

# MAN AND WOMAN IN ORTHODOX TRADITION: THE MYSTERY OF GENDER

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern feminism has spawned an entrenched theological movement as is evidenced by liturgical and ecclesiastical innovations in certain churches, and by the increasing number of publications that reinterpret the traditional sources of Christian dogma to fit a feminist perspective. Under the influence of feminism, questions concerning the dignity and moral worth of women find their theological focus in the controversy over women in the priesthood. The ancient practice of ordaining only certain males to the liturgical priesthood is being vigorously challenged and made to appear as an arbitrary practice implicitly demeaning to women, shaped by a patriarchal culture and conditioned solely by sociological factors.

The challenge feminism poses to the Orthodox evangelical proclamation is described by one theologian in the following way:<sup>1</sup>

[The meaning of women and their role in the Church] is a new issue for Christians; it has not been treated fully or properly in the past. But it cannot be avoided. How we respond to it, I believe, clearly demonstrates what we believe about everything: God and man, Christ and the Church, life and death. It is, in a manner of speaking, our particular issue or controversy:

<sup>1</sup>Fr. T. Hopko, in "Women and the Priesthood: Reflections," in *Women and the Priesthood*, ed. by Thomas Hopko. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983, p. 190.

our gnosticism, our Arianism, our Origenism, our iconoclasm. . . . The Orthodox Church has hardly begun to formulate her response to the issue, but she must take it up and complete it. It is, I believe, not a task of discovering *what* the truth is—it is rather the task of articulating and explaining it in proper theological language and concepts. It is the perennial theological task of finding the “words adequate to God.”

Accordingly, the present essay is an effort to contribute to the task of articulating and explaining in proper theological language the principles which form the Church's intuition concerning the meaning of man and woman. Since my field of expertise is the thought of the ancient Church Fathers, the theological language and concepts I will employ are drawn from their writings. I will apply their categories with two principal goals in view: first, to show the ontological meaning of gender, and second, to explain why women serving in the liturgical priesthood is an ontic impossibility—i.e., it is contrary to nature. The first goal, showing the ontological meaning of gender, will constitute the major part of the essay. It will uncover theological principles imbedded deep in Orthodox Tradition that will require only a brief treatment of the second goal. Indeed, the latter will come as a logical conclusion to the former.

The following essay does not intend to persuade or to convince: it seeks to explain the teaching of the Church. One's freedom to worship, believe and think as one chooses is thereby upheld; but so also is the demand to be absolutely faithful to the principles that inform one's religious convictions. Accordingly, before explaining the meaning of gender from an Orthodox perspective, we must set forth the theological foundation on which such teaching is based.

## I. STARTING POINTS

*A. The Cornerstone of Orthodox Doctrine.*<sup>2</sup> The cornerstone,

<sup>2</sup>I have given a somewhat fuller treatment of this point in my essay, “Pastoral Implications of Christology,” *SVS Quarterly* 34 (1990), no. 4.

or starting point, of Orthodox theology begins with the confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation. When St. Peter on the road to Caesarea Philippi confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, Jesus responds, "Blessed are you Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." (Mt. 16:16ff) Jesus' response shows that belief in the divine Sonship of Jesus is based not on sociological factors, but on the revelation of God the Father.

Since the confession of Jesus as the Son of God is revealed by the Father, it is accepted as fundamental for determining authentic Christian doctrine. St. John the Theologian writes, "Beloved, test the spirits to see whether they are of God. . . . By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist." (I Jn 4:1-3) The same criterion is laid down many times in the writings of the Church Fathers; perhaps it is expressed most concisely by St. Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century:<sup>3</sup>

The mystery of the Incarnation of the word contains the meaning of all the enigmas and symbols in Scripture, as well as the hidden meaning of all sensible and intelligible creation. He who knows the mystery of the Cross and the Tomb, knows also the essential principles of all things, and he who is initiated in the ineffable mystery of the Resurrection, knows the end for which God created all things from the beginning.

These passages illustrate a crucial point for understanding the direction our discussion will take: the knowledge of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God originates from within the worship of the Church. We believe that Jesus' identity as the Son of God incarnate is revealed to the Church by God Himself in the experience of Holy Communion (cf. Jn 16:30 where the disciples as a whole finally come to the knowledge of Jesus' true

<sup>3</sup>*Capitulum theol. et oecon. centuria I*, in J.-P. Migne's *Patrologiae Graecae* (= PG) 90, col. 1108A 7-B 15.

identity in the setting of the Last Supper), and is not determined in any way by sociological factors. The Incarnation of the Son of God therefore constitutes the reference point for understanding the mystery of all things. For Orthodox theology, then, to arrive at the meaning of man and woman one must set the whole question in the context of the doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man.

*B. The Incarnation and Feminism.* The irreconcilable gap between feminist thought and Christian doctrine first reveals itself here, in the attitude taken towards the Incarnation as the fundamental principle of interpretation. Feminist thought does not base its understanding of man and woman on the doctrine of the Incarnation, but subjects even the Incarnation itself to interpretation on the basis of feminist principles—if it does not dismiss the Incarnation altogether.<sup>4</sup> For example, one feminist theologian explicitly states: "It is impossible to use the Incarnation as a key to understanding the essence of femininity without weighting matters in favor of the masculine principle."<sup>5</sup>

This means by implication that the theological starting point must be something other than the doctrine of the Incarnation which is dismissed as a legitimate starting point on the *a priori* assumption that it opposes feminist concerns in favor of the masculine principle. The doctrine of the Incarnation thereby becomes one item among many others that is interpreted on the basis of a newly constructed foundation constituted of feminist principles.<sup>6</sup> Having dismissed the Incarnation as the

<sup>4</sup>As it does in the writings of Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology, Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. Cf. esp. p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975, p. 187.

<sup>6</sup>With his feminist spectacles, Jewett, for example (*Ibid.*), sees the maleness assumed by the Divine Logos in His Incarnation as sociologically, not soteriologically, conditioned. "The Incarnation, in the form of male humanity, though historically and culturally necessary, was not *theologically* necessary" (p. 168). Jewett's Christological view is produced by a hermeneutical principle forged within his feminist perspective. This hermeneutic distinguishes between the divine (eternal and true=feminism) and human (transitory and ignorant=chauvinistic) aspects of Christian history which have marched side-by-side through the centuries in a slowly but steadily lessening tension. Whatever conflicts with Jewett's hermeneutical principle belongs to the human (chauvinistic) and non-binding side of tradition, and

reference point for understanding, feminist thought has initiated a search for "new starting points" which "must revolve around the need to restore to the language of God its female imagery," and "the new experience of partnership in ministry now being lived by women and men, ordained and lay, in many cultural and church contexts."<sup>7</sup> With these new starting points, the way is cleared for replacing the ancient teaching concerning God and man with a new, feminist oriented content.<sup>8</sup> The ecclesial consequences of this program can be seen in the new "bonding process" taking place between Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish feminists; a process rendered possible because the common root that binds these women of different religious confessions is not the apostolic confession of Jesus Christ, but the principles of feminism.<sup>9</sup>

Feminist thought is therefore uncomfortable with the ancient teaching of the Church because it is shaped by starting points fundamentally at odds with the starting point of apostolic Tradition. Feminist thought must therefore change the Church's teaching if feminism is to find a home in the Church. Accordingly, the real controversy over the place of women in the Church (in particular female ordination) does not concern the value and dignity of women, but rather the starting point or basis of Christian theology: is it the Incarnation, or feminist principles?<sup>10</sup> The issue posed by feminist thought, therefore, is

whatever can be made to harmonize with it belongs to the divine and eternally true side of tradition. When extended to Scripture this principle leads to the elevation of select congenial passages (viz., Gal. 3:28 and Gen. 1:27f.) to the divine side, while all other passages which speak of subordination of the woman to the man (including Gen. 2:21-22, 3:16, I Cor. 11:3-16, Eph. 5:22-33, Col. 3:18-19, I Tim. 2:11-15, and I Pet. 3:1f.) are either dismissed or minimized as residue of the male-dominated perspective of Old Testament patriarchal society. With the help of this hermeneutical principle we suddenly are able to see in Paul's thought an unresolved tension between the old, chauvinistic attitude of rabbinic Judaism (manifested in I Cor. 11:3-16, e.g.), and the enlightened, liberated perspective of Jesus (which comes out in Gal. 3:28—see Jewett, pp. 134ff.).

<sup>7</sup>See Constance F. Parvey, ed., *Ordination of Women in Ecumenical Perspective: Workbook for the Church's Future*, Faith and Order Paper 105 (World Council of Churches, Geneva), 1980; in particular, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 57ff.

<sup>9</sup>See Anne E. Patrick, S.N.J.M., "Women and Religion: A Survey of Significant Literature, 1965-74," in *Woman: New Dimensions*, ed. Walter J. Burghardt, S.J. New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1977, p. 164.

