methodology. The controversialists seem to accuse the Declaration of inadequate or inaccurate understanding of human sexuality, of emphasizing sexuality over personhood, of fostering discrimination. Are all these accusations justifiable? The evaluation of the controversialists' position, therefore, comes to order.

3. *Evaluation*

a. *The Biblical Arguments*

aa. *The Creation Story and the Order of Creation* — Some respectable exegetes and biblical theologians differ from the controversialists' interpretation and support the Declaration's view that humanity as male and female is God-willed, i.e., different but equal and complementary.

¹⁹⁶ Margaret Farley, work just cited, p. 314-315.

Gerhard von Rad, a noted exegete, for instance, along with his followers, interprets the Priestly account of creation to mean that:

"By God's will, man was not created alone but designated for the 'thou' of the other sex. The idea of man according to the P, finds its full meaning not in the man alone, but in the man and woman."¹⁹⁷

Another biblical scholar, Raymond F. Collins, corroborates von Rad's interpretation. He maintains that the creation of man is "a creation of male and female"; that "sexuality is of the human realm"; that "the whole man exists as male and female is according to the very plan of the Creator"; and that "man is sexual because God intended him so, not because God Himself is sexual."¹⁹⁸

A special note of exegetical explanation on "image" (Hebrew, *selem*) and "likeness" (Heb., *demut*) must be given at this point. Collins explains that man's image and likeness to God lies in the *operational* rather than in the *physical*, i.e., the imagery is in the "task" not in the "sexual differentiation". However, it is as "sexually differentiated", Collins explains further, "that man has received the task."¹⁹⁹

Likewise, Collins points out that the Yahwist version of Genesis is often misinterpreted to mean "inferiority of woman to man" because woman is said to be "taken out of man". "Temporal priority" he explains, "does not imply ontological priority". The Yahwist version merely presents a perversion of the sexual life from its primitive integrity. The order is still retained, only the existential situation of the human sexual experience is not as it ought to be."²⁰⁰

Prof. Otto Piper also proves how biblical ideas contrast strongly with mere biological or humanistic views on the male-female relationships. He writes:

¹⁹⁷ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Second Edition (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 56.

¹⁹⁸ Raymond F. Collins, "The Bible and Sexuality", in *BTB*, 7 (October 1977), pp. 149-167.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155; 166.

"The second account of the creation of man in Genesis 2:7 is in its present context meant to serve as a commentary on the first one (Gen. 1:23-30) *by stressing the difference of the sexes*. The bible attaches such importance to differentiation of the sexes that the full destination of man cannot be obtained except of means of it."²⁰¹

To conclude this matter, it must be stressed that an authentic understanding of the creation of man and woman accepts a differentiation between the sexes, even if there is a disagreement on whether or not this means "subordination".²⁰²

bb. *Galatians* 3:28 — Likewise, some respectable and competent exegetes and biblical scholars have an interpretation of Pauline passage different from that of the controversialists. They do not simply differ but also disprove the controversialists' interpretation.

For instance, Arthur Vogel himself disagrees with the use of this text to argue for woman's ordination, saying that to do so is "to extrapolate beyond the intention of the text."²⁰³ The intention of St. Paul is well articulated by John Seward and Donald Winslow, who maintain that St. Paul had in mind a "pastoral exhortation" to his listeners because of a situation in which Christians had been accused of dishonoring marriage and advocating sexual confusion of ambisexuality.²⁰⁴ John Saward explains thus:

"This reconciliation in Christ does not mean the creation of a great collective in which all are uniformly the same. Christ unites us so that the Spirit may diversify and create a rich multiplicity in which difference is cause for celebration."²⁰⁵

Vicente Miceli, SJ, expresses the same idea in these terms:

²⁰¹ Prof. Otto Piper, *The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage* (1960), 90ff.
²⁰² Cf. Catherine M. Odell, "Does the Bible Say Women Should Be Submissive to Men?", *Visitor* (20 February 1983), pp. 6-7, for the debate on this matter.

²⁰³ A. Vogel, *Op. Cit.*, p. 46.

²⁰⁴ J. Saward, *Op. Cit.*, p. 8; D. F. Winslow, "Sex and Anti-Sex in the Early Church Fathers", in *MF:CAS*, p. 29.

²⁰⁵ J. Saward, *Op. Cit.*, p. 8.

"Redemption did not contradict creation nor overturn its order. It did not cancel the vocation of the sexes."²⁰⁶

With regard to the other Pauline injunctions, G. Trompf and J. Murphy O'Connor clarify that Paul's intention is to prove "sexual difference."²⁰⁷

b. *Arguments from Contemporary Human Sciences*

This matter recalls to us the controversy over the "theory of evolution" (which seemed to put evidence of biblical revelation against the evidence of human sciences). Pius XII resolved the controversy by stating that "this theory must not be rated as something certainly established in the present condition of scientific thought."²⁰⁸ In the same token, the controversialists seem to have canonized the data from these human sciences as true and certain, and as the main criteria of theological truths. Aside from the fact that these human sciences are in themselves experimental, hypothetical and merely based on statistics, the controversialists seem to have forgotten that biblical revelation, Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church are the integrated criterion of theological truths. To treat, therefore, of a subject matter by a method not within its competence or beyond its competence is a wrong methodology. As B. Lambert rightly says:

"One... cannot substitute a humanistic reading of the Word of God for a reading of faith, or a non-traditional reading for a reading which has for itself the advantage of a homogeneous continuity with the order of the mysteries such as they have manifested themselves."²⁰⁹

Now, we deal with the specific human sciences they have employed:

²⁰⁶ V. Miceli, *Op. Cit., Op. Cit.*, pp. 71-72. He also holds that this passage has nothing to do with Holy Orders, because of the preceding text that reads: "For all you who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

²⁰⁷ G. Trompf, "On Attitude Toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: I Cor. 11:3-16 and Its Context", *CBQ* 42 (April 1980), p. 499; cf. also J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Op. Cit.*, p. 496.

