

THE QUESTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF WOMEN*

BY

Prof. VLASSIOS PHIDAS

1. Ordination and Priesthood

The Orthodox Church has never had any real canonical problem as regards the grounds for the possibility or impossibility of the ordination of women, because such problematics are totally alien to the Orthodox ecclesiastical consciousness. The problem is essentially brought into the Orthodox theological discussion via the multilateral and bilateral theological dialogues of the contemporary ecumenical movement. However, the *ordination* (χειροτονία) of women by the Protestants and, recently, by the Anglicans, creates, in the last analysis, a real theological stimulus for Orthodox theology as well, since it is mainly posited as a theological problem in the contemporary ecumenical movement.

The canonical approach to this matter presupposes the restoration of the real dimensions of the theological examination of the meaning of the word *ordination*. This word, as it is well known, has a multiple meaning both in the biblical and the ecclesiastical tradition. It can be interpreted in terms of the election (ἐκλογή) or of the simple laying on of hands (χειροθεσία), or even of the sacramental ordination. Consequently, the multiple meaning of the term ordination of women in the canonical tradition is better understood in its real theological dimensions only through its implicit reference to the sacrament of the priesthood.

The theological convictions of Protestantism and of the largest section of Anglicanism concerning the sacrament of priesthood are, as it is well known, plainly foreign to the content of the corresponding teaching of the Orthodox Church. They derive from the demonstrably different ecclesiological presuppositions for evaluating the sacramental experience of the Church. Thus, for the Protestants, the term ordination is found to be closer to the canonical notion of the simple

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election or laying on of hands on a believer for the purpose of charging him with some special ecclesiastical ministry, always in apparent connection with the teaching of the general priesthood of believers. In the Orthodox Church, however, ordination is identified with the canonical sacramental ordination for the transmission of the so-called special priesthood, i.e. the priestly or hieratic authority. The use of the term ordination of women in the former sense could perhaps be regarded as possible for the Orthodox canonical tradition as well as, for example, in the case of the ordination of deaconesses¹. It would be unthinkable, however, from the canonical point of view to use this term in the latter sense in the case of deaconesses.

The difference in the understanding of the sacrament of priesthood, which specifies the different approaches to the question of the ordination of women, derives from the plain variance of the ecclesiological presuppositions, because the divesting of the power of the Christocentric ontology of the Church in Protestantism was combined with the rejection, as it were, of the Christocentric ontology of priesthood. This ecclesiological differentiation can be better clarified by means of the following typical ecclesiological schematizations. Thus, the traditional ecclesiological schema: *Christ—Church—believers* was partially reversed in Protestant ecclesiology through the projection of the schema: *Christ—believers—Church*. The reversal in the above schema of the relation of the Church to the believers leads to the acceptance of the pre-existence of the believers vis-a-vis the Church, which, in any case, is constituted by them; hence, the catalytic consequences of this reversal for the Christocentric ontology of the priesthood.

This schematization of the ecclesiological differentiations makes it quite obvious that the question of the ordination of women is, from the canonical point of view, completely different in the Orthodox Church from what it is in Protestantism, because there is no theological or ecclesiological analogy in the approach to this problem between the former and the latter. The Protestant rejection of the entire patristic tradition concerning the sacrament of the priesthood and the hieratic authority introduced the possibility of rejecting the notion of canonical sacramental ordination as well. Yet, the question concerning the ordination of women, practically a matter of indifference for the

1. E. Theodorou, *Ἡ χειροτονία ἢ χειροθεσία τῶν Διακονισσῶν*, Ἀθήναι 1954.

Orthodox Church, remains a serious one, especially for Orthodox theology, because the explanation of the reasons for the exclusion of women from the priesthood is already an unavoidable theological and ecclesiastical desideratum, not only because of the participation of the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement, but also because of the need to present in as clear a way as possible the theological foundation of the Orthodox ecclesiastical position concerning this timely matter.

2. The Rejection of the Priesthood of Women

The canonical tradition of the Church of the first centuries on the issue of the ordination of women is most poor, or, better to say, non-existent, because in the Church's consciousness there never arose institutionally any question on this matter, beyond a few heretical or schismatical provocations. In fact, both in the apostolic as well as in the post-apostolic age the principal bearers of the hieratic authority and continuators of the apostolic ministry of *episcopo* were male, like the Apostles; they were never confronted with the need to deal theologically with the question whether it was possible or not for women to be ordained to the priesthood. Yet, the issue was raised through the appointment of women to exercise duties which were similar to those of the bearers of the hieratic authority by some of the heretical Gnostics and by the schismatical Montanists².

The Church's opposition to this act of innovation on the part of heretics and schismatics set in motion the consciousness of the Church on this matter already during the second half of the second century. The heretical innovation was disapproved by means of specific arguments which were codified in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*³, which survived in a Syriac version, and in the *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, where it is characteristically stressed: *We do not, then, allow women to teach in the Church, but only to pray and to listen to the teachers. For even the Teacher and Lord Jesus Christ himself, in sending the Twelve to make disciples of the people [of God] and of the nations, did not send women anywhere to do the preaching. For if it was necessary for women to teach, he would have been first to give the order that they too should catechise the people along with us. Indeed*

2. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, I, 13:2. Tertullian, *De praescriptione*, 41,5. *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iv, 14ff, etc.

3. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ch. 15.

if the man is the head of the women, it is not just that the rest of the body should rule over the head⁴.