<sup>10</sup>That this is a theological issue is not lost even on a "neutral" ob-

a challenge of faith: "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15)

This brief discussion shows why the Church's affirmation that men and women are equal in honor, value, and dignity leads to anthropological understandings radically different from those of feminism—their starting points are fundamentally different. It also introduces the doctrine of the Incarnation as the starting point for the Church's interpretation of the mystery of gender and thereby fully discloses the intent of this essay: to show how the Incarnation as the basis for interpretation illuminates the meaning of gender.

## II. CHRISTOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

*A. Knowing the Unknowable God.* When the Lord asks His disciples on the road to Caesarea Philippi, "Who do you say that I Am?" He is asking them to identify who is doing all these mighty works. And when St. Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," he is distinguishing the apostolic confession of Christ from that of others who were saying that Christ was simply a prophet. Peter is saying that Christ—His "I Am"—is the Son of God and not a prophet. This simple confession carries profound consequences for ontology.

First, that the Father gives to Peter the capacity to penetrate the external appearance of the Lord Jesus in order actually to identify Him in His inmost depths as the supra-comprehensible divine Son reveals that in some mysterious way, the uncreated, living God who lies beyond comprehension can be comprehended. He is both known and unknown, for He who is invisible has become visible while remaining invisible.<sup>11</sup>

Patristic Tradition employed the Greek philosophical terms essence or nature (οὐσία or φύσις) to refer to the uncreated, incomprehensible being of God which infinitely surpasses the

server, Kenneth L. Woodward, in "Feminism and the Churches," *Newsweek*, Feb. 13, 1989, reprinted in *The Christian Challenge*, April 1989, pp. 5-8. See also Deborah Belonick's study, "The Spirit of the Female Priesthood," in *Women and the Priesthood*, pp. 135-168.

<sup>11</sup>In the words of St. John Climacus: "Illumination is an indescribable activity; we understand in an unknowing way, and we see in an unseeing way." PG 88, col. 813 BC.

capacity of any mind to comprehend. In His nature or essence, God is beyond all names; He remains unnameable, and in terms of our present topic, He remains beyond gender.<sup>12</sup>

And yet, St. Peter's confession reveals that God can be known and *named*: and He is known in His *Son*, Jesus of Nazareth, the Divine Logos incarnate. "No one has ever seen the Father; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known." (Jn 1:18) "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9) He who lies beyond names and gender in terms of His nature is found to *be* names, two of which are *Son* and *Father*.<sup>13</sup>

These names are of divine origin, and are not the product of human religious imagination: "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven." Even the Son's name as man, Jesus—which in Hebrew means "the Lord saves"—whereby all rational beings address Him and call upon Him (Acts 3:16 & 4:12), is given by His Father, not by Joseph or the Theotokos (Mtt 1:20-21 & Lk 1:30-31). Given the divine origin of all the names, including the name Jesus, as well as their significance for the worship of God (Phil 2:10), it is hardly faithful to the theology of Scripture to suggest that the names of God, or even the male-ness of the Incarnation, are sociologically conditioned and therefore negotiable.

In Orthodox theology, the names of God do not refer to His nature, but to the three Persons of the Trinity, whom patristic Tradition designated by the term "hypostases." And yet, even though the hypostases are named, they derive, as it were,

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *On the Divine Names* 1.2: "We must not dare to apply words or conceptions to this hidden transcendent God. We can use only what scripture has disclosed. In the scriptures the Deity has benevolently taught us that understanding and direct contemplation of itself is inaccessible to beings, since it actually surpasses being." Trans. by Colm Luibheid, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*. New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup>In patristic thought, the confession of Jesus as the Son of God leads to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In the confession of Jesus as the Son of God one sees God His Father; because Jesus is God's Son, He is fully God, yet at the same time is distinct from the Father. To confess that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed one) implies recognition of the fact that He is the bearer of God's Holy Spirit. See my article, "God Beyond Gender," *SVS Quarterly* 30 (1986), no. 4, pp. 292-98.

from out of the unnameable nature of God, which is to say that in some mysterious way, the names—i.e., the hypostases—come from within the very essence of God. Or, one can state the mystery equally well from the reverse angle, and strengthen the point: the hypostases, or names, are those in which the unnameable essence exists.<sup>14</sup> This presents to the mind an image in which the names or hypostases lie even deeper in the incomprehensibility of God than the unnameable and incomprehensible essence. Either way of speaking shows that the divine names are *non-negotiable* for they are the eternal, divine, and holy hypostases that come in an ineffable manner from within the unnameable essence of God.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, changing the traditional names of God to more inclusive names such as “Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,” or even reversing the gender of the divine names to “Mother” and “Daughter” is not an alternative for Orthodox theologians. The Holy Spirit of God Himself, not human culture, gives us these names through the confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God incarnate: “Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Gal 4:6)

And yet, precisely in the eternal, divine hypostases, the unknowable God is known, even in His unknowability. The knowable hypostasis of the Son, who makes known to us the Father and the Holy Spirit, is, in His divine nature, the unknowable God together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup>This two-fold manner of expressing the mystery of the ontic relationship between the divine hypostases and the divine nature—i.e. speaking on the one hand as though the essence produces the hypostases, and on the other, as though the essence is contained in the hypostases (in which case, one speaks of the Father as the cause of the Son and the Holy Spirit, rather than the divine essence)—is common in patristic writings. For example, pseudo-Cyril, in his *De Trinitate*, says in one place, “The essence [of God] is called physis because it produces (φύουσα) the hypostases.” And he says in another place, “We maintain that there is one simple essence, absolutely perfect, which exists in three perfect hypostases.” PG 77, col. 1149 AB, and col. 1141 AB.

<sup>15</sup>The Jewish history of the theology of the “Name” of God is in itself highly instructive for understanding that the divine names are ontic, substantive (in the sense of hypostatic) realities in the uncreated Being of God. See Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978, pp. 147-162.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. the 38th letter of St. Basil (or St. Gregory of Nyssa), in which



In his commentary on Dionysius, St. Maximus explains the mystery in this way:<sup>17</sup>

The phrase, “He who is forever abundantly suprasubstantial is no less suprasubstantial,”<sup>18</sup> means that when He became man, He was not under bondage to our nature; quite the opposite. Our nature was subjected to Him, thereby effecting another mystery. For He Himself remained altogether incomprehensible, and having obtained His own Incarnation, He demonstrated a suprasubstantial generation more incomprehensible than any mystery. Yet, even when He was becoming comprehensible through His generation, indeed, because of it, He was known even then to be incomprehensible. For the teacher [Dionysius] says [in another place], “Even after His appearing, He is hidden, or, if I may speak in a manner more befitting God, even *within* His appearing. For this mystery of Jesus remains hidden and can be drawn out by no word or mind. Even when we speak of it, it remains unspeakable, and even when we know it, it remains unknowable.” Could there be any greater proof than this to demonstrate the divine suprasubstantiality? He brings to light what is hidden, and with a word, what cannot be spoken. To the mind, He makes known what is altogether unknowable.

The argument, therefore, which reasons that the names of God are negotiable because His nature is incomprehensible, so that whatever names are given to Him must be produced from within the context of human culture alone, fails. The argument confuses the knowable and nameable hypostases of God with His unknowable and unnameable nature.

Thus, the first theological principle revealed in St. Peter’s confession, is that the incomprehensible God who is beyond all

verbs taken from the root “to know” (γινώσκω) are consistently attached to the hypostases, to show that God is known not in His essence, but in the hypostases of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Loeb Classical Library 190, *St. Basil: the Letters*, vol. I, p. 206).

<sup>17</sup>*Ambiguorum Liber*, PG 91, cols. 1048 D-1049 B.

<sup>18</sup>The text St. Maximus is explaining comes from Dionysius’ fourth letter to Gaius the monk, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works*, p. 264.

names can be known because He exists in three eternal and holy names, two of which are *Father* and *Son*. This immediately directs us to a second theological principle fundamental for understanding the meaning of gender: the ontic source of all creation is the Person or hypostasis of Jesus, the Divine Logos, which we shall now explain.

*B. The Ontic Source of All Creation.* That the knowledge given to St. Peter by the Father is directed towards the identity of His Son; and, moving the other way, that in knowing the Son we can know the Father ("I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father but by me" Jn 14:6),<sup>19</sup> indicates that all created being is rooted in the hypostasis of the Son.

The goal of human life is communion with God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind" (Mt 22:37). In Hebraic anthropology, the center of human being is in the heart or soul (cf. I Sam 16:7; I Kgs 15:3; Ps 119:11; Prov 17:10; Mt 5:8 & 6:21; Lk 2:19; et al.); and in his soul man yearns for God (Ps 84:2-3). In Hellenistic anthropology, the mind is the center of human being, and in the Christian "synthesis" of the two—as found, for example, in the writings of the *Philokalia*—prayer, or communion with God, is defined as standing "in the presence of God with the mind in the heart." All of this is to say that the restlessness in man's soul, and the thirst to know and worship God is rooted in the fact that man in the entirety of his being "comes from out of" God. That this restless thirst should find its τέλος (consummation) in Jesus of Nazareth is due to the fact that He is the source of all being, the Image in whom we were created: "He is the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on

<sup>19</sup>SS. Irenaeus and Cyril may serve as representatives of the patristic testimony on this point. St. Irenaeus writes: "It was impossible without God to come to a knowledge of God, so He teaches men through His Word to know God" (*Contra Haer.* IV.5.1, PG 7, col. 984 AB) and: "The Lord revealed Himself to His disciples, that He is the Word of the Father who imparts knowledge of the Father. . . . No one can know the Father except through the Son, and no one can know the Son except through the Father. . . . Without the Son no man can attain knowledge of God for the Son is the knowledge of the Father"; (IV.6.1. & 3, cols. 986 D, 987 CD & 990 BC). St. Cyril writes: "For through the Son is a man drawn to the knowledge of the Father." (*In Ioannem* PG 74, col. 96 BC.)

earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him" (Col 1:15-17; cf. Jn 1:1-3).