²⁰⁸ Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, 12 August 1950: AAS 42 (1950), pp. 561-578. English text from NCWC translation (Bonston: n.d.), pp. 35-39.

²⁰⁹ B. Lambert, *Op. Cit.*, p. 28.

aa. *Anthropology* — The controversialists who sponsor the "single-nature" anthropology seem to be unaware that while it has its own value, it can also lead to some ancient heresy. As well pointed by J. Saward and M. Novak, it has Gnostic undertones.²¹⁰ The heresy of Gnosticism denies sexual differentiation in that physical characteristics were irrelevant to the divine sparks within, and the true Gnostic then was one who transcends this and every other mark of crude materiality and is received into the unity of the gnosis. Hence, the Gnostics deny the ordinary and obvious demands of human flesh in favor of a spiritualized and undifferentiated view of human nature.²¹¹ M. Novak also observes that "Gnosticism would like to make as little of this differentiation as possible."²¹²

Eric Mascall likewise clearly points out some other consequences of denying sexual differentiation:

"...not to respect the ontological character of manhood and womanhood is to put oneself at odds with the doctrine of creation and also with biblical anthropology... To decide that a woman just as much as a man can be consecrated to the essential ministry is to declare one's theological conviction that Christian anthropology does not see a constitutive element of what is to be a man or a woman."²¹³

bb. *Biology* — The controversialists' position is just one side of the coin, so to speak, concerning biological researches. Speaking of the *sexual act*, Charles Williams maintains that it is a "mutual act", and inferiority of the woman is not implied at all (as usually understood by controversialists), because before any child is born, the masculine seed had to be received by the female vessel and then man is helpless to produce a child unless he surrenders the means to someone else, and this principle applies to the woman, too.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ J. Saward, *Op. Cit.*, p. 8; M. Novak, "On the Ordination of Women", *Commonweal* (8 July 1977), p. 425; V. Miceli specifies the Marcionites and the Montanists who practised "women priestesses" for they denied that the Redeemer willed a difference between men and women, *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

²¹¹ Cf. R. R. Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*, p. 101. Here, she indiscriminately made use of "apocryphal writings" (like the Gospel of St. Thomas) with Gnostic undertones.

²¹² M. Novak, *Op. Cit.*, p. 425.

²¹³ E. L. Macall, "Some Basic Considerations", pp. 19-20.

²¹⁴ Charles Williams, *In the Image of the City* (London, 1958).

Although her opinion is a bit radical, Elizabeth Elliott claims that the anatomical structure of the male genital symbolizes activity/initiation, and the female genital symbolizes passivity/response.²¹⁵

cc. *Sociology* — There are also notable sociologists who offer conclusions that agree with the traditional view about "sex roles", particularly in the family. Steve Clark, for instance, who made a ranging study on sex roles in scripture and contemporary society, proves that social roles are universal, necessary and good, and that while men and women are equally called to take on God's nature in Christ, Christian qualities are structured and somewhat different in men and women.²¹⁶ Moreover, one feminist herself, Midge Dicter, disagrees with the assertion that a woman is different from man only because of some socio-cultural influence. She says:

"... for women to announce their very womanliness results from bad and meretricious culture is the expression of a deep hatred for themselves... There is no more radical nor desperately nihilistic statement to issue forth from the lips of humans than that there is no necessary difference between the sexes. For such differences do in themselves constitute the most fundamental principle of the continuation of life on earth."²¹⁷

dd. *Psychology* — A considerable number of competent psychologists and psychoanalysts acknowledge an ontological difference between men and women, based on functional and behavioural realities which modify the intentional: Most outstanding of this group is the Dutch psychologist, F. J. Buytenĳk. In his well-known book, *Woman, A Contemporary View*, sexual differentiation is most precisely outlined. He writes:

"Because every existence is being-bodily-in-the-world, and because difference between the body of a man and the

²¹⁵ E. Elliott, *Let Me Be a Woman* (Tyndale, 1976); Here, she writes: "The essence of masculinity is initiation and the essence of femininity is response".

²¹⁶ Steve Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Servant Books, 1980). Abridged as "Problems in Development of Masculine and Feminine Character", *Pastoral Renewal* (Nov. 1980), pp. 35-40.

²¹⁷ Midge Dicter, *The New Chastity and Other Arguments for Women's Liberation* (New York, 1972), p. 180.

body of a woman is more than we are accustomed to think, the nature of her existence is always typically feminine and different from the manner of a man's existence however much the structures of society may change and whatever educational norms are followed. This difference remains, even when a woman does the same works as a man."²¹⁸

Buytendik explains further that a woman differs from a man in bodily way, in her nature, her inborn characteristics and qualities; besides an anatomical and psychological difference, there is an aboriginal difference in the dynamic structure of conduct.²¹⁹

C. G. Jung's theory of contrasexuality is "provisional" upon the admission of Jung himself, inasmuch as it is a "pioneer work"²²⁰, and yet those who appealed to him have canonized it as true and certain. Jung's theory is not without critics either. For instance, Naomi Goldberg points out that:

"Jungian thought has the tendency to make sweeping generalizations about the nature of races, nationalities and sexes."²²¹

Goldberg further remarks that the acceptance of the *animus anima* theory does not support integration of the sexes but rather leads to mere separatism.²²² Even the idealized "androgynous" existence has its own lacunae. As Mary Aquin O'Neill rightly puts it, "it runs the risk of reducing difference which contributes to the 'spice of life' "²²³ E. L. Mascall also discredits "androgyny" with the following statements:

"Humanity is, so to speak, essentially binary: it exists only in two modes of masculinity and femininity and we can understand it by studying them. *It does not exist part-*

²¹⁸ F. J. Buytendik, *Woman: A Contemporary View*, tr. Denis J. Barrett Glennrock, New Jersey: Newman Press and New York: Association Press, 1968), p. 8.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ C. G. Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. 9, pt. 2, par. 27; R. T. Barnhouse herself admits that the experiments in behavioural sciences "have conflicting results" and that "the objectivity is very difficult to achieve" and that "research plans have defects". Cf. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 6-11.