In the same spirit and in another connecton the celebration of Baptism by a woman is also disapproved as something precarious (ἐπισηφαλές), or *rather illegal and impious* (μᾶλλον δὲ παράνομον καὶ ἄσεβές). This prohibition is also explained in a way analogous to the previous one: *For if the man is the head of the woman and he is handed on the priesthood, it is not just to trespass creation and, abandoning the beginning, to come to the body which is the end. For the man is the beginning of the woman, because he is head as well. If in what we said earlier we did not allow them to teach, how could one allow them to function as priests against nature? For this is a sin of ignorance of the godlessness of the Greeks to ordain priestesses to female goddesses, but it is not of the order of Christ. If it was necessary to be baptized by women, the Lord too would have been baptized by his own Mother, and not by John, or, in sending us to baptize, he would have sent along with us women too to do the same. But now he did not order this anywhere, nor did he deliver this in writing⁵.*

These two texts, utilizing the relevant tradition of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, exhaust the antirrhetical, theological and canonical argumentation of the ecclesiastical tradition and practice concerning the relation of the woman to the priesthood. The theological basis is the whole Pauline teaching concerning the position of the man and the woman in the Church (cf. especially 1 Cor. 6:14-19; 7:1-17, 24-40; 11:3-14; 14:34-35; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 5:22-23), always in relation to the relevant narrative of Genesis and to the whole mystery of the divine economy. The canonical basis of the interpretation of the will of Jesus Christ, referring, on the one hand, to his example *in* the election of the Twelve and, on the other hand, to the apostolic tradition which is consistent with the former, in combination with the more particular Pauline teaching concerning the man as the head and the woman as the body, constitute a sufficient theological explanation for the formation of the Church's consciousness on the relation of women to the priesthood. Hence the unanimous ecclesiastical and canonical action which has always been the consistent application of this consciousness. It is outstandingly characteristic that even Tertullian, who

4. *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, III: 6, 1-2.

5. *Ibid.*, III: 9, 1-4.

had obvious Montanist predispositions, excluded women from any function and from any hieratic ministry⁶.

It is self-evident that the elements of the two texts of the *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, as well as those of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, present a formerly worked out theological elaboration of the special issue of the ordination of women to the priesthood. The first stimulus was provided by the well-known action of the Montanists, who, *attributing some sort of grace to Eve, because she was the first to eat from the tree of knowledge*, recognized in women the continuation of the prophetic charisma and, hence, *women are instituted by them in the episcopate and the presbyterate on account of Eve*⁷. In spite of the Montanist distinction of superiority of the prophetic charisma over sacramental priesthood, the issue raised by the ordination of women was a real one, because the titles of the priesthood of the Church were attributed to the outstanding bearers of the prophetic charisma and the same applies to the exercise of the hieratic duties which were assigned to them.

Analogous tendencies, established by means of an analogous argumentation to that of the Montanists, were also developed by the heretical Kollyridians, who were disapproved by almost the same arguments: *To whom is it not plain that this teaching and scheme is from the demons and that it is a diluted argument? For no woman has at any time or place served God as a priest, not even Eve herself, although she did fall into transgression; but she did not dare to do it, because it would be impious to lose such an argument... And nowhere has a woman acted as a priest... If women were commanded to serve as priests to God, or to do some regulatory (canonical) work in the Church, it would have been rather necessary for Mary herself to have done some priestly function in the New Testament; for she was proved worthy to welcome in her own bosom the king of all, the heavenly God, the Son of God; whose womb became a temple and a dwelling place and so the incarnate economy and astonishing mystery were prepared according to God's love for mankind. But she was not commissioned to baptize, since Christ could have been baptized by her instead of by John. All these [the Twelve] were selected to be Apostles and to administer the Gospel as priests, together with Barnabas and the rest and to be the leaders of the sacraments. It was from*

6. Tertullian, *De virginibus vel.*, 9, 1.

7. Epiphanius, «Contra Haereses», 49, 2-3. PG 41:881.

him [James] and the aforementioned Apostles that successions of bishops and presbyters were established in the house of God. In no place was a woman established in such things. There were, he says, four daughters to Philip the Evangelist who prophesied, but none of them served as a priest⁸.

Thus the Pauline teaching concerning the role of the woman in the worship of the Church, deriving from the doctrine of man as the head and the woman as the body, was given a more particular foundation not only in the Lord's example in choosing his Apostles, but also in the example of the Apostles and of the Virgin Mary. She, *who became the dwelling place for the Lord's incarnate economy*, should have exercised the hieratic authority in the New Testament above every other woman, had this not been excluded from her on account of the very *nature* of women. *How could one allow them to act as priests against nature, since it was not right to disregard creation and, abandoning the beginning, coming to the end, that is, to the body?*

However, the Pauline teaching, concerning the man-woman relation in the Church's worship, supplied through the vagueness of its expression the exegetical possibility of tracing this natural distinction to the rationality of creation, through which one could also account for the consequences, i.e. that *since the beginning of time no woman has ever offered priestly service to God in any way* and that in the Church the woman was excluded from the priesthood by the Lord and the Apostles. Tracing this distinction to the rationality of creation, according to which man is put forth by the Apostle Paul as *an icon of God and head*, and the woman, as *man's glory, or as body, or as an icon of an icon*, was undoubtedly the fundamental theological explanation of the exclusion of the woman from the priesthood, in spite of the acceptance of the lawfulness of the exercise of the prophetic charisma by the daughters of Philip the Evangelist. Nevertheless, this distinction became in the patristic tradition of the first centuries the cause of serious exegetical problems, because it was not evaluated singularly and only according to the rationality of creation, but also within the wider context of the whole plan of the divine economy in Christ.