However, that Jesus, the ontic foundation of all created being, is identified and addressed by the apostles, not as a nature, but as a Person—*Thou* art the Son of God—reveals that all created being is rooted not in some abstract, impersonal "stuff," but in a Person or hypostasis, viz., the Divine Logos. St. Maximus teaches that the inner principles, or "logoi," of all created things exist in the Divine Logos: "For the principles or inner essences of all things are embraced by the Logos, but the Logos is not embraced by anything."<sup>20</sup> The Divine Logos is a unity embracing a diversity of principles.<sup>21</sup> Applied to woman this means that even the inner principle of "female-ness" lies in the Logos. And since Jesus is the Divine Logos, then even in his Incarnation as "man," He is the ontic source of woman. Again, this confirms for us that a true understanding of gender can be acquired only in the context of the doctrine of the Incarnation. To seek an understanding of gender outside the Divine Logos incarnate can yield no ultimately satisfying conclusion.<sup>22</sup>

For this reason, as well as others given below, I maintain that efforts to find in the Holy Spirit the prototype of the female run counter to the anthropology of Scripture and patristic teaching. The inner essence of the woman, as of the man, lies in the Logos, not in the Holy Spirit. St. Irenaeus strongly argued that the Holy Spirit gives His own image to no one; rather, He gives the image of the Father and of the Son.<sup>23</sup> As we will see

<sup>20</sup>*Second Century on Theology*, § 10, English trans. in *The Philokalia II*, by G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware. London, Boston: Faber & Faber, 1986, p. 139; see also *Fourth Century of Various Texts*, *Ibid.* § 32, p. 243.

<sup>21</sup>*First Century on Theology*, § 20, p. 142; see also §§ 4 & 10, pp. 138-139.

<sup>22</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, § 70, p. 128: "The whole world, limited as it is by its own inner principles, is called both the place and age of those dwelling in it. There are modes of contemplation natural to it which are able to engender in created beings a partial understanding of the wisdom of God that governs all things. So long as they make use of these modes to gain understanding, they cannot have more than a mediate and partial apprehension."

<sup>23</sup>*Contra Haer.* III.17.3: "The Lord confers the Holy Spirit upon the Church so that we might receive from the Spirit the image and superscription of the Father and the Son." (PG 7, col. 930 D.) In another place, Irenaeus likens the Spirit to the life-giving seed (IV.31.2), and in another

shortly, one must affirm the common origin of male and female in the one Divine Son, not only to avoid theological nonsense, but also to maintain a clear vision of the intimate communion between man and woman.

The fruit of our study so far has been to show that the simple confession of Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God leads to a philosophical vision of the personal, or hypostatic, origin of all creation in the hypostasis of the Divine Logos. The meaning of all created beings, and of man and woman in particular, is found not in an ideology of equal rights but in the confession of Jesus Christ as the Divine Logos incarnate. But in coming to this, the question as to the ontological meaning of gender has become all the more pointed. If the inner essence of femaleness lies in Jesus the Divine Logos, and yet, if even in His Incarnation as a male He remains as the ontic source of the female (as well as of the male), then what theological significance for the ontology of gender are we to attach to the Incarnation of the Divine Logos as a man and not as a woman?

In order to address this question fully, we must undertake a more detailed exposition of the doctrine of hypostasis, but now we extend its application to anthropology to see what it might yield for our understanding of the mystery of gender in particular.

### III. THE PHILOSOPHY OF HYPOSTASIS AND THE ONTOLOGY OF GENDER.

*A. Anthropology: God Created Them Male and Female.* The Fathers of the 5th Ecumenical Council, in their condemnation of Origen, rejected the androgynous anthropology of pagan philosophy; they denied the pre-existence of souls—a doctrine that followed from the view that man is essentially spirit, and that the body is accidental to his nature—and affirmed that perfect human nature is constituted of both body and soul.<sup>24</sup>

place he writes that the Lord sent His Son in order that He might fashion the Church after the image of His Son. (IV.37.7.)

<sup>24</sup>See Anathemas I and II in *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 14, ed. Henry R. Percival in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* 2nd series, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1983, p. 318.

The Emperor Justinian in the sixth century wrote against Origen: "God at the same time (κατὰ ταυτὸν) created both the soul and the body, that is to say the perfect man (τέλειον τὸν ἄνθρωπον). . . . God made the body and he made the soul together, producing man as a whole. For man is neither body apart from soul, nor soul apart from body."<sup>25</sup> Writing against Origen in the 8th century, John of Damascus says: "The body and the soul were formed at the same time—not one before and the other afterwards, as the ravings of Origen would have it."<sup>26</sup> According to patristic teaching, then, human nature is composite, constituted of body and soul.

Along with this, however, is the doctrine that human nature does not exist except in human persons or hypostases.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, we understand that as human hypostases, Adam and Eve each contain within themselves the whole of the composite human nature; they are each one fully human, constituted at one and the same time of soul *and* body. "Each human hypostasis is made up of two natures—soul and body, I mean—which it preserves unconfused in itself, to which fact the separation caused by death bears witness."<sup>28</sup> The somatic character of man's nature is confirmed for the Christian theologian by the doctrine of the Incarnation, since according to that doctrine the Divine Logos must assume body and soul in order to become perfect man. And the doctrine of Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension—since it involves Christ's human body as well as his human soul<sup>29</sup>—effectively excludes an Orthodox theologian

<sup>25</sup>*Liber Adversus Origenum*, PG 86.1, col. 951 B 3-5 and 953 A 6-9.

<sup>26</sup>St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, trans. by Frederic H. Chase, Jr., in *The Fathers of the Church* vol. 37, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958, p. 235. Cf. also pp. 64-66; and *De Institutiones Elementari*, PG 95, col. 100 B 3ff.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 67. Leontius of Jerusalem of the sixth century writes: "There is no nature of man that can be observed by itself, but each nature belongs to a particular someone, and is seen as an enhypostasized nature." *Adversus Nestorianos* V.28, PG 86.1, col. 1748 D 3ff. And in the fourteenth century Gregory of Palamas writes: "Universals exist as such in particulars but are distinguished from them by the mind and reason alone and are conceived prior to the many though they have no existence at all apart from the many, in true reasoning at least." *St. Gregory Palamas: The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, trans. by Robert Sinkewicz. Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1988, p. 83.

<sup>28</sup>St. John of Damascus, *Philosophical Chapters*, ch. 41, in *FC* 37, p. 66.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. St. John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa* IV.1, PG 94, col.

from conceiving human nature as moving in any way to an androgynously perfected existence.

These principles taken from the doctrine of hypostasis can be directly applied to the question of gender: since the somatic "part" of human nature, through which the male and female quality of human being is manifested, is not accidental but essential, the mystery of gender lies deeper than the outer "crust" of human nature. If one could penetrate "beneath" the body of the spiritual core of human being, one would not have gotten beyond gender to an essentially androgynous human "being," but one would discover that gender is somehow inalienable to being fully human, and that it lies at the very core of our being.

This receives further confirmation from details in the creation account. Eve is created from the beginning as a human hypostasis, taken from Adam, constituted of a full human nature, body and soul; and in all of this, as a female. There was never a time nor an existential condition when she was not a woman. She was not in the beginning taken from some androgynous human essence which received certain properties to set it off now as "femaled," as though female properties could now be removed one by one until the femaled essence returns to its original neuter existence, but from the very beginning, Eve was constituted wholly as female.

In the same way, Adam is created from the beginning as a human hypostasis, taken from the dust of the ground, constituted of body and soul as a male. He was not established first as human essence and then given a certain set of characteristic properties whereby the human essence became a male, but from the beginning he was established as a particular hypostasis, as male; there was never a time nor an existential condition when he was not a man.

Understood in the light of this philosophy of hypostasis, one cannot take deification, in which "there is neither male nor female," to mean that gender is left behind in an ascent to some

1104 AB: "His flesh which was raised was the same flesh that suffered, for nothing of His [human] nature, not His body or His soul, was cast aside [in His Resurrection], but He continued to possess a body endowed with the faculties of reason, mind, and will, and thus He sits at the right hand of the Father, willing both as God and as man the salvation of us all."

neutered human existence, for this would mean the obliteration of human nature. It means, rather, that just as God became man without ceasing to be God, so also we become God without ceasing to be human—and as human, male or female. All who enter the waters of Holy Baptism put on Christ, the Son of God by nature, and in this putting on of Christ, all men and women receive the grace of His natural Sonship, becoming thereby sons of God by grace. While remaining who and what we are, we move out of ourselves in *ecstasis*, into the divine Sonship which is beyond gender, enjoying by grace the same intimate communion with the Father which the divine Son enjoys by nature. So Alexander of Alexandria (3rd century) writes in his letter to Alexander of Constantinople:<sup>30</sup>

And it is on this account that our Lord, being by nature the Son of the Father, is worshipped by all; and they who have put off the spirit of bondage, and by brave deeds and advance in virtue have received the Spirit of adoption through the kindness of Him Who is the Son of God by nature, by adoption also become sons.