²²¹ Naomi Goldberg, *Changing of the gods* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), Ch. 5: "Jungian Psychology and Religion", pp. 46-71. Quotation on page 58.

²²² Ibid., p. 59.

²²³ M. A. O'Neill, RSM, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 149-160.

²²⁴ E. L. Mascall, "Some Basic Considerations", p. 21.

*ly in one and partly in another, but under a difference of mode, it is fully in each. This fact which overflows over the conceptual structure of Aristotelean logic pertains even in the level of nature, but it is virtually important on the level of grace and redemption."*²²⁴

Finally, C. S. Lewis also stresses the relevance of sexual differentiation in the spiritual life:

"The innovators are really trying to say that sex is something superficially irrelevant to the spiritual life. To say that men and women are equally eligible for a certain profession is to say . . . their sex is irrelevant. We are within the context wherein we are treated as neuters. This may be inevitable for the secular life. But in our Christian life, we return to reality. There we are not homogeneous units, but different complementary organs of a mystical body."²²⁵

Answer to the Specific Objection:

"Sex Equality is not Identity of Functions"

A special word of clarification must be set against the special objection: that to affirm sexual differentiation is to foster sex discrimination and inequality. Here, the question to be asked, first of all, is: Is the male priesthood a violation of women's rights?

1. *The priesthood is NOT a right* — The incumbent Prefect of the SCDF has an enlightening explanation on this matter.²²⁶ According to him, the concept of *fundamental right* is derived either from belief in creation or from the conception of the "constructibility" of their world and its functionality in the context of human reasoning. Now, the nature of the ministerial priesthood as such, does not fit into either of the two kinds of fundamental rights because the priesthood is not a consequence of creation,

²²⁴ E. L. Mascall, "Some Basic Considerations", p. 21.

²²⁵ C. S. Lewis, "Priestess in the Church", *Woman in the Church*, L. Bouyer, ed., p. 129.

²²⁶ Card. J. Ratzinger, "The Male Priesthood: A Violation of Women's Rights?", in *TOP*, pp. 127-138.

nor of human reasoning. Pope John Paul II had made this very clear during an audience with some U.S. Bishops: that the teaching on the exclusion of women from priestly ordination is "extraneous to the issue of discrimination" and that "it is linked to Christ's own design for his priesthood."²²⁷

2. *Poor ecclesiology* — Bernard Lambert, rightly points out that it would make a poor ecclesiology if one attempts to situate the right of Christians to grace and to pastoral services and the undifferentiated exercise of the priesthood. Everything in the human body, he explains, is not the same or interchangeable. It is the same in the Mystical Body. Lambert also states that one would absolutely falsify these matters if he or she attempts to make them a question of right. The priesthood is a vocation, he explains further, even if this vocation has a support in being, in sexuality, not that this establishes a difference of degree but because on the contrary, it establishes a support for definite signification.²²⁸

3. *Pretended equality is loss of identity or bogus masculinity*— Louis Bouyer brings out very well this consequence of pretended equality between the sexes:

"A pretended equality (abstract) would be nothing but an annihilation of her originality and proper identity which motivates the limitation of the priestly ministry."²²⁹

The true and only way to be equal with, he goes on to explain, is not their admission into a kind of "bogus masculinity" but the admission of the unique importance of what they can do and can be. Their contribution to human existence is no less important or honorable than, though fundamentally different, from the masculine contribution. He cautions us:

"Let us not fancy that we could do the many real service by encouraging them to do what could only result in a loss of identity."²³⁰

²²⁷ *Daily News*, "Pope Explains Stance on Women", Sept. 8, 1983, p. 4.

²²⁸ Bernard Lambert, *Op. Cit.*, p. 30.

²²⁹ L. Bouyer, *Woman in the Church*, p. 16; also in "Christian Priesthood and Women" in *Man, Woman and Priesthood*, p. 66.

²³⁰ L. Bouyer, "Christian Priesthood and Women", in *loc. cit.*, p. 66.

4. *Detrimental to marital life* — The irreparable consequence of eradicating sexual difference in the sexual life of married couples is articulately pointed out by the well-known psychologist, Eugene Kennedy. He says:

"In the name of sexual equality . . . a myth has risen to erase differences between man and woman in their sexual experience together."²³¹

An appreciation of the difference, according to him, enhances the dignity of men and women and heightens an appreciation of sexuality as something that takes on its richest meaning in the lives of men and women.

The Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) has also discovered that a common source of misunderstanding between the sexes, either in the period of courtship or marital life, arises from the failure to know the basic differences between the feminine and masculine sexual response and resulting behaviour. Hence, SIECUS recommends that the more a woman can learn about the male and vice versa, the greater the chance they can work out a compatible relationship leading to a successful courtship and marriage.²³²

Finally the observation of Dr. John Schimel is worth nothing in relation to the issue at hand:

"Equality has progressed to the point of interchangeability of persons and sexes with the resultant loss of the sense of identity. It is hard to feel 'male' if there is really no difference."²³³

PART V

THE "SUBJECT" OF REPRESENTATION: A THEOLOGICAL SPECULATION

The preceding pages so far have only described a *situation* wherein there is a *controversy* over the *nature of the ministerial*

²³¹ Eugene Kennedy, *The New Sexuality*, (New York: Image Books, 1972), p. 75.

²³² SIECUS, *Sexuality and Man* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 32.