8. Epiphanius, *Ibid.*, 59, 2-3. PG 42, 741-744.

3. The Woman as God's Icon According to the Order of Creation

Through the Pauline teaching the rationality of creation is organically placed within the rationality of the divine economy and, indeed, includes all the consequences of the fall for the man-woman relation.

The Pauline evaluation of the position of the woman in the Church is not restricted, in our view, to the strict criterion of the rationality of creation, but is extended especially into the wider context of the rationality of the divine economy in Christ, within which, however, the man-woman relation apparently takes on a different content.

Thus, if the Pauline teaching analyses only the rationality of creation, then the ensuing relation between head and body is a qualitative distinction; if, however, it places this relation within the rationality of the divine economy, then it is simply a functional distinction. If the first proposition is accepted, then the man as the head of the woman is superior to the woman according to the rationality of creation, since only he was created according to the image (εἰκὼν) of God and as head of the woman, who is simply the *body*, or the *glory* of man, or the *icon of the icon* of God. If, on the other hand, the second proposition is accepted, then the distinction between head and body is not fully founded on the rationality of creation and, therefore, being created in the image of God it is possible to be equally connected with both man and woman, as we shall see below.

St John Chrysostom, interpreting the verse from Genesis, *You shall turn to man and he shall dominate you*, makes a clear distinction between the rationality of creation and the rationality of the divine economy. He brilliantly observes that, *I certainly created you with the same honour from the beginning, and willed that you should be communicant with him of the same value in everything and, as in the case of man, so in your case also I handed over the rule over all; but because you did not make use of that equal honour as you should, for this reason I place you under the man... Because you abandoned the equality of honour and him who communicated with you in the same nature, for this reason I place you under him and order that he should be your lord, so that you may know his leadership; because you did not know how to rule, you must now learn how to be ruled⁹.*

The *equal honour* which both man and woman enjoyed according

9. John Chrysostom, «Homil. in Gene.», xvii, 8. PG 63:144-145.

to the order of creation was overturned through the fall, and as a result a new man-woman relation was formed according to the type of relation pertaining to head and body. The differentiation in the man-woman relation, brought about by the fall, is more clearly presented in St John Chrysostom's commentary on I Corinthians, where it is stressed that Eve *having been made thus, she was not immediately subjected. Indeed nowhere is there any mention to her of any authority of subjection. When, however, she wrongly used authority and when the one who was made to be a helper was found to be subversive and to have lost everything, then, she justly hears: to your husband you shall turn...*¹⁰.

It is self-evident, that according to the order of creation the woman was created *with equal honour and equal value in all respect* with her husband and she too was bequeathed, as the man, with being made according to [God's] image, because *it does not appear that the woman has another nature than the human one, and the man another, but there is one and the same*¹¹. The identity and equality of honour of the nature common to man and woman makes it obvious that the woman is God's image (εἰκὼν), and certainly not simply an image of an image (εἰκὼν εἰκόνοϛ), as certain unclear formulations of Pauline teaching could be taken to imply.

This was perhaps also due to the disagreement of exegetes concerning the reference of the phrase *according to the image*¹². But it was certainly not unrelated to a certain more general obscurity concerning the relation of the order of creation to the order of the divine economy, which is in Christ. Thus, Theodoret of Cyrus argued that *man is God's image neither according to the body, nor according to the soul, but only according to the ability of ruling. As for the woman, being as she is under the authority of man, is man's glory and, as it were, an image of an image. Because she too rules over the rest, but she was ordered to be subject to the man*¹³.

If, however, the woman was ordered *to be subjected to the man*, then reference is made to the consequences of the fall and not to the order of creation. Hence, St Basil can explicitly state that according to

10. *Ibid.*, «Homil. in 1 Cor.» 2. PG 61:215.

11. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, 37:7.

12. Cf. especially Theodoret of Cyrus, «Questiones in Octateuchum» 20. PG 80:104ff.

13. Theodoret of Cyrus, «Herm. in 1 Cor» 11. PG 82:312.

the order of creation the woman too was created as the man: *Both, then, the woman and the man have been made according to God's image. For the natures of both have been made alike and their actions are as equal as their rewards and their rewards as their condemnation. Since, therefore, they have received equal share in having been made according to [God's] image, they have equal share in virtue. Thus the female too, not less than the male, has been made according to the image and the likeness*¹⁴.

The likeness in all respects and the equality of honour, however, of the prelapsarian man and woman have been overturned by the fall and a relation of *subjection* has been formed according to the divine command, i.e. the relation of head to body, within the framework and the overturning of the whole order of the divine creation. This *subjection*, however, of the woman to the man is obviously functional and in no way implies, as it was sometimes suggested in the patristic tradition, the wider responsibility of the woman for the transgression, because in the fall of the first couple the responsibility was equal, as was the punishment. Yet, it was argued by some of the Fathers that man's responsibility was greater than the woman's. Thus, St Irenaeus held that man's responsibility for the fall was weightier than the woman's, *for the woman, having wrestled with a demon, is excusable, whereas Adam, having been defeated by a woman, was inexcusable, especially because he had been personally entrusted with the commandment of God*¹⁵.