Even yet, however, we stand only at the threshold of the mystery of gender, and the question as to its ontological meaning remains as pointed as ever. For if this divine Sonship of which all, male and female, are granted to partake by grace is beyond gender, and yet, if our being male or female is inalienable to our being human, and side by side with that, if He who is *Son of God* by nature in His Incarnation becomes the *Son of Man* by nature, then there must be an even deeper mystery imbedded in this mystery of gender; a mystery that has to do precisely with gender even in its being beyond gender, and which discloses even more profoundly the mystery and meaning of human existence.

*B. The Mystery of Gender: And God Took From Adam's Rib.* That God "created them male and female" (Gn 1:27b) is

<sup>30</sup>In Theodoret of Cyrus, *Ecclesiastical History* I.3, *NPNF* 3, 2nd series, p. 38.

important in feminist anthropology for demonstrating woman's equality with man. But this does not stand at the very beginning of man's creation.

In both the Priestly and Yahwist accounts of man's creation, Adam was created first (Gn 1:27a and Gn 2:7), but the Yahwist takes us back-stage of the Priestly account and shows us what lies behind the words: "So God created man. Male and female He created them." We learn that Eve came into being from out of Adam's rib (Gn 2:21). This is crucial for understanding the mystery and meaning of gender.

Feminist thought, however, ignores the ontological priority of Adam.<sup>31</sup> Starting from the position of social and political egalitarianism feminist theology interprets the emergence of woman from Adam's rib in the light of: "God made them male and female," to assert on a Scriptural basis that she is his equal. The Church also affirms woman's equality with man, but rather than interpreting its meaning on the basis of social and political egalitarianism, she interprets the ontological content of egalitarianism on the basis of a closer reading of the creation account, and sets that in the light of the confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. So where does that take us?

As we have shown, the biblical narrative teaches us that Adam comes into being first, "For the first man, that is Adam, came into being in the image and likeness of God."<sup>32</sup> Eve came into being from out of the hypostasis of Adam. Like Adam, Eve was brought into being as an hypostasis in her own right, and, like Adam, Eve is taken by the Fathers as a perfect example of an hypostasis: "Since there are many men, each single man is an hypostasis. For example, Adam is an hypostasis, Eve another hypostasis, Seth another hypostasis."<sup>33</sup> But she is brought into being as an hypostasis from within the hypostasis of Adam and not from some abstract human nature. This means that Eve

<sup>31</sup>Even the document entitled, "Conclusions of the Inter-Orthodox Consultation on the Place of the Woman in the Orthodox Church and the Question of the Ordination of Women" (Rhodes, Greece, Oct. 30-Nov. 7, 1988: printed in *SVS Quarterly*, vol. 33 [1989] no. 4, 392-406) overlooks this crucial fact. Consequently, it is prevented from understanding the real mystery of woman's "place." (See note *infra*.)

<sup>32</sup>Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) *In Epistolam I ad Corinthios XI.3*, PG 74, col. 880 D 10ff.

<sup>33</sup>John of Damascus, *De Institutione Elementarum*, PG 95, col. 101 A 4-7.



derives the whole of her being *from within Adam*, and cannot be contemplated ontologically apart from him.

"Man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." (I Cor 11:8f.) Because Eve comes from out of the innermost depths of Adam and receives from him everything she is—both her existence as hypostasis and her human nature—gender is seen to be a manifestation of the fact that our being is constituted at its very core in an intimate communion of love.

Eve does not come from outside of Adam, from some detached objectified human essence outside of them both, but from within his inmost being—his "rib"!<sup>34</sup> This is not an anthropology of male dominance; woman is not subordinated to man, nor does she compete with man. This is rather an anthropology of intimate, loving communion; for Eve is wholly embraced in a mystical, holy communion of love. She comes into existence out of God's love for Adam, and from the very first instant of her creation she is wholly enveloped in the love of Adam: "This now is bone of *my* bone, and flesh of *my* flesh" (Gn 2:23). She was made for man, made so that together they could complete the essential quality of their hypostatic existence: to move out of themselves in *ecstasis* in order to give themselves wholly to the other, to love absolutely intimately, and to be loved absolutely intimately in a holy, loving union.

In the context of the doctrine of man's creation in loving communion, one begins to understand that such controversial passages as the following, "In the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God," (I Cor 11.11-12) speak not of male dominance, but of loving, *familial* communion. St. John Chrysostom writes:<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Reflecting on the meaning of this phrase, "So God took from Adam's rib," in the context of the pictorial manner of expression so characteristic of Hebraic thought, one feels all the more powerfully how utterly intimate is Eve's communion with Adam. The rib is that part which encloses the heart, the seat of the soul, or spirit, the center and life-giving principle of the human composite in Hebraic anthropology (as well as in Eastern monastic psychology). Eve comes from within the most intimate core of Adam's being, from the very center of his hypostasis. Her origin lies in his "I am." Deeper intimacy than this is impossible.

<sup>35</sup>St. John Chrysostom, Homily 20 on Eph. 5.22-33, trans. Catharine

In the beginning woman came forth from man, and from man and woman other men and women proceed. Can you see now how close this union is, and how God providentially created it from a single nature? He permitted Adam to marry Eve, who was more than sister or daughter; she was his own flesh! God caused the entire human race to proceed from this one point of origin. He did not, on the one hand, fashion woman independently from man; otherwise man would think of her as essentially different from himself. Nor did He enable woman to bear children without man; if this were the case she would be self-sufficient. Instead, just as the branches of a tree proceed from a single trunk, He made the one man Adam to be the origin of all mankind, both male and female, and made it impossible for men and women to be self-sufficient.

We are rooted in each other because we are all rooted in the intimate, personal union of our foreparents, Adam and Eve, a union so loving and intimate because Eve herself comes wholly from within the inner being of Adam. This constitutes the ineffable mystery of being man and woman, made in the image of God. "Love alone, to speak properly, shows that man is in the image of the Creator," writes St. Maximus,<sup>36</sup> for love is the most fundamental quality of hypostases created in the image of the hypostatic God, who is love. Therefore, only the fulfilling of love—intimate communion—makes man perfect.<sup>37</sup>

*Observations Concerning Inclusive Language.* In this light, the so-called "exclusive" language of the Church is revealed in fact to be "inclusive" for it is consciously informed by the philosophy of communion revealed in the account of man's creation. By referring to men and women collectively by the

P. Roth and David Anderson, *St. John Chrysostom on Marriage and Family Life*. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986, p. 44.

<sup>36</sup>*Ambig. Lib. PG* 91, col. 397 BC.

<sup>37</sup>I Jn. 4:16, I Cor. 13:13; cf. Irenaeus, *Contra Haer.* IV.12.2, PG 7, cols. 1004 D-1005 B: "Apart from the love of God, knowledge profits nothing, and to understand the mysteries, to have faith, even to prophesy, if done without love are empty and vain; for love makes man perfect, and he who loves God is perfect both in this world and in the world to come."

use of masculine terms, the Church is simply speaking in a manner consistent with the theological understanding that women and men ultimately derive their being not from some neuter, abstract, impersonal nature, but from the person of Adam. St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 44) writes: "The woman came into being in the image and likeness of man, that is Adam, in no way alien to his nature, but of the same nature and species as he. This fact our forefather Adam himself clearly affirmed when he said, 'This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.'"<sup>38</sup> In Adam, the male gender is discovered to be the ontological root of all mankind so that the masculine term, used generically in the context of Orthodox philosophy, encompasses both men and women by referring to their personal, communal, ontological source. So St. Basil of Caesarea writes:<sup>39</sup>

Why, you say, does the prophet [David in Psalms 1:1] single out only man and proclaim him happy? Does he thereby exclude women from happiness? By no means. For, the virtue of man and woman is the same, since creation is equally honored in both; therefore, there is the same reward for both. Listen to Genesis. 'God created man,' it says, 'in the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.' They whose nature is alike have the same reward. Why, then, when Scripture had made mention of man, did it leave women unnoticed? Because it believed that it was sufficient, since their nature is alike, to indicate the whole through the more authoritative part.