²³³ Dr. John Schimel, "The Psychopathology of Egalitarianism in Sexual Relations", *Psychiatry* 25 (1962), p. 24.

priesthood vis-a-vis the issue of women's ordination... The two major areas of contention relate to the "object" and the "mode" of representation, two aspects derived from the "representative character" of the ministerial priesthood.

The situation has been described by singling out the representative *cons* vis-a-vis the representative *pros* of the issue. This manner of representing data is merely "political", because, as the CTSA report observes, "the controversy has been done in a situation of advocacy of one or the other position."²³⁴

Except for an orderly presentation of the *pros* and *cons*, and except for a handful of personal interpolations, nothing of a systematic theological speculation has been done yet. The author of this work endeavours, therefore, to do this now. Through a theological reflection then, I will clarify that women's ordination is a theological issue and that the "subject" of representation, that is, the question of who can or who cannot be ordained is intimately linked with the nature of the ministerial priesthood, not just a matter of discipline, nor a matter that can be resolved within the framework of legitimate pluralism between the Churches.

Inasmuch as the Declaration is our point of reference, let me start the theological speculation by recapitulating the Declaration's theological argument in a quasi-syllogistic form:²³⁵

Major Premise: In administering the sacraments that demand the character of ordination, the priest does not act in his own name (*in persona propria*) but in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*);

Minor Premise: This formula, as understood by tradition, implies the Saviour that he must be a man and not a woman.

Conclusion: It is precisely because the priest is a sign of Christ the Saviour that he must be a man and not a woman.

Now, the key word, as implied in this argument, and as gathered from the language used by the controversialists, to describe the "being" and the "function" of the priest is "representative". As established in the third chapter, the priest is the "re-

²³⁴ CTSA Report, p. 16.

²³⁵ Official Commentary, in *TOP*, p. 39.

presentative of Christ", theologically expressed in the formula *in persona Christi*.

1. *The Meaning of "Representation"*

At this point, it is necessary to define the term "representation". It is derived from two Latin words "praesens" and "reddere", meaning "to render (someone) present".²³⁶

The term can be taken into two senses, "political" and "theological". In the first sense, one is constituted a representative of someone through human legislation or volition, as in the case of ambassadors sent by their respective governments to other countries with which they have diplomatic relations. Another case of example would be the Papal Nuncio representing the Pope. This representation is *purely juridical*.

In the second sense, the representative is constituted by divine will to act as a mediating agent in the encounter between God and man, most especially in the *sacramental* economy of salvation. It is in this sense, properly speaking, when Christ is rendered present in the "person" of the representative. It can be more specified, therefore, as "sacramental" representation.²³⁷

2. *The "Subject" of Representation*

A convenient explanation of the "subject" of representation (or priesthood) can be discovered in the "nature" of the ministerial priesthood itself: *what it is*. The following reflection on its *nature* is entirely based on the sacramental economy in the Church, that

²³⁶ Accdg. to LG, *Modus*, n. 295, the text "Unicum sacrificium Novi Testamenti scilicet... repraesentant et applicant"; Cf. Schema *De Ecclesia*, 1964, p. 72, in which it is asked that the words "mystice renovant" be inserted between "repraesentant" and "applicant". The Commission answered that "repraesentare" signifies "praesens reddere" ideoque iam ideam exprimit ille Pater, per additionem in textum inducere vellet." Cf. *Modi*, c.p., 3., pp. 52-53.

²³⁷ This is to remind our readers again of the interchangeability of "signification" and "representation" in this work.

In sacramental representation, there is also "juridical" representation through the "power of jurisdiction"; here, the "power or order" is meant. Our readers must be informed that the distinction between the two (powers) is still problematic.

is, the *sacramental structure* of the Church.²³⁸ In this perspective, therefore, the ministerial priesthood is seen as a "Sacrament", possessing the three elements that constitute it to be one, namely, *visible sign, of an invisible grace, and instituted by Christ.*

a. *The Priest's Person: A Sign*

As the official Commentary notes, it would be a very elementary way of understanding the sacraments if the sign is limited to the material elements.²³⁹ The sacramental sign extends not only to things but to persons as well.²⁴⁰ Hence, in this case, the person of the priest is also a sign, obviously, of Christ, the author of sacramental grace. Consequently, it is also for this reason that the priest acts *in persona Christi*.

This theological formula expresses the specific and special quality of the "being" of the priest, not just his *function*. It is deeply rooted in Scripture and Tradition. Christ's mandatory words like "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21); "Feed my sheep" (Jn. 21:15-17); "Do this in remembrance of me" are not just mere empty and temporary words of commands, like the commands, like the command given by someone to an envoy. The words of Christ, as Hacker says, "have a creative efficacy; they effect reality itself."²⁴¹

St. Paul himself considered this ability to represent Christ as the characteristic quality of his apostolic function (2 Cor. 5:20). Paul speaks of a special "charism" which Timothy possesses as a "permanent" quality that helps him exercise his ministry and which he received by the laying on of the Apostle's hand (2 Tim. 1:6).

The early Church Fathers employed this formula to express the special quality of being of the priest. St. Cyprian, for instance, wrote in his *Epistola*: "The priest truly acts in the place

²³⁸ Cf. Avery Dulles, S.J., *Models of the Church* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1981), for a critical assessment of the Church in all its aspects.

²³⁹ Official Commentary, in *TOP*, p. 40.

²⁴⁰ *Int. Ins.*, art. 5.

²⁴¹ P. Hacker, "The Priesthood and the Eucharist To-day", in *PC*, p. 332.

of Christ."²⁴² St. Bonaventure (13th c.) also stated that "the person ordained is a sign of Christ the Mediator."²⁴³

One can see a development from *juridical* to *sacramental* representation. A *transcendental* relationship between the representative (priest) and the represented (Christ) comes into play so that as a result, the priest becomes a *permanent sign*, "a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedek" (Heb. 5:6). In this transcendental relationship a specific sacramental "identification" with the High Priest becomes a necessary factor.

aa. "Configuration" through "Ordination"

The priest's person *per se* does not make him a sacramental sign of Christ, otherwise all male person would become "priests" automatically as in the case of the Old Testament priesthood. The priest is *formally* constituted as a *sign* (hence, a representative) of Christ by the rite of ordination (*ordo in fieri*) wherein the *ordinandus* is given the "sacramental character", that indelible mark imprinted on his soul which in turn makes him a permanent sign and which brings about his transcendental relationship with Christ the High Priest (*ordo in facto esse*).