Consequently, the functional *subjection* of the woman to the man can be interpreted not, of course, in terms of a qualitative distinction of the woman's nature, or of the weight of responsibility for the fall, but in terms of a new man-woman relation in the framework of the entire plan of the divine economy in Christ for the restoration of the disturbed order of the whole of creation through the fall. This new man-woman relation, however, due to the fall, has no longer any reference to the order of creation, but to the order of the divine economy, i.e. between the promise and the fulfilment of the promise in Christ. Through this new perspective the order of creation is now related to the order of the divine economy in Christ, within which the

14. Basil the Great, «De constitut. hominis» Or. I, 22-23. PG 30:33-36. Cf also Didymus the Blind, «De Trinitate» ii:7. PG 39:573: «ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Εὐα συνεκτίσθη μὲν τῷ Ἀδὰμ τῷ κοινῷ τῆς φύσεως λόγῳ, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ διεμορφώθη».

15. Irenaeus, «Fragm». 14. PG 7:1237.

man-woman relation assumes a new content and specifies the peculiarity of the functional role of each one of them in the history of salvation which is in Christ.

4. The Man-Woman Relation According to the Order of the Divine Economy

The application of the plan of the divine economy in Christ followed, as it is well known, by way of typological correspondence the same stages and projected the same means for redemption with those which followed after the fall. This typological correspondence, clearly spelled out in the Pauline doctrine, was especially developed in the patristic tradition through the projection of the typological correlation of *Adam-Christ* and *Eve-Mary*, by means of which it is possible to interpret the peculiarity of the functional role of man and woman in the plan of the divine economy, as well as the *subjection* of the woman to the man on this account.

In the plan of the divine economy in Christ all things were wrought by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The fulfilment of the promise was brought about «by the Fathers' good pleasure» through the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God from the Holy Spirit and Virgin Mary. Through the incarnation, however, the Son and Logos of God became not a mere man in his humanity, but the Man *par excellence* who recapitulated in himself the whole of humanity. It was in this light that the Church always understood the Pauline teaching concerning the Adam-Christ typological correlation, which is applicable in both directions, in as much as Adam is put forth as a type of Christ, the new Adam, and Christ is regarded as a type of the old one, the first Adam.

St Irenaeus, developing this Pauline teaching concerning the old and the new Adam, observes characteristically that Jesus Christ, as the new Adam, *recapitulated in himself the ancient creation, because, as through the transgression of one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, likewise through the obedience of the one man righteousness was brought in and bore fruit in life for the men who were of old dead*¹⁶. This soteriological dimension of the incarnation of the Logos of God is theologically expressed through the typological correlation of the old and the new Adam: *This is why Luke shows*

16. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, iii, 21, 9-10.

that the genealogy from the birth of our Lord to Adam includes seventy-two generations, uniting the end to the beginning and indicating that he is the one who recapitulated in himself all the nations which came after Adam together with Adam himself. Hence, Adam was said by Paul to be a type of the future one, because the Logos who constructed all things pre-typified in him [= Adam] the future economy of humanity related to the Son of God¹⁷.

The doctrine of the Adam-Christ typology, which is common to the patristic tradition, is understood to be of fundamental importance in the application of the plan of the divine economy in Christ, *for the Lord who was made firstborn from the dead and took to his bosom the ancient fathers, himself became the beginning of the living, because Adam became the beginning of the dead¹⁸*. In this light Jesus Christ *recapitulating all things in Himself, also recapitulated the struggle against our enemy¹⁹*, to whom, of course, the entire plan of the divine economy in Christ is also related.

The typological relation, however, of the old and the new Adam was not some sort of theoretical relation of mere types, but a certain real repetition of the «life style» (πολιτεία) of the first Adam in the life of the second Adam, so that through the obedience of the second the disobedience of the first Adam could be amended. Thus, *as that first Adam received his constitution and was created by the hand of God from an uncultivated earth, which was still a virgin..., likewise the one who recapitulated Adam in himself, who was the Logos himself, rightly received the birth of the recapitulation of Adam from one who was still a virgin²⁰*. The birth of the Logos of God from the Virgin Mary for the sake of the recapitulation of Adam was necessary in the plan of the divine economy; *for the enemy would not have been justly defeated, unless his victor was a man [ἄνθρωπος = ἀνήρ] from a woman, because the creation of the woman took place out of the first Adam²¹*.

The repetition by the new Adam of the *life-style* (πολιτεία) of the old Adam reaches out to every detail, so that Irenaeus specifies even the day of Adam's death by the day of the death of Jesus Christ:

17. *Ibid.*, iii, 22, 3.

18. *Ibid.*, iii, 22, 4.

19. *Ibid.*, v, 20.

20. *Ibid.*, iii, 21, 10.

21. *Ibid.*, v, 20.

If one wishes to learn on which particular day, out of the seven days, Adam died, he may find this out from the story of the Lord. For in recapitulating the whole man in himself from beginning to end, he also recapitulated his death. It is obvious, then, that the Lord suffered death in obedience to the Father on the same day on which Adam died having disobeyed God. Thus, in recapitulating this day in himself, the Lord came to the passion one day before the Sabbath, which is the sixth day of creation, in which man was also created, granting to him through his own passion the second creation, which proceeds out of death²². In this same light Origen refers to the Jewish tradition, according to which the body of Adam was buried on the place of the Skull, so that as all of us die in Adam, all of us might be vivified in Christ²³.