On the other hand, so-called "inclusive" language is exposed to be in fact "exclusive" for it disavows this biblical anthropology of holy, loving, familial communion. Suggesting a view of man that jumps on at the second stop in the creation account—"God made them male and female"—and wholly bypassing woman's origin in Adam, inclusive language implies philosophical undertones that set forth a fundamentally different view of male-female relationships. A description of the

<sup>38</sup>In *Epistolam I ad Corinthios XI.3*, PG 74, col. 881 AB

<sup>39</sup>Homily 10 on Ps. 1 in *St. Basil Exegetic Homilies*, trans. by Sr. Agnes Clare Day, C.D.P., FC, vol. 46, p. 155f.

ancient Dionysian myth given by Walter F. Otto is quite consistent with the philosophical implications of so-called "inclusive" language:<sup>40</sup>

This feminine reserve [of the Dionysian women] has not the slightest thing to do with what we call morals. It belongs to nature which has made man and woman so mutually dependent that each must constantly seek the other's company, and yet each is separated from the other by a rift which stems from the primal depths of all that lives.

Both the philosophical implications of "inclusive language" and the ancient Dionysian myth carry the notion that woman and man are ontologically fully human only when they are either side by side (and therefore not in each other) or when outside of and independent of each other, finding their common point of origin outside of any human hypostasis in some objectified, neutered human essence. We will see shortly that according to the teaching of the Church, the rift between man and woman is not to be found in the primal depths of nature, but in the self-love and pride of sin. And we have seen that in the primal depths of human nature, there is found a difference that is rooted in an absolutely intimate, personal communion of love. Otto goes on to say that to be male in the Dionysian myth means to be created for the passion of reproduction, whereas archetypal femininity is all beauty, sweetness, and charm combining into the sum of motherliness.<sup>41</sup> According to Orthodox Tradition, however, to be male is to love, and to be female is to be loved, and to love in return. And from within that loving communion comes the whole human *family*.

Moreover, because inclusive language implies the existence of an impersonal, neutered essence from which male and female are drawn, there is inherent in its anthropological implications a kind of docetism. That which is essential to our being human—our existence as male or female, which itself is a manifestation

<sup>40</sup>*Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, trans. with an introduction by Robert B. Palmer. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1965, p. 178.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

of the personal, loving, familial, and intimate communion in which we were created and in which we were meant to exist—is mutilated and rendered meaningless since it finds the ground of its ultimate reality in some impersonal, neutered essence. Such language therefore obscures and even denies by the anthropology it implies the fundamental quality of the human hypostasis: to live in communion with the other and with God by virtue of having been created in the image of God. Because of the philosophical ramifications hidden in inclusive language, viz. that all relationships are ultimately rooted in an abstract, impersonal essence, such language cannot support a theology of personal communion. It assumes that power constitutes the dynamic element in all personal relationships. Love becomes irrelevant and all that remains is the relative dominance of one individual over another. The Orthodox doctrine which understands that human love is so warm and vibrant because it is so personal and *familial* is altogether lost.

Consequently, when Orthodox theologians conform to the use of so-called inclusive language, they speak in a manner that subtly contradicts the theological proclamation they wish to uphold; and since this manner of speaking carries philosophical implications closer to the anthropology of ancient paganism than to Christian theology, it can only dilute the full force of the Gospel proclamation of holy, deifying communion.<sup>42</sup>

*C. An Ontology of Communion: In the Image of God He Created Them.* In patristic sources one finds alongside the notion that the image of God in which man was created is the Divine Logos Himself, the understanding that the image of God in man consists in the triadic structure of his nature, whereby he images the Holy Trinity.<sup>43</sup> For example, from St. Gregory of

<sup>42</sup>The document on the place of women in the Orthodox Church referred to above, because it completely overlooks the fact that woman comes from the “rib” of Adam, seems oblivious to the anthropology that informs “inclusive language.” Consequently, the document’s own use of “inclusive language” only vitiates its attempt to affirm that the content of salvation is communion (pp. 397-398).

<sup>43</sup>See Robert E. Sinkewicz’s introduction to his translation of the 150 Chapters of Gregory Palamas, in which he traces briefly the history of this idea to show its influence on Gregory’s understanding of man. *Op. cit.*, pp. 21-24.

Sinai (14th century) one finds this statement:<sup>44</sup>

God is known and understood in everything in three hypostases. He holds all things and provides for all things through His Son in the Holy Spirit; and no one of Them, wherever He is invoked, is named or thought of as existing apart or separately from the two others. Just in the same way, man has mind, word and spirit; and the mind cannot be without the word, nor the word without the spirit, but the three are always in one another, yet exist in themselves. The mind speaks by means of words, and the word is manifested through the spirit. This example shows that man bears in himself a feeble image of the ineffable prototype, the Trinity, thus demonstrating that he has been made in God's image. Mind is the Father, word is the Son, spirit is the Holy Spirit, as the divine fathers teach in this example, expounding the dogmatic teaching of the consubstantial and pre-existing Trinity, of one God in three Persons, thus transmitting to us the true faith as an anchor of hope.

It follows from this that since Eve receives from Adam the whole of her human nature, then in the inner structure of her nature she, too, is the image of God, but only in communion with Adam, for she receives all that she is from within him. Here is another argument against the view that the Holy Spirit is the archetype of the female. Woman, because her nature is Adam's nature, like Adam images in her nature all three Persons of the Trinity. The effort to locate woman's prototype in the Holy Spirit, apart from the Father and the Son, implies within the bosom of Divine Being a gap between the Holy Spirit and the other two Persons which would not only render the "perichoretic" union<sup>45</sup> of the three Persons unintelligible,

<sup>44</sup>"Texts on Commandments and Dogmas," §§ 30-32, in *Writings From the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart*, translated from the Russian text by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer. London: Faber & Faber, 1973, pp. 43f.

<sup>45</sup>Perichoretic union: a union in which the three Persons "flow in and out of one another." This is a term used by the Fathers to show the intimacy of communion between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

but would also dissolve the intimate communion of Adam and Eve since the absolute gap posited at the very core of divine being will be imaged in an absolute gap between Adam and Eve. This gap cannot be closed since it will be conceived as integral to the structure of being. In considering patristic references to "feminine" characteristics of the Deity, one should determine the context of those references before drawing any theological conclusions. Do those references refer to the *image of God* in which man is created, or to *divine providence* which acts not only like a father, but like a mother as well?

The patristic teaching on the image of God shows that the mystery of gender consists in its being the manifestation of the personal, loving communion which constitutes the core of human being. In the one human nature which men and women both *are*, they both image all three Persons of the Godhead; but in the unique relationship of communion possible to man and wife, one finds an image of the mystery of Christ's communion with His Bride, the Church.<sup>46</sup> Eve comes from the rib of Adam and receives from within him the principles of her inner "logoi," just as the whole of the new creation, the Church, flows from the "rib" of the crucified Logos<sup>47</sup> and finds the principles of her inner "logoi" in Him.

We now find on every "level" of being a person or hypostasis, rather than impersonal nature, as the ontic source. Contemplating the mystery of divine, uncreated Being in the light of revelation, we see three hypostases, one in nature, honor and dignity, and yet whose source both in terms of nature and hypostasis is the Person or hypostasis of the Father.<sup>48</sup> Again, contemplating created being in general, we find that the "inner essences" or "logoi" of all things lie in the divine hypostasis of the Son. And when we contemplate human being, we find a personal, hypostatic origin again: the hypostasis of Adam.

<sup>46</sup>Eph. 5:33. Ps. Anastasius interprets the creation of Adam and Eve wholly as an icon of Christ and His Bride, the Church (*In Hexaemeron IX, PG 89, col. 991ff.*).

<sup>47</sup>This imagery is suggested by St. Maximus, *First Century of Various Texts* § 23, *Philokalia II*, p. 170.

<sup>48</sup>Cf., for example, St. Gregory Palamas, *150 Chapters* 132, Sinkewicz, p. 237; and Leontius of Jerusalem, *Adversus Nestorianos* I.20, *PG 86.2, col. 1485 BC*. Cf. Also J. Zizioulas, "The Teaching of the 2nd Ecumenical Coun-

The personal source of being at every level means that the movement of activity specific to human nature is one of loving, holy communion. Man's very coming into being is a movement that comes from God and is destined to return to God: "God is the beginning and end of the genesis and movement of beings, because they are brought into being from Him, and they are moved through Him, and they come to their rest in Him."<sup>49</sup> In his commentary on Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Maximus writes:<sup>50</sup>

The great Dionysius teaches [the monk Gaius] that the God of all is not simply called a man after He becomes flesh, but in truth becomes a man in all essential respects. The simple and true demonstration of this is the possession of that power (δύναμις) which is constitutive of the nature. If one were to call this its natural activity (ἐνέργειαν), since it is a characteristic that is proper and primary to that nature, one would be quite right. For movement makes something to exist in a specific way. It is the most generic of all the natural properties which a nature contains and which are present in that nature. Apart from movement there is only the non-existent since to the non-existent alone belongs neither movement nor existence, according to our great teacher Dionysius.

The movement constitutive of human nature, moreover, is *directed* movement in and to God. But we can define it more narrowly yet: it is a *personal* movement directed towards the hypostasis of the Divine Logos in whom all things were made. This movement of man in and to the hypostasis of the Divine Logos finds on the purely human level an image in the movement of all mankind originating in the hypostasis of Adam. But there is this significant twist: men and women are constituted on the purely human level to move from the first Adam, in and to the Second Adam (deification), which opens to us the possibility on the Holy Spirit in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective," in *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum* I. Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1982, pp. 29-54.