Hence, the ordained priest becomes so "configured" to Christ that he can act in his name, in his person.²⁴⁴ He becomes an extension of Christ, in fact, an "alter Christus". He now can perform the priestly acts of Christ, so that his acts are truly and in the full sense the acts of Christ.

bb. The Role of "Sex" in Ordination

It seems at this point that there is no connection at all between the "sacerdotal character" given at ordination and the "sex-identity" or "maleness" of the *ordinandus*.

aaa. *The meaning of "sex"* — Sex is a very broad term. Biologically, it refers to the modification of the organism as deter-

²⁴² St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 63, 14: PL, 4, 397B; ed. Hartel, vol. 3, 713.

²⁴³ *In IV Sent., dist.* 25, a, 2, q. 1: ed. Quaracchi, t. 4, p. 649.

²⁴⁴ The Council of Trent used "character" and "priestly power" to describe the "theological being" of the priest. Cf. Denz. 964; Vatican II uses "configuration", cf. *PO*, n. 2.

mined from the XY male or XX female chromosomes. However, sex is more commonly taken to mean the "sex organs". In this sense, sex is "an integral component of the substantial organism."²⁴⁵

Philosophically, sex, whether male or female, is an *accident* proper to the concrete or individual human nature; whereas "sexuality", in general, is an accident proper to the human nature on the metaphysical plane.²⁴⁶

From the psychological point of view, sex is "a personality factor which permeates, influences and affects every act of a person's being at every moment of existence",²⁴⁷ or that from which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make the person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society.²⁴⁸

bbb. *The link between maleness and sacerdotal character* — The link between the maleness of the *ordinandus* and sacerdotal character can be found in the *matter* of the sacrament of Order, i.e., *the laying on of hands on the ordinandus*.

Now, on the level of sign (*sacramentum tantum* in Scholastic terminology), the laying on of hands requires a "subject" to receive the sacramental character (*res et sacramentum*), even though this latter is invisible and spiritual. The *sign-value* of the *ordinandus* must be taken into account, and it is located in his "natural resemblance" with the one whose place or part he is taking. This "natural resemblance" consists in "maleness", for Christ *was* and *remains* a man.

Therefore, that which *materially* constitutes the priest's person as a sacramental sign is his *maleness* in virtue of the principle of "natural resemblance" in sacramental signification. The sacerdotal character given at ordination is that which formally consti-

²⁴⁵ Manuel Piñon, O.P., *Being and Reality* (Manila, Philippines: U.S.T. Press, 1972), p. 333.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

²⁴⁷ Anthony Kosnik, ed., *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought, A Study Commissioned by the CTSA* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1979), p. 82. This book, however, got the disapproval of the SCDF for referring only the *generic sense* of sexuality. Cf. SCDF, *The Book 'Human Sexuality'*, 13 July 1979: *Ench. Vat.*, nn. 1705-1721.

²⁴⁸ SCDF, *Persona Humana*, The Vatican Declaration on Certain Questions concerning Sexual Ethics, 29 December 1975: *L'OR*, 16 Jan. 1976. Cf. A. Flannery, op. cit., vol., pp. 496-498.

tutes him as a sacramental sign or representative. Maleness as such does not formally constitute one to be a sign, because as St. John Chrysostom said: "Even the majority of men have been excluded by Jesus from this immense task."²⁴⁹

*ccc. The Eucharistic Celebration: The Greatest Link
Between Christ and the Priest*

Having been configured to Christ, the ordained minister can now do to some extent what Christ could do, even to the point that his priestly acts and liturgical actions are said to be Christ's. Which priestly act is considered to be the highest degree of the priest's imaging of Christ?

The Eucharistic celebration, which is the renewal of the Covenant, the re-enactment of the passion and death and resurrection of Christ (Paschal Mystery), is considered as the strongest instance of the priest's link with Christ. As Msgr. Mortimort puts it:

"It is above all the priest's role in the Eucharistic celebration which is described as being *in persona Christi*, without excluding the other activities of the priestly ministry."²⁵⁰

This is in virtue of the fact that the Holy Eucharist has an extraordinary nature, thereby requiring from the priest an extraordinary role. Besides the fact that it is the "source and apex of the whole work of preaching" and "to which all other sacraments, as well as other ministries of the Church, and every work of Apostolate are directed",²⁵¹ its *form* requires a special way of being said. As St. Thomas puts it, its form is said "*ex persona loquentis*" whereas the other sacramental forms are said "*ex persona ministri*".²⁵²

As the Declaration says, it would be difficult to see the image of Christ if the role were taken by someone *not* male, for it was a *male* Christ who celebrated the first Mass.

²⁴⁹ John Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio*, 2, 2: PG 48:633.

²⁵⁰ Msgr. A. G. Mortimort, "The Vale of a Theological Formula 'In Persona Christi'", in *TOP*, p. 90.

²⁵¹ *PO*, n. 5; *LG*, 26, 28, "prasertim" and "maxime".