St John of Damascus supplies a systematic exposition of the relation of the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God from the Virgin Mary to the restoration of the order (λόγος) of creation, overthrown by the fall, through the deification of the human nature in Christ: *For the Logos himself became flesh, conceived in the womb of the Virgin, and coming forth as God together with what he assumed, which was already deified by him, as soon as it came into being, so that all three took place at once: the assumption, the existence, and the deification of it by the Logos... while the Mother of God supplied in a manner surpassing nature the possibility of being created to the Maker and the possibility of becoming human to God, the creator of everything²⁴. The birth of the new Adam from a virgin took place through the Holy Spirit and the first generation of Adam²⁵, for as she [= Eve] was made out of Adam without any intercourse, likewise she [Mary] too begat the new Adam, born according to the law of begetting, and in a manner surpassing the nature of birth²⁶. This elevation of the incarnation to the level of the order (λόγος) of divine creation makes plainer the necessity of loosening the bond of Eve through a recycling (ἀνακύκλιση) from Mary to Eve.*

It is a common place, then, in the entire patristic tradition that the Adam-Christ typology expresses not only the salvation of the human

22. *Ibid.*, v, 23, 2.

23. Origen, «In Matth. Homil». 126. *PG* 13:1777.

24. John of Damascus, «Expositio de Orthodoxa Fidei», 3, 12. *PG* 94:1032.

25. *Ibid.*, 3, 1. *PG* 94:984.

26. *Ibid.*, 4, 14. *PG* 94:1160.

race in Christ, but also the perfection of creation through the restoration of the disturbed order on account of the transgression and through the renewal of all things in Christ. Yet, it is a reasonable question, why the special Eve-Christ typology was not developed, in view of the fact that Christ *recapitulated the struggle against our enemy*²⁷, and Eve took the lead in the fall of the first human couple. The question is reasonable, because in the patristic tradition Eve, as well as Adam, personify, each of them in their own right, the entire human race in the condition of the fall.

The answer given to the above question by the patristic tradition suggests a distribution of the special functional roles of the man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy, which, in the last analysis, are transferred to the restoration of the order of creation, because it was the entire creation that was recapitulated and renewed in Christ. The special Adam-Christ typology was one between *the first-born of all creation and the first created Adam, out of whom the creation of the woman was procured*²⁸, and hence the first created Adam possessed the unique characteristic, in comparison to Eve, that he was first to be made, and alone by God alone (μόνος ὑπὸ μόνου). St Athanasius the Great highlighted this unique privilege of Adam, through which, however, he represented the entire human race, including Eve herself, who *was taken from Adam: Adam alone was made by God alone through the Logos. But again no one would say that he has something more than all the other human beings, or differs from those who came after him, because he alone has been made and created by God alone, whereas all of us (including Eve) have been born from Adam*²⁹.

5. The Role of the Woman According to the Order of the Divine Economy

This uniqueness of the first created Adam in relation to Eve, although not implying any kind of ontological superiority of nature, was the basis for both the distribution of the distinctive functional roles of the man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy and of the distinctive projection of the Adam-Christ and Eve-Mary typology. If Adam was the type of Christ, and Christ, the type of

27. Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses*, v, 20.

28. *Ibid.*, v, 20.

29. Athanasius the Great, *De Decretis*, 8, 4.

Adam, who alone was made by God alone, then, it is reasonable that the Eve-Mary typology should be differentiated within this same plan. Yet, this relation is put forward in the patristic tradition as a fundamental, organic and unalienable element of the whole divine plan, because otherwise even the realization of the Adam-Christ typology itself would not have been possible.

The Eve-Mary typology is fundamental, because Eve presents the ancient humanity, while the virgin Mary presents the transfiguration of the ancient humanity through the birth from the Holy Spirit of the new humanity in the person of the new Adam, the incarnate Son and Logos of God. Thus, according to Irenaeus, *Mary the virgin is appropriately found to be obedient..., whereas Eve is found to be disobedient, for she disobeyed while she was a virgin. For just as that one, having Adam as her husband, yet being still a virgin... disobeyed and was made the cause of death for herself and for the entire humanity, likewise Mary, having the foreordained husband and yet remaining a virgin, obeyed and was made the cause of salvation for herself and for the entire humanity*³⁰.

So then, the Eve-Mary typology is established upon the secure «disobedience-obedience» (ἀνυπακοή - υπακοή) scheme of patristic tradition, which also constitutes the basis of the Adam-Christ typology. Hence, the fact that the Virgin Mary *became the cause of salvation for herself and for the entire humanity through obedience*, because Eve *became the cause of death for herself and for the entire humanity through disobedience*. Thus, the redemption of the disobedience of Eve through the obedience of Mary according to the plan of the divine economy became necessary, whereas this kind of necessity was absolute as far as the birth of the new Adam was concerned, who recapitulated in himself all things and became the *first-fruits* of the new humanity.

It is clear, therefore, that the realization in the history of salvation of the Adam-Christ typology definitely presupposed the realization of the Eve-Mary typology as a necessary prerequisite of a special circle in the plan of the divine economy in Christ: *This is why the law calls her who was betrothed to a man wife of the one who betrothed the woman, though she is still a virgin, denoting the recycling back from Mary to Eve, since there was no other way for untying*

30. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, iii, 22, 4.

*what had been tied, except the case when the conjunctions of the bond were reversed, so that the first connections might be resolved through the second, and the second might free the first. Indeed it came to pass that the first conjunction was dissolved by the second one and the second conjunction occupies the place of being a dissolution to the first*³¹.