<sup>49</sup>St. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguorum Liber* in PG 91, col. 1217 CD.

<sup>50</sup>St. Maximus, *Ibid.*, col. 1048 AB.



bility for understanding more profoundly the meaning of the Divine Logos' Incarnation as the *Second Adam*.

#### IV. SALVATION IN CHRIST THE SECOND ADAM AND MARY THE SECOND EVE

*A. Christ the Second Adam: The Union of Those Who Were Sundered.* Love is the perfection of man created in the image of the loving God; self-love is the origin and mother of man's disintegration.<sup>51</sup> "For the self-love and cleverness of men, alienating them from each other and perverting the law, have cut our single human nature into many fragments."<sup>52</sup> Closed in on himself through self-love, the natural movement of the hypostasis—an ecstatic movement out of oneself and into the other in God in loving, deifying communion—is distorted into a movement of self-loving tyranny over one's own kind.<sup>53</sup>

The tragedy of mankind is understood in this spiritual context. The desire for pleasure is the dominating force in self-love.<sup>54</sup> Eve's desire for the fruit of the tree, which was pleasurable to the eye, over the commandment of God is the consummate expression of self-love. Out of her love of pleasure, she becomes disobedient to God. Forgetting humility, she asserts herself over Adam and in so doing, overturns the natural order of creation, for she was not created as Adam's head, but Adam is her head.<sup>55</sup>

Self-love informs the behavior of Adam as well, for in his acquiescence to Eve, he also manifests a dominating desire for

<sup>51</sup>St. Maximus the Confessor, *First Century of Various Texts* § 83, in *Philokalia* II, p. 172. See also, § 30, p. 171: "The devil has deceived us by guile in a malicious and cunning way, provoking us through self-love to sensual pleasure. He has separated us in our wills from God and from each other; he has perverted straightforward truth and in this manner has divided humanity, cutting it up into many opinions and fantasies."

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, § 46, p. 173.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, § 31, p. 171.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, § 53, 175. Cf. also the *Second Century on Various Texts*, § 34, p. 244.

<sup>55</sup>Ps. Anastasius of Sinai writes: "Never was woman decreed to be conspicuous by assertiveness (*gravis*) or impropriety," for she was created to be his helper in the acquisition of divine life. In *Hexameron* IX, PG 89, col. 991 D.

sensual pleasure.<sup>56</sup> St. Maximus writes that the movement away from communion to self-love has contaminated male-female relationships with sensual lust and ignorance in which man pursues his own individual glory rather than God's.<sup>57</sup> Self-love and pleasure are now attached to the very root of our nature like a cancer, and have become the law of fallen human nature.<sup>58</sup> Our earthly existence is now constituted contrary to nature,<sup>59</sup> for in the world man and woman do not exist in communion with one another, submitting to each other in humility and love, but they co-exist in pride and lust in which providence is maligned and the dignity which all equally share by nature is denied;<sup>60</sup> they exist as isolated individuals competing for power and aggrandizement, not only as an expression of self-love, but also out of a simple concern for survival lest one be consumed by the rapacity of the other.<sup>61</sup> The natural order of humility and loving communion has therefore been exchanged for an unnatural disorder of pride, self-love, and lust.<sup>62</sup>

The point of this patristic testimony is not to define woman as the cause of sin; this is directly contrary to the Fathers' clear teaching that ontologically woman is fully human and exists in the image of God through her communion with Adam. The meaning of Eve's sin lies not in her being woman, but in the

<sup>56</sup>*First Century of Various Texts*, § 23, p. 170.

<sup>57</sup>*Second Century on Various Texts*, § 44, p. 246, and §§ 64-65, p. 226.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, § 47, p. 247, and § 39, p. 244.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, § 33, p. 243.

<sup>60</sup>*Fifth Century on Various Texts*, §§§ 5-7, p. 262.

<sup>61</sup>Gn 3:12-13, where Adam accuses Eve for his own sin is tragically poignant when compared to his love for her in Gn 2:23-24. From the first instant of her coming into being, Eve never knew any other existential condition than that of Adam's intimate love for her. Now, after the Fall, Adam retreats into self-love and rejects his wife. There she stands: abandoned, lonely, unloved. How pathetic and disoriented she must have been in this condition completely unnatural and unknown to her! Do we find here a biblical commentary on the pathos of the contemporary women's movement? Eve does not really want to be "her own woman" because she was made to be loved as a person, created in the image of the triune God, in communion with Adam. Could the behavior characterizing the women's movement be symptomatic of a deep, inner outrage caused by the unnatural condition in which sinful society is constituted; a condition in which women have not been loved and revered as the full human persons they *are* by nature in a society that has either forgotten, or failed to learn, the inner teachings of Christian anthropology?

<sup>62</sup>*Fifth Century on Various Texts*, §§§ 5-7, p. 262.

fact that by disobeying the commandment of God, she places herself over Adam, and serves as the consummate *typos* of human unbelief, pride, and self-love. Indeed, as properly "woman," that is to say, as she was created by God, woman is seen by the Fathers as the supreme realization of the virtues, love, and of the divinizing virtues that give rise to love which unites men with God and one another.<sup>63</sup> When anyone scorns the Fathers' harsh statements to imply the inferiority of women, they do so in total ignorance of the distinction assumed by the Fathers between the ontological and existential modes of man's existence: that is to say, between the nature of man as he was meant to exist in God, and the nature of man as he has been distorted by the sin of self-love and pride.

Moreover, the Fathers teach that both Adam and Eve are the cause of our death in sin for together they partake of self-love. And so St. Irenaeus can say in the same breath that Eve, because of her disobedience, "was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race," as was also Adam, who because of his love of pleasure,<sup>64</sup> "became the beginning of those who die."<sup>65</sup> The emphasis, however, falls on Adam; as the ontic "root" of all mankind on the creaturely level, he has severed the whole human race from God by his sin, and plunged it into the nothingness of death (Rm 5:12 & 19). So writes St. Irenaeus: "Through the disobedience of one man, who in the beginning was fashioned from virgin soil, the many were made sinners and forsook life."<sup>66</sup>

Consequently, the whole of the human race was in danger of perishing for it had disintegrated into the isolationism of self-love and was left adrift in the sea of corruption and death.<sup>67</sup> In such a condition, it was not enough for God simply to forgive

<sup>63</sup>For example, *Third Century on Various Texts*, §§ 30 and 31, pp. 216-7. "Women are extremely strong, but truth conquers all" (I Esd 3.12). By women, he means the divinizing virtues which give rise to the love that unites men with God and with one another. . . . Women signify the supreme realization of the virtues, which is love. Love is the unending pleasure and indivisible union of those who participate through their longing in what is good by nature."

<sup>64</sup>Cf. St. Maximus, *First Century of Various Texts*, § 14, p. 168.

<sup>65</sup>*Contra Haer.* III.22.4, PG 7, cols. 958-959.

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, III.18.7, PG 7, col. 958B.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. St. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* §§ 4-6, trans. by Robert W. Thomson. Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 143ff.

man by divine decree, for man was made for communion with God. St. Athanasius teaches that forgiveness does not exempt one from the consequences of nature; it only looses sins.<sup>68</sup> And so, to overturn the law of pleasure and self-love that was attached to our nature, the Divine Logos became man through a conception rooted not in the pleasure of self-love, but in the purity of the Blessed Virgin.

But since all of us are rooted in the hypostasis of Adam, the hypostasis of the Divine Logos must be incarnate as the Second Adam; as the first Adam contained in himself the whole human race and in his disobedience became the beginning of those who die, so also the Second Adam contains in Himself the whole human race and in His obedience to the Father, becomes the beginning of all those who live.<sup>69</sup> Leontius of Jerusalem (6th century) writes:<sup>70</sup>

Why is not this other passage clear, namely, that just as Adam is one of the whole [race], and the first in the establishment of death through whom we all likewise have become mortal by nature, so also Christ in the flesh is one of the whole race, and the Prince of the passage to immortality, through whom we all who are in Him have come into the possession of immortal life.

Voluntarily accepting a virginal birth and submitting freely to the pain of death, He endows human nature with an incorruptible form of regeneration that is no longer contaminated by the pleasure of self-love;<sup>71</sup> He destroys the tyranny of sin rooted in the cycle of pleasure and pain now dominating our fallen nature,<sup>72</sup> and as the Second Adam containing the whole of mankind in Himself, He unites those who were sundered.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, § 7, p. 151.

<sup>69</sup>St. Irenaeus, *Contra Haer.* III.22.4, PG 7, col. 959 BC.

<sup>70</sup>*Adversus Nestorianus* II.6, PG 86.2, cols. 1545 D-1548 AB. Cf. also St. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* §§ 8 and 9, pp. 153ff.

<sup>71</sup>See St. Maximus, *Fourth Century of Various Texts*, §§ 39 and 43, pp. 244 and 246.

<sup>72</sup>*Fourth Century of Various Texts*, § 42, p. 246.