²⁵² *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3um.

b. *The Priest's Dual Representation*
In Persona Christi and In Persona Ecclesiae

The dual representative role of the priest, i.e., an agent of Christ and an agent of the Church seems to have a conflict. Actually, there is none, *per se*. The conflict between the two seems to consist only in the *manner* the controversialists present it.

aa. *The dual role seems polarized* — In discussing the *primacy* of the "object" of representation, whether it is Christ or the Church, there is a general tendency to polarize the two roles of the priest. This should not be the case inasmuch as, from the viewpoint of the priest, he is one and the same representative. This means that while the priest is taken apart from among men to be totally dedicated to the Lord's work, he still remains a member of the Christian community. He is not more of a Christian, but he is more of a priest than the lay person."²⁵³

From the viewpoint of the two apparently conflicting objects of representation, there can be no polarization inasmuch as the Church is also the "mystical Body of Christ". One cannot separate the priesthood of the Church from the priesthood of Christ, and one cannot separate the priest from the Church, for the priesthood would have no meaning if it is not within the context of the Church.

bb. *Priority of nature, not of time* — When the Declaration or the Church's Magisterium teaches that the priest represents, first and foremost, Christ and then the Church, here, it is a question of priority of nature and not of priority of time. To interpret this as a priority of time can lead to the polarization of the two roles.

Owing to the fact that the Church's priesthood has for its origin and source in Christ's and that it is Christ himself who directly calls the priest, the representation of Christ by the priest has priority of nature. The priest does not directly owe his priesthood to the Church. It is not primarily the Church which appoints him and ordains him to be a priest. It is Christ himself: "You have not chosen me, I have chosen you." (Jn. 15:16)

²⁵³ One must safeguard, however, the value of the new ecclesiastical status in which a Christian is established by priestly ordination, that differentiates him in *essence* and *function* from the lay person.

cc. *The merits of the direct christological foundation of the priesthood (in persona Christi) :*

The emphasis on the christological rather than the ecclesiological dimension of the priesthood has merits of its own. It is a corrective measure against some erroneous perceptions of the priesthood and it has far reaching implications upon the spiritual life of the priest.

aaa. *Erroneous-perceptions of the priesthood:*

— *Functionalism:* This is a way of perceiving the priesthood in terms of "function" or "work", and the priest becomes a mere "functionary". This is a Protestant or Reformation way of defining ministry.²⁵⁴ One ceases to be a "priest" when he stops functioning. On the other hand, emphasis on the christological basis of the priesthood implies the permanency, the sacramentality and supernatural character of the ministerial priesthood. The priest in this case is a "spiritual leader", not a "social leader" or "social worker".

— *Ordination or Appointment by the community:* The christological emphasis is also a deterrent against some current speculations on "ministry" that it is the community which ordains or appoints the priest to preside over the Eucharistic celebration, whether he is ordained or not. The christological emphasis can correct this error by stressing that the power of Orders directly comes from Christ.

bbb. *Implications of "in persona Christi" upon priestly spirituality*

One can see by far richer implications upon the spiritual life of the priest from the christological emphasis. To speak of the priest as one who acts in the place of Christ points to the priest some moral responsibility to live up to the image as an "alter Christus", than when they are mere agents or functionaries of the Church.

²⁵⁴ Luther's theses: "ordinem non esse sacramentum sed officium"; "ordinem potestatem esse predicandi, non offerendi" ideoque, eos, qui verbum non predicant non esse sacerdos." All these were condemned as erroneous in the Council of Trent.

When it comes to the question of celibacy, the image of the priest as "alter Christus" offers a valuable basis for the call and observance of celibacy, as the state proper to priests. He is called to model himself as closely as possible on Him whose minister and representative he is in such an intimate way.²⁵⁵

For the priest, it is also a pressing invitation to grow in personal holiness so that he can represent Christ by the example of his own life as well. As Cardinal Mercier puts it:

"We cannot represent Christ effectively — does not the very word 'represent' say so — unless we show him present in our own person at the center of humanity. What saves the world is not the dead letter of an evangelical text nor an abstract doctrine. It is the Gospel spelled out in the lives of the official representative of Christ as Saviour."²⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

In this study of the controversy on women's ordination to the ministerial priesthood since *Inter Insigniores*, it has been clarified that the issue is a theological one. It is so because it impinges too directly on the nature of the ministerial priesthood. The question of who can or who cannot be ordained priest is "doctrinal" in character which is intimately linked with the nature of priestly ministry. Concomittantly, it has been clarified that the nature of the ministerial priesthood is *indicative* of the sexual identity (maleness) of the subject of this state and function.

The controversy centers on the Declaration's "theological argument" against women's ordination to the priesthood, as laid down in its theological reflections on the "nature of the ministerial priesthood". The controversialists' objections and criticisms against the argument revolve around two crucial areas, owing to the "representative character" of the priesthood, namely, the

²⁵⁵ Editorial Council, "The Priesthood according to the Magisterium", in *PC*, p. 148.

²⁵⁶ Fernand van Steenberghen, "The Priesthood according to Cardinal Mercier" in *PC*, pp. 188-189.

"object" and the "mode" of representation. These two are intimately connected but have been artificially schematized for the sake of a clear discussion.

One's convictions on what should be the "object" and what should be the "mode" of representation are very crucial to the resolution of the issue. Obviously, the controversialists' convictions fundamentally differ from that of the Declaration's.

The controversy over the "object" of representation is basically a "christological" question. The Declaration sees the male character of the priesthood in the light of the mystery of Christ, that is, in his "male-Incarnation" as theologically significant and purposeful in the plan of salvation. His maleness is made much more significant when "biblical typology" or "symbolism" designates him as the "bridegroom" of the Church, the Bride, and also as the representative of the Father and as the Second Adam.

On the other hand, the controversialists do not see any relevance at all in Christ's maleness when it comes to the mystery of redemption, and hence, the priesthood. They consider its emphasis, instead, as a "misinterpretation of the Creed", as "Christolatry", as "aggrandizement of the male sex", as "stereotypical reductionism" and as "distortion of the Gospel". They offer other aspects of Christ which according to them, are more significant, less discriminatory, more faithful "reading of the Gospel", namely, the "risen Christ", the "androgynous Christ", the "feminine Christ" and even radically, the "female Christ". The Christological affirmation of the Declaration should be upheld for it is a question of fact that Christ was and remains a man even in his glorified state, and that this maleness undoubtedly has a purpose in the mystery of redemption.