This superb text projects in a clear manner the special role of the woman in the plan of the divine economy and describes exactly its particular content. The *conjunctions of the bond*, which had been tied up through Eve's disobedience, had to be untied through the *conjunctions*, which were brought in through Mary's obedience, so that the second conjunctions might get rid of the first, because there was no other possible way for loosening the conjunctions of the bond which had been introduced through the fall (*there was no other way for untying what had been tied*). The loosening of the conjunctions of the bonds of the fall was indeed possible through the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God, but the incarnation too presupposed the dissolution of the conjunctions of the bond of Eve's disobedience through the conjunctions of the obedience of the Virgin Mary. This procedure was indeed a *distinct cycle* in the plan of the divine economy and, therefore, *the recycling from Mary to Eve* specified the special content of the role of the woman in the history of salvation. Thus, *the bond of Eve's disobedience was loosened through Mary's obedience; for what the virgin Eve tied through misconduct, this the virgin Mary untied through faith*³².

The undoing of the bond of Eve's disobedience was the special functional role of the woman in the plan of the divine economy, which was achieved through the obedience of the Virgin Mary at the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God. The special character of this role consists in that there was need first to complete *the recycling from Mary to Eve*, so that the Son and Logos of God could possibly enter into the cycle of the incarnation. According to John Damascene, *The Logos became flesh immutably from the Holy Spirit and the holy and ever-virgin Theotokos... having been conceived in the Virgin's womb not on account of will, or desire, or intercourse involving a man, or a pleasurable birth, but from the Holy Spirit and the first generation of Adam*³³.

31. *Ibid.*, iii, 22, 20.

32. *Ibid.*, iii, 22, 4.

33. John of Damascus, «Expositio de Orthodoxa Fidei», 3:1. PG 94:984.

The self-sufficiency, of course, of the Eve-Mary and Adam-Christ typological cycles is not absolute, because both are mutually inclusive of each other in Christ; but, they are functionally distinct, because the second one presupposes the first. Nevertheless, this distinction, which is necessary for the understanding of the distinctive functional roles of the man and the woman, has not been sufficiently developed in the patristic theological tradition. The ultimate reference of both cycles to the Adam-Christ typology constitutes a soteriological approach *par excellence*, which, however, does not abolish the distinction of the cycles. Thus, Epiphanius observes that, *If Adam is not saved, neither the lump (dough), nor any part of the lump, is saved. For if the first to be created and to have come into being out of untouched earth does not partake of salvation, how can salvation be obtained by those who came after him?*³⁴. In this light the birth of the new Adam from the Virgin Mary was necessary, *so that he might recapitulate Adam in himself... and in order that no other creation might come to be, nor another creation be saved, but that same one might be recapitulated, while the identity is preserved*³⁵.

Thus, God operated the creation of the new Adam from Mary, because *if man is to be saved, it is the first created man who must be saved*³⁶, and, therefore, *Adam was the first vessel to be taken possession of, since death was abolished when the Lord vivified man, that is, Adam*³⁷. This transposition, however, of the two cycles of the distinct functions of the man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy in no way diminishes the importance of the prior cycle of the recycling from Mary to Eve, because the undoing of the bond of Eve's disobedience was necessary and was achieved through Mary's obedience. Mary thus becomes the prototype of a woman's role in the Church.

6. The Woman's Role and the Economy of the Holy Spirit

It becomes obvious, then, on the basis of what has been already said, that the functional role of the woman, fulfilled by the Virgin Mary, was a distinguished cycle within the plan of the divine economy, which constitutes a necessary presupposition for the incarnation of the

34. Epiphanius, «Contra Haereses», 46, 2. PG 41:841.

35. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, iii, 21, 10.

36. *Ibid.*, iii, 22, 2.

37. *Ibid.*, iii, 1 & 7.

Son and Logos of God and for the recapitulation in him of the old Adam for the salvation of the whole human race. This is more clearly demonstrated through the relation of the special role of the Holy Spirit to the role of the Virgin Mary in the plan of the divine economy in Christ, because the Logos of God became flesh «*from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary*».

The distinction between the role of the Holy Spirit and the role of the Son and Logos of God becomes apparent within the unity of the whole plan of the divine economy in Christ. The peculiarity of the role of the Holy Spirit, before and after the fulfilment of God's promise for the salvation of the world, has not been systematically developed in the patristic tradition by analogy to the economy of God's Son and Logos, even though it is experienced in the entire function of the ecclesiastical body.

It has always been clear in the Church's consciousness, however, that the deeper understanding of the self-evident distinction of the function of the two persons of the Holy Trinity and of their *synergy* in the fulfilment of the promise of God the Father is indissolubly connected with the understanding of the distinction of the liturgical functions of the *male* and the *female* in the plan of the divine economy, which is extended to the very eschaton. This explains the fact that the Church's consciousness maintained, as we shall see, through an empirical and typological symbolism the peculiar relation in the plan of the divine economy of the functional role of the female to the mission of the Holy Spirit, and of the functional role of the male to the economy of the Son and Logos of God.

The attempt, however, of modern Russian theologians from V. Soloviev to P. Evdokimov to interpret this ecclesiastical consciousness on the basis of religious-theological criteria through *sophiology*, whereby the bipolarity of the male and the female is projected on to the ontological reality of the Godhead, is moving on a completely different plane. S. Bulgakov³⁸ asserted, by means of a clearly gnosticising terminology and by way of codifying the tendencies of Russian sophiology, that the uncreated Wisdom «*Σοφία*», as the archetype of the Wisdom of the Godhead, of the world and of humanity, is a *female substance*, which tends to actualize itself by turning into its own hypostasis.