<sup>73</sup>Cf. St. Maximus: "Love unites different beings, and it especially unites men to God and to one another." *First Century on Various Texts*, §§ 27-29 and 35, pp. 170-2.

He establishes all of mankind in His own divine and immovable hypostasis not only on the divine level as the Divine Logos, but now on the human level as the Second Adam. According to St. Irenaeus:<sup>74</sup>

Just as the first man who was formed, Adam, was taken from untilled, virgin soil . . . so also did the Word recapitulate Adam in Himself by receiving a virginal birth from Mary enabling Him to gather up Adam into Himself. Now, if the first Adam had a man for his father and was born of human seed, then it would be reasonable to think that the Second Adam was begotten of Joseph. But, in fact, the first Adam was taken from the dust, and God was his Creator. Therefore, it was necessary that the Second Adam also recapitulate in Himself [the whole of mankind] by being formed as man by God, so that He would be like the first Adam in terms of His origin. So why did not God also form the Second Adam from the dust, rather than from Mary? So that there would not be another creation that needed to be saved, too, but that the very same creation which was made in Adam [and that had fallen], should be recapitulated in Christ as the Second Adam, and thus the analogy is maintained.

With this, we enter even more deeply into the mystery of gender. Passing beyond that aspect in which it is a manifestation of our being created in and for loving communion, we enter into that aspect in which it is discovered to be the way of deification.

*B. Mary the Second Eve: Move to Deification.* If Eve's transgression is the consummate expression of man's pride in which the natural order is overthrown, the Theotokos' obedience is the consummate expression of humility in which the natural order of communion is restored. Through her free, personal submission to the will of God (Lk 1:38) the Divine Logos receives from her in her womb His human nature, so that from

<sup>74</sup>St. Irenaeus, *Contra Haer.* III.21.10, PG 7, col. 955 AC.

within the inmost depths of the First Adam, from within the Holy Virgin, rises the Second Adam, the Divine Logos incarnate. Whereas Eve was created to be the Mother of all living but gave herself to self-love and became the Mother of death, the Theotokos, by dying to self-love in her acceptance of virginity, has become the Mother of all living through her Son, Jesus Christ our God and Savior.<sup>75</sup>

Accordingly, if the Second Adam renews mankind by establishing his ontological origin in His own hypostasis both on the divine and human level, the Second Eve renews mankind by overturning his deliberate disobedience and pride by her free humble submission to Christ, the Second Adam:<sup>76</sup>

Mary the Virgin is found obedient, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word." But Eve was disobedient for she did not obey when she was still a virgin. . . . And so, having become disobedient, she was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race. Mary, however, became the cause of salvation, both to herself and the whole human race, and thereby set the first Eve at liberty. . . . The knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. For what the Virgin Eve had bound fast through unbelief, the Virgin Mary set free through faith.

In His resurrection, and in the outpouring of His Holy Spirit, the Second Adam cleanses the male's weakness and self-love by His own strength and self-sacrifice, and at the same time, He absolves the woman from the blame she incurred in the first Garden. For in the Second Garden—the Garden of

<sup>75</sup>Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 20.4 in *NPNF* 5, 2nd series, p. 410. In this study I have not relied on the thought of Gregory of Nyssa because his understanding of male-female ontology is caught on an inconsistency. He maintains the patristic doctrine that man in his nature is body and soul, but when he turns to the mystery of gender, he forgets and, falling back into the androgyny of Greek philosophy, attributes gender to the Fall. Even so, the thrust of his anthropology is that men and women share completely in the image of God and that they are therefore perfected when united in love.

<sup>76</sup>St. Irenaeus, *Contra Haer.* III.22.4, *PG* 7, col. 958f.

Christ's Tomb—she comes to the man no longer as a “minister” of transgression and death, but of the glorious resurrected life in Christ. In this, woman truly becomes woman for she fulfills for the first time the real meaning of her being woman: to be man's help-mate, not simply in the ordinary, mundane routine of life, but in the acquisition of eternal life in communion with God. So St. Cyril of Alexandria writes in his commentary on Lk 23:9, “And they returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest:”<sup>77</sup>

Through the word of the angels, the women became initiators of the divine mysteries [mystagogues] for they reported these things in haste to the disciples. For it was necessary that the woman be given the glory of grace in this manner, for she who long ago had become the minister of death [Eve] is now released from the blame she incurred, and has become instead the minister [or deacon] of the words of the holy angels. And there came on her the majesty of one who proclaims the mystery of the Resurrection, for she was its first disciple. Therefore, the female gender has received benefit, for her reproach has been taken away, and her curse has been overthrown. Whereas when the Lord met them in the Garden long ago he said to the woman: “In pain shall you bear children,” here [in this Garden] he has given to them an end of the curse. For, as is recorded by another Evangelist, the Lord says: “Be of good cheer.”

In the obedience and humility of the Theotokos, and in the condescension of her Son as the Second Adam, one sees that the law of deification in which there is neither male nor female, is fulfilled precisely in our *being* male and female. Gender has been created as the means to transcend gender; for if as men and women we practice humility and love by submitting to one another in accordance with creation, we then become God by grace (while not ceasing to be man, male and female) just as God became man by nature (while not ceasing to be God).

<sup>77</sup>PG 72, col. 941 CD.

If in this light we cast our minds back to the punishment imposed by God on Adam and Eve, we now see that His punishment was in reality an act of mercy, for through it, He points out for Adam and Eve the way to salvation and deification by bringing them back—albeit this time in pain (Gn 3:16 & 17 LXX)—to that loving communion in and for which they were created. In the words of St. Irenaeus:<sup>78</sup>

So Adam received as punishment for his transgression the tedious labor of tilling the earth, so that he would eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, and return to the dust whence he was taken. In the same way, the woman received as her punishment the tedious labor and pain of child-bearing, and she was placed in subjection to her husband in order to serve him.

The way back to God now is the way of death to self-love and the love of pleasure, and the practice of humility in real, concrete terms.<sup>79</sup> For Adam, dying out to self-love means humbly submitting himself to his wife in the love of God, giving himself to the pain of tilling the earth in order to provide for his wife Eve as he was meant to do, rather than acquiescing to the pleasure of indulgence. For Eve, dying out to self-love means humbly submitting herself to the love of Adam, her head, and giving herself to the pain of bearing and raising her children that they might learn to live humbly in accordance with the divine image stamped in the nature they receive from their parents.

The movement or activity which God is here commanding Adam and Eve to practice is precisely the personal, directed movement natural to human nature; if Adam and Eve submit to God's punishment, they will find themselves in ecstatic movement, each one moving to and in the other. In this communion of love, they move not only to and in the other, but also into

<sup>78</sup>*Contra Haer.* III.23.3, PG 7, col. 962. See also St. Maximus, *First Century of Various Texts* §§ 87-91, pp. 184-5.

<sup>79</sup>Cf. St. Maximus, "He who abandons his former passion-dominated way of life, and out of fear submits his entire will to the divine commandments stands at the beginning of the return to God." *First Century of Various Texts*, § 68, p. 179.



the divine life of God where they graciously receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit.

For this reason, marriage is a mystery or sacrament. In a marriage founded on the law of Christ, man's natural condition becomes the means of transcending the self-love that dominates our fallen condition; the law of lust and self-love that has become the law of our fallen nature is transformed by God's grace into a law of loving communion through the faithful commitment of husband and wife to each other (the martyrdom of marriage), and in their commitment to the training of their children in love.

I submit that this is the theological context in which such controversial passages as I Tim 2:8-15 are to be understood:

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness with modesty.

The logic at work here is not one of male authoritarianism, but one of contrition, humility and love in obedience to Christ. John Chrysostom, for example, explains the passage by developing at length the following main points: woman's place in the Church should be, as it were, invisible in terms of her fleshly beauty, not because her beauty is bad but because of the lust of man and the vanity of woman. We must behave ourselves so as to encourage each other to godliness, not to incite love of fleshly beauty, which comes from self-esteem and pride. A godly decorum, St. John continues, is born of contrition, for we have sinned, and it is practiced in the silence of humility. We come

to Church to mourn for our sins and to pray, not to parade. By practicing the virtues of godliness woman fulfills her role as man's help-mate, helping him to attain with her the glory of deification.<sup>80</sup>

Hence, it is precisely *in* our gender, by observing our proper, natural roles, that we are granted by God's grace to transcend gender, even while we remain male or female. In the ecstasy of deification, where there is neither male nor female, we all by grace become sons of the Living God, for we have been united with the Second Adam, who is the Son of God by nature. And in our union with Him we are granted by grace to enjoy the same intimate communion with the Heavenly Father that He enjoys by nature.

## V. WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD

The specific purpose of the levitical priesthood was to offer cleansing for all the people so that the assembly could perform her task as the priestly nation (Lev 16:15-16; Ex 19:6). The Israelite king embodied the whole nation of Israel and bore in himself the sins of the people.<sup>81</sup> Every year on the Day of Atonement, he accepted abuse at the hands of the priest as punishment for the sins of the nation.<sup>82</sup> These soteriological

<sup>80</sup>*NPNF* vol. 13, 2nd series, pp. 432ff. Cf. also his commentary on I Cor. 11:3ff, *NPNF* 12, 2nd series, pp. 151-154. In this context, the document on woman's place in the Orthodox Church (art. cit.) is deficient for in delineating what women can do in the Church (pp. 401ff), it manifests little sensitivity to the fundamental ethos of humility and submission through which the woman, as well as the man, attain deification.