Another watering down of the significance of Christ's maleness in the priestly ministry is the assertion from the controversialists that the priest is the direct representative of the Church, and not of Christ. They argue most importantly from the structure of the "liturgical prayers" that it is so. The priesthood is given direct ecclesiological basis, or at least, they aim at an equilibrium between the two. While it is legitimate to do so, nevertheless, the general tendency among the controversialists "to po-

larize" them must be rectified, for the reasons that the representative is one and the same person (*idem sacerdos et Christianus*), and that the represented (both Christ and the Church) can somehow be *identical* in that the Church is also the "Mystical Body" of Christ.²⁵⁷ The priority or primacy spoken of in this case, however, is one of "nature" and not of "time". Hence, the priest represents, first and foremost, Christ. This is also due to the fact that the grace of authority in the Church comes "from above" and not "from below".

Regarding this first major point of controversy, therefore, the Declaration's affirmations are more tenable vis-a-vis the controversialists'. In fact, theirs can lead to some Reformation errors and to some ancient heresies as pointed out in Chapter III.

The controversy over the "mode" of representation is basically an "anthropological" question. The controversialists have interpreted "natural resemblance" as "moral resemblance", or "literal resemblance", or "psychological resemblance" but not "sexual resemblance", for to them, "natural resemblance" as "sexual resemblance" is sexism, discrimination and reductionism. A wider and less discriminatory concept is being proposed by them as the basis for "natural resemblance", namely, "personhood" or "humanity". Again, these interpretations and proposals cannot be accepted because they are either short of "visibility" or "perceptibility" necessary for sacramental signification, or pushed to extremes, they can lead to some ancient heresies.

Closely connected with the question of "natural resemblance" is the question of "sexual differentiation". Granted that "natural resemblance" consists primarily in "sexual resemblance", is there really a difference between the sexes? The controversialists deny not so much the differentiation in itself as its relevance to priestly representation. Appeal is often made to the Pauline passage, Galatians 3:28, which they interpret as the eradication of all "natural distinction", including sexual differentiation. This cannot be accepted because it goes against *biblical anthropology*: God created them male and female (Gen. 1:27).

²⁵⁷ Cf. Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*: AAS (1943) p. 199.

Controversialists assert further that emphasis on sexual differentiation espouses sex-inequality and sex-discrimination. In this particular context, the priesthood is claimed as a "right". Equality has been interpreted as "sex-identity". Obviously, this is a reflection of one's poor ecclesiology, for it neglects the fact that the Church is a differentiated body, with different tasks and functions and ministries. Moreover, even if one becomes a member of the Mystical Body, one's individual identity (including sexual identity) is retained, not absorbed into the whole. Furthermore, the priesthood is not a "right" but a "vocation", a gratuitous gift from God.

In their attempt to devalue the theological significance of sex and sexual differentiation in the priestly ministry, controversialists have recourse to the data of "human sciences", asserting that they should be taken into account when discussing theological matters. Their approach suggests a tendency toward humanistic reading of the data of faith. This methodology goes wrong for the reason that the evidences gathered from these contemporary human sciences, no matter how valuable they may be in their own domain, cannot grasp the supernatural content of the ministerial priesthood. It is *beyond* their competence.

Another underlying principle in their assertions is "cultural conditioning": Christ's male-Incarnation is culturally conditioned; Christ's choice of the Apostles is culturally conditioned; Christ's not choosing the Virgin Mary as an Apostle is culturally conditioned; the practice of the Apostles is culturally conditioned; even one's own sexual identity is culturally conditioned or determined. According to them, one culture is as good as another and to refuse priestly ordination for women because of "socio-cultural conditions" like the inferior status of women in a patriarchal society, would constitute espousal of inequality and discrimination. This cannot be held because to assert that everything is "culturally conditioned" is pure relativism. Male priesthood is one of those unshaken lines of thought that is contained in divine revelation (both in Scripture and Tradition).

Above all, in their nuances of the priesthood, one can easily detect some Reformation innuendos, such as their considering the

priest as a mere plenipotentiary of the Church, a mere functionary; ordination has been expressed in Protestant terms like "appointment" and "calling" from the community;²⁵⁸ the "corporate character" of the priesthood is oftentimes emphasized; the Eucharistic celebration is seen as a mere fraternal meal and oftentimes dissociated from the ordained priesthood. The community has the right to appoint one to preside over it and consecrate. Hence, there is a general tendency "to secularize" or "to desacramentalize" the priesthood, i.e., to drain it of its "sacramental" or "sacrificial" character.

It is in view of all these tendencies that the Declaration opportunely came up with its theological reflection on the nature of the ministerial priesthood, intended not so much to argue against women's ordination as to re-affirm directly and positively the true nature of the priesthood. It has been put back where it should belong, i.e., the "sacramental" plane. The priesthood then, is a *sacrament, a sign*. This is its basic notion.

Being a sign, the priesthood points to an object of signification, Christ, whose male-Incarnation is complemented by biblical typology or symbolism. That he was and remains a man is matter of fact, and this fact and its value in the plan of salvation cannot be ignored.

The identity of the "object" of representation also points to the identity to the "subject". The identity of both consists in a "natural resemblance", the most obvious of which is "maleness". Maleness must not be taken too much for its materialistic sense. The male-identity of the sign (or representative) of Christ is necessitated when he assumes His role in his priestly acts, most especially in the renewal of the covenant (nuptial image as "bridegroom") or in the "re-presentation" or "re-enactment" of the first Sacrifice. The meaningfulness of these *acts* would be played down if not taken by a male priest.