38. S. Boulgakov, *La sagesse de Dieu*, Paris 1983.

The metaphysical bipolarity of male and female in *sophiological* theory has exerted direct and indirect influence on the approach to the issue concerning the place of the woman in the Church. Thus, P. Evdokimov³⁹ claimed that the Holy Spirit can be regarded as the *archetype of the female* in the Triadic Godhead and of the *hypostatic maternity* in it, while the Theotokos can be understood as the personification of the holy female in humanity. Under this spectrum the key for the interpretation of the mystery of the woman in the Church is to be found, according to P. Evdokimov⁴⁰, in this typological «sex» relation of the Holy Spirit to the Virgin Mary, because the *hypostatic maternity* of the Holy Spirit is extended to the *virginal maternity* of the Theotokos and prefigures the role of the woman in spiritual maternity. Thus, it is apparent, that the female lies closer to the Holy Spirit as that which expresses hypostatically the female in the Godhead, whereas the male lies closer to the incarnate Son and Logos of God who expresses hypostatically the male in the Godhead, and thus the *priesthood of Christ* is assimilated by the male rather than by the female.

P. Evdokimov's above-mentioned theoretical presuppositions concerning the relation of the female to the Holy Spirit were utilized by Th. Hopko⁴¹, but from a clearly soteriological perspective, and hence his remark: *it is the present task to show clearly that human community, as the created epiphany of the uncreated Trinity, is made male and female so that it can realize and achieve the divine life given to it by its uncreated Archetype*⁴². Yet, all such attempts under this particular spectrum have not utilized the wealth of patristic theology concerning the special relation of the peculiar role of the Holy Spirit to the liturgical function of the Theotokos in the whole mystery of the divine economy which is in Christ.

It is obvious, of course, that such views concerning the direct or indirect hypostatic expression of the notion of the female by the Holy Spirit, relating directly or indirectly the human bipolarity of male and female to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, are unknown to the Orthodox patristic tradition and faith, because the notion of a male/female

39. P. Evdokimov, *La nouveauté de l'Esprit*, Paris 1977, 253ff.

40. P. Evdokimov, *La femme et le salut du monde*, Paris 1978, 412ff.

41. Th. Hopko, «On the male character of the Christian Priesthood», *Women and the Priesthood*, New York 1983, 97-134.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 100ff.

hypostatic distinction in the Holy Trinity is unthinkable for Orthodox theology. The distinction, from the point of view of hypostasis, of the mission of the Son and the mission of the Spirit in the unified plan of God the Father for the salvation of the human race is undeniable, but this distinction is foreign to any male/female sex analogy not only in the Triadic Godhead, but also in humanity as such. It brings out the *synergy* of the two persons of the salvation which is in Christ.

The *synergy* of the Son and the Holy Spirit has been a common place in the theological tradition and consciousness of the Church, having been articulated in a superb way in the Alexandrian theological literature (*Origen, Didymus the Blind, Cyril of Alexandria, etc.*). St Maximus the Confessor provided a synoptic account of this teaching concerning the *synergy*, through which the distinctive functions of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the actualization of the whole plan of the divine economy for the salvation of the human race are brought out: *This mystery was foreknown before all the ages to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. To the one only by way of good will (κατ' εὐδοκίαν); to the other by way of personal action (κατ' αὐτοουγίαν); and to the other by way of synergy (κατὰ συνέργειαν). For neither the Father nor the Spirit were ignorant of the Son's incarnation, because the whole of the Father was by way of substance (κατ' οὐσίαν) in the whole of the Son, who was personally working out the mystery of our salvation through incarnation; not by becoming incarnate, but by expressing his good will for the Son's incarnation; the whole of the Holy Spirit was by way of substance in the whole of the Son, not by becoming incarnate, but by working out in synergy with the Son the ineffable incarnation for us*⁴³.

Thus, the mission of the Holy Spirit and the mission of the Son have to do with their *synergy* for the preparation of the salvation of the whole human race by means of distinctive roles and stages, and hence the distinctive roles of male and female in the plan of the divine economy do not admit of «sexual» (φυλικῆς) appraisal. Under this spectrum the function of the Theotokos in the history of salvation constitutes beyond doubt not, of course, the personification of the holy female, but the personification of the whole of humanity, because

43. Maximus the Confessor, «Questio 60 ad Thalassium», *PG* 90:624. Cf. Didymus the Blind, «De Trinitate», ii, 7. *PG* 39:580. Τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα «τῷ ἀποσοδεῖ καὶ παντοδότη Θεῷ Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ αὐτοῦ συνεργεῖ καὶ συμπαρέχει πάντα πάντα...».

by her obedience, she was made a cause of salvation for herself and for the whole of humanity⁴⁴, just as, in another way, the new Adam, who was incarnated from her, assumed in his humanity the whole of the human race.

Consequently, the peculiarity of the typological relation of the Holy Spirit to the female is derived not, of course, from the female's sex, as the Russian theologians suggest, but clearly, from the liturgical coordination of the role of the Holy Spirit to the special mission of the woman in the plan of the divine economy. This relation is not an *hypostatic relation* of the third person of the Holy Trinity to the woman and is certainly unrelated to the hypothesis concerning the hypostatic expression of the female in the Holy Trinity by the Holy Spirit. This relation of the mission of the Holy Spirit to the mission of the female, fulfilled through the entire action of Virgin Mary in the incarnation of God's Son and Logos, is functional and is constantly realized in the life of the new reality of the Church.

In this context it is self-evident that there is a need to specify the peculiarity of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the special function of Virgin Mary. By loosening, through her obedience, the bondage of Eve's disobedience, she brought to completion, as we saw, the cycle of the *recycling from Mary to Eve*, which was sealed by the birth of God's Logos from a woman. Thus, whereas in the old creation Eve was taken from (ἐλήφθη) Adam, in the new creation the new Adam was incarnated from a woman. And all this took place, *so that no new creation might come to pass, nor the creation which is being saved might be some other, but this one might be recapitulated in that one, while the similarity is maintained*⁴⁵. Certainly, the fulfilment of this role of the female in the plan of the divine economy was not possible through human obedience alone, and thus the incarnation of God's Logos was prepared and accomplished by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.

The Holy Spirit appears already in Genesis as the creative power of the original world, and after the fall, as remaining among human beings but not resting on them, *because they are flesh*, according to the divine announcement, according to which *My Spirit shall not rest (ἐπισκιάζειν) upon these people (Gen. 6:3ff)*. At the incarnation of God's Son and Logos from the Virgin Mary the Holy Spirit comes to

44. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, iii, 22, 4.

45. *Ibid.*, iii, 21, 10.

the Virgin, so that what was impossible in the history of salvation might be accomplished. St John of Damascus recorded succinctly and most pointedly the mind of the whole patristic tradition concerning the entirely exceptional role of the Holy Spirit in the loosening of the bond of Eve through the Virgin Mary and in the Incarnation of God's Son and Logos:

After the consent of the holy Virgin, the Holy Spirit came upon her according to the Lord's word, which the angel announced, purifying her and granting her a power of receiving the Logos' Godhead, and also of giving birth. It was then that the enhypostatic wisdom and power of the Most High overshadowed her, namely the Son of God, who is homoousios with the Father, like a divine seed, and constructed for himself from her immaculated and most pure bloods a flesh ensouled with a rational and mind-endowed soul, a first-fruits of our own lump; not by way of a sperm, but by way of creation through the Holy Spirit; not in the sense that the form was constituted by additions little by little, but completed under one (impulse); while the very Logos of God came to be an hypostasis to the flesh⁴⁶.

It was by means of such a creative operation of the Holy Spirit that Virgin Mary was purified and enabled to become a worthy vessel of the Logos' tabernacling, through which the transfiguration in her person of the old fallen humanity was accomplished and the bond of Eve's disobedience was loosened through the birth of the new humanity in Christ. The Holy Spirit, then, is *creatively* related to the transfiguration of the old humanity and to the perfection in Christ of the first creation. Thus, he came creatively upon the Virgin Mary, so that, through the incarnation from her of the *first-fruits of our lump*, the special mission of the Holy Spirit in the plan of the divine economy might be fulfilled. This mission was completed through the supply to the Virgin Mary of the necessary *power to give birth* (δύναμιν γεννητικῆν) in the incarnation of God's Son and Logos, which was accomplished according to the good will of God the Father, by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. The Holy Spirit *came upon the holy Virgin, purifying her and granting a power of receiving the Logos' Godhead, and also of giving birth, and hence the incarnation of the Logos from the Virgin Mary was accomplished not by way of a sperm, but by way of creation through the Holy Spirit.*

46. John of Damascus, «Expositio de Orthodoxa Fidei» 3, 2. PG 94:985.

Such a creative intervention on the part of the Holy Spirit for the loosening in the person of the Virgin Mary of the connections in Eve's bond and for the supply of the necessary *power to give birth* in the incarnation of the new Adam highlights the *special operation* of the Holy Spirit in the completion of the cycle of *the recycling from Mary to Eve*. It is through this wondrous purificatory descent and creative operation upon the Virgin Mary, that the Holy Spirit comes once again *to rest upon* human beings in order to restore and complete the order (λόγον) of the divine creation which had been disturbed through the fall, while the Virgin Mary becomes the new place of the power of the Most High which overshadowed her.

Indeed, the Virgin Mary became the recipient of the creative epiphany of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, the Annunciation of the Theotokos could be regarded as the supreme prefiguration of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This most specific relation of the special mission of the third person of the Holy Trinity to the special role of the female in the plan of the divine economy placed a seal not only on the unique relation of the mission of the Holy Spirit to the role of the Virgin Mary, but also on the more general typological relation to the operation of the Holy Spirit to the mission of women in the Church. That is why the Virgin Mary became the type and prototype of the woman in the new humanity in Christ.

7. The Christocentric Character of the Priesthood and the Pneumatocentric character of the Woman's role in the Church

Through this most specific relation of the Theotokos to the Holy Spirit the Virgin Mary was able to become a temple of God and a type of the Church as the Mother of Jesus Christ, because the motherhood of the Theotokos and the motherhood of the Church are activated through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Church, like the Virgin Mary, receives the descent of the Holy Spirit, begets Christ and brings into the renewed world the new offspring of the new humanity which is in Christ. It is obvious, then, that in the plan of the divine economy in Christ, the role of the woman was tied more directly to the more *specific mission* and not to the *hypostatic peculiarity* of the person of the Holy Spirit in the divine Trinity, because through his creative operation in the Virgin Mary, on the one hand the bond of Eve was loosened and on the other hand the necessary *power to give birth* was supplied to her for the birth of the new Adam, God's Son and Logos who became a human being.

The above Pneumatocentric understanding of the woman's role in the plan of the divine economy, fulfilled through the act of the Virgin Mary at the incarnation of God's Logos, formed