<sup>81</sup>The Old Testament exemplar *par excellence* of the vicarious quality essential to the function of any leader of Israel is Moses. As Israel's leader, he was so identified with the people that even though he himself was innocent, he was appointed to suffer with his people and was not allowed to enter the promised land. But the most pointed episode in which Moses' vicarious suffering is illustrated is when he intercedes before God on behalf of the people who had fallen into idolatry, pleading that they be spared and that he be blotted out of God's book of life in their place (Ex. 32:32)

<sup>82</sup>Cf. F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Developments of Old Testament Themes*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968, chs. 7-8; Helmer Ringgren, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*. Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, 1956, ch. 3; and C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Salvation*. City Road, London: The Epworth Press, 1946, p. 151ff.

functions of the priest and king obviously required for their fulfillment persons who contained in themselves the whole of the people; they could therefore be fulfilled only by the male who, in Adam, serves as the ontic, hypostatic root bearing in himself the whole human race. The fulfillment of these specific functions by the woman is simply an ontic and soteriological impossibility, for, even though she contains the whole of human nature in herself, in her hypostasis she does not stand as the head of the race, but is herself embraced in the head, in the hypostasis of Adam.

The Adamic offices of priest and king are united and fully realized in the Suffering Servant of the Lord. (Is 40-55) As the Messianic leader of Israel, He assumes and carries in Himself the consequences of Israel's sin. In His vicarious suffering for the sins of the people (Is 53),<sup>83</sup> Israel's sins are atoned and his ordination as God's priestly nation interceding on behalf of all nations, is fulfilled. (Is 42:6) The Suffering Servant is, of course, Jesus Christ. He is both the true King of Israel and our High Priest. In our union with Him in Holy Baptism, we all are tonsured into the royal priesthood of the New Israel; we all become royal priests, and in Him, the Church's function as God's priestly nation interceding before God on behalf of all and for all, is perfected. But within this royal priesthood is the priesthood specific to Adam as the hypostatic origin of human being, viz. the liturgical priesthood, whose purpose is to stand before God on behalf of the priestly community so that through him, the community's priestly role may be realized. In the Old Testament, this specific function was fulfilled imperfectly (because of sin) in the levitical priesthood (Lev 16:15f.), but now it is fulfilled once and for all in the only true High Priest, Jesus

<sup>83</sup>Cf. O. Eissfeldt, "The Ebed-Yahweh in Isaiah 40-55," *Expository Times* 44, 1932-33, pp. 261-68; Robert Lennox, "The Servant of Yahweh in the Old Testament," *Theology Today* 15 (Oct. 1958), pp. 315-20; Curt Lindhagen, *The Servant Motif in the Old Testament: A Preliminary Study to the Ebed Yahweh Problem in Deutero-Isaiah*, Uppsala, 1950, pp. 280ff.; T. W. Manson, *The Servant-Messiah*, Cambridge at the University Press; 1953; C. R. North, "The Servant of the Lord," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, v.IV, pp. 292-94, and *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah*, London: Oxford University Press, 1948; H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays*, London: Butterworth Press, 1952, chs. 1 and 2; and W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, Naperville, IL.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1957.

Christ, the Second Adam, the Head of the Church, the personal source of all human being on the human as well as the divine level. (Heb 7:23-9:28)

The worship of God's priestly nation is now constituted in a two-fold movement of communion that corresponds exactly to the natural movement of human nature; there is the movement of God to man, and of man to God.<sup>84</sup> Both movements proceed through Jesus Christ, the Second Adam. As the Word and Power of God, he destroys the power of sin and death, and opens up to man the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. As the Second Adam, He unites man in Himself and brings him into communion with His Father, in His Holy Spirit. The worship of God's priestly nation is therefore perfected, for in the Second Adam, fallen Adam realizes his natural role as the priestly head of the new priestly community.

This is confirmed further by the theology suggested in the silent prayers of the priest said during the Divine Liturgy at the litany of the faithful. At one point, the priest prays: "We thank thee O Lord God of Hosts, who hast accounted us worthy to stand even now before Thy holy altar, and to fall down before Thy compassion for our sins and for the errors of all Thy people." In the second prayer of the faithful, after the priest again prays for his own cleansing, he prays for the faithful: "Grant also to those who pray with us, O God, growth in life and faith and spiritual understanding." The same themes are expressed again in the silent prayer said by the priest at the litany of supplication. The principal function of the levitical priesthood has not been destroyed; it has been completed and fulfilled in the liturgical priesthood of the New Israel because the liturgical priesthood has been established and perfected in the Second Adam (cf. Mt 5:17 and Rom 10:4, "Christ is the τέλος (completion) of the Law").

Accordingly, if in the resurrection of Christ woman truly fulfills for the first time the real meaning of her being woman, then also in the resurrection of Christ man truly fulfills for the first time the real meaning of his being man: in Christ he is now made able to stand before God on behalf of the woman who came from him, and the children whom they have begotten,

<sup>84</sup>Cf. Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3.III.3 and 12.

not only to bring them into the deifying communion with God for which they were made, but also thereby to bring them into the fulfillment of their priestly function as royal priests ordained to intercede before God on behalf of all creation. That the liturgical priesthood should be performed only by certain males, then, follows in accordance with the structure of human nature; since we are constituted in communion through the ontic priority of Adam, the order observed in the worship of the Church must follow the natural order of creation so that the Church can fulfill her election as the priestly nation through whose sufferings and prayers, all might realize their natural destiny of deifying communion with God.

In the genuine experience of this holy, loving communion the concept of male superiority or dominance is non-existent. When we speak of the male's priority over the female, we are speaking of a priority among equals in which men and women, through union with their personal, ontic source, Christ, the Second Adam, are brought into that holy, deifying communion of love in and for which they were created. In the Church, then, both men and woman are free to move, in accordance with the structure of human nature, out of themselves to the full realization of their natural gifts for the benefit of all. The male's priority of love means that the full realization of every person's potential is encouraged and nurtured, rather than suppressed, which would be the case if the male's priority were one of dominance. At the same time, the full potential of any person can be realized only in this holy environment of loving communion which is fulfilled only through humble submission to one another in Christ, the Second Adam, and through obedient observance of the spiritual roles natural to each. It is therefore soteriologically essential that the natural order, in which the male serves the female as her priest, be preserved so that the Church may be the priestly nation which brings all persons, male and female, into the likeness of God—which is a communion of love—for which they were created.

*What About Singles?* If marriage is that in which man's creation in communion is realized, then what about singles, or, to use language more appropriate to patristic Tradition, what about virginity? Here, I will attempt only a brief response,

leaving to others more qualified the task of explaining this in greater detail.

I have tried to show how a patristic theology of gender reveals that man's being at its core is constituted in personal, loving, familial and intimate communion. The mystery of marriage is the natural way for realizing that communion. Marriage blessed by the Church, then, becomes holy and salvific for through marriage, man and wife enter into that ecstatic, personally directed movement natural to human hypostatic being.

The goal of this personally directed movement, however, does not lie on the human level. If it is established in the Person of Christ, then in His Holy Spirit man and wife transcend the limitations of created human nature and enter into communion with the uncreated Holy Trinity through their union with the Second Adam. In this, marriage is seen as the natural way of salvation leading to deification which is above nature, but not contrary to nature.

This is the same goal of the way of virginity, if it is established in the virginity of Christ. In union with Christ, virginity is made the supra-natural (above nature, not against nature) way to salvation as deification. The laws of salvation are the same in marriage and virginity—humble submission to one another, and obedience to the commandments of Christ; but they are practiced in different ways.

## CONCLUSION.

The most powerful proof the Church can offer for the biblical and patristic anthropology of communion is personal embodiment of this loving communion: men and women honoring one another in purity, humility, and love; and Christian husbands and wives who in their loving submission to one another embody the holy communion between Christ the Second Adam and His Church, the Second Eve. Apart from personal embodiment, the doctrine of the Church, coming from within the Spirit of humility and love who manifests in the saints the divine radiance of the natural beauty and dignity of man, and who is irresistible to all except those hardened in spiritual

death, will be betrayed by the rasping spirit of pride and conceit, making the doctrine of the Church to appear simply as another set of sterile, abstract ideas shouted at the world. Only through genuine communion with God will the natural place of men and women be clearly seen as an essential manifestation (epiphany) of the Gospel's proclamation of salvation.

He who believes fears; he who fears is humble; he who is humble becomes gentle and renders inactive those impulses of incensiveness and desire which are contrary to nature. A man who is gentle keeps the commandments; he who keeps the commandments is purified; he who is purified is illumined; he who is illumined is made a consort of the divine Bridegroom and Logos in the shrine of the mysteries.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup>St. Maximus, *First Century on Theology* § 16, *Philokalia* II, p. 117.



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