The exclusion of women from the priesthood, however, must not be taken for an exaltation of the male sex as superior to the

²⁵⁸ It must be pointed out at this juncture that the doctrine of numerous Protestant churches concerning "ordination" does not coincide with the Catholic and Orthodox Churches'. Since "ordination" is not a sacrament to them, it is merely an "appointment" or "assignment" to an office or position.

female sex; nor must it be understood that there is a "metaphysical impossibility" involved; rather, it is a deliberate choice of God in the "order of signs". The understanding of this deliberate choice of God can be gained through this theological reflection on the nature of the ministerial priesthood.

The theological argument of the Declaration, therefore, must not be read as a "demonstrative argument". The mysteries of faith, including the Sacraments (hence, Holy Orders), cannot be transformed into truths considered purely on the rational plane. Subsequently, the issue cannot be resolved with pure rational arguments. This argument, therefore, is just a *ratio convenientiae*, i.e., a theological reflection on the data of faith is convenient because even after the faithful's acceptance of God's teaching and law, their coherence with human reason is still encouraged to be discovered. However, because it is just a *ratio convenientiae*, it does not mean, as Prof. Hans Urs von Balthasar says, "mere suitableness" or "mere approximateness" that might be simply fortuitous and relative.²⁵⁹

The non-admission of women into the ministerial priesthood is not proposed *de fide*. Some have interpreted this as a Vatican way of keeping the matter "open". Does this mean that eventually women will be ordained priests? It depends on how one understands the issue as being "open": if it is intended to mean "possibilities" of women being ordained in the future, *nego*; if by "open" one means further theological research or reflection on why women cannot be ordained, thereby discovering more deeply the true nature of the ministerial priesthood, its relationship with the lay priesthood and the mystery of the sexes, especially women, then *concedo*.

To understand the Church's stand on this point, one must keep in mind again the hermeneutics of magisterial pronouncements, that the conclusions or affirmations made are "definitive" though not "definite". They are not "definite" because they are not exhaustive; they are "definitive" because they are true and certain. This is very clear in *Mysterium Ecclesiae*:

²⁵⁹ Prof. Hans Urs von Balthasar, "The Uninterrupted Tradition of the Church", in *TOP*, p. 75.

"It sometimes happens that some dogmatic truth is first expressed incompletely (but not falsely) at a later date, when considered in a broader context of faith or human knowledge, it receives a fuller and more perfect expression."²⁶⁰

Moreover, one must also understand that when the Church allows further theological discussion on a problematic matter, the conclusion must be in accordance with the *sense* in which it has been defined by the Church.²⁶¹ This is an indispensable principle one must observe in dogmatic or doctrinal evolution. The controversialists seem to fail in this aspect. In fact, the issue of women's ordination is one manifestation of the general trend of disobedience to authority. It might be a personal matter, but Edith Black's statement can clarify the previous statement:

"I began to see that my rejection of the Church's teaching was based more on an emotional resistance to male authority than on sound theological reasoning."²⁶²

At this juncture, it must be acknowledged that the issue of women's ordination has merits of its own. As B. Lambert rightly puts it:

"The analysis of the question indicates a clear preference for a negative solution; that is not to say, however, that nothing ought to be retained from the contrary arguments. Truly, some lessons can be drawn either in the sense of reformation or in the sense of advancement and creativity."²⁶³

Indeed, the issue or controversy has contributed to a better understanding of ministry in general, the meaning of priesthood and the role of women in the Church in particular. As Louis Bouyer correctly says:

²⁶⁰ The SCDF's *Mysterium Ecclesiae* is the Declaration in Defence of the Catholic Doctrine on the Church against Some Present Day Errors, June 24, 1973: AAS (1973), pp. 396-408. Cf. A. Flannery, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 433.

²⁶¹ *Humani Generis*, n. 21. Cf. DV, 10: "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God... has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church *alone*."

²⁶² Edith Black, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²⁶³ B. Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

"The potentially disruptive controversy over the ordination of women to the priesthood which is becoming widespread within the Church should have at least a beneficial effect; it should lead us to a deeper understanding of the mystery of woman."²⁶⁴

Likewise, the controversy has occasioned a "deeper theological understanding of traditional principles"²⁶⁵ and it has led theologians to rectify their method in utilizing *loci theologici*.²⁶⁶

Furthermore, the issue has aroused a considerable measure on the part of the Church's authorities that the priesthood is "ministerial", i.e., service to the people.²⁶⁷ The aristocratic attitude deriving from the status of priesthood has been minimized and the over-exaltation of the priest as "holy", "untouchable" and "apart from the people" has been played down. On the other hand, women have been given more substantial roles in the Church and not just confined to arranging flowers and altar linens.

Indeed, women's mission in the Church should be promoted, but this should be done in consistency with the already established norms of the Church and with their charism and personality as women. This way, the principle of differentiation in the Church is respected and appreciated. As Mary Rosseau rightly states:

"The denial of ordination to women, then, need not grow out of a contempt for women's inferior priesthood nor a levelling of sexual differences that makes them irrelevant to roles in church and society, nor a hunger for power. It can rest on a recognition that sexual differences are important to our identities as persons, and a concern for the accuracy, and thus efficacy, of the priesthood as a sacramental symbol."²⁶⁸

Finally, with the Declaration *Inter Insigniores*, the Church has argued, not just presumed the exclusion of women from the ministerial priesthood. And so it must be asked: what else could it be if it is not the Lord's answer to the question?

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²⁶⁴ L. Bouyer, *Woman in the Church*, p. 9.

²⁶⁵ Official Commentary, in *TOP*, p. 41.

²⁶⁶ Introduction to *TOP*, p. xi.

²⁶⁷ Cf. John Paul II's *Message to Priests* on Holy Thursday of March 7, 1984 (mimeo).

²⁶⁸ Mary Rosseau, "Real Feminists Don't Go to Church", *Catholicism in Crisis* (reprint), p. 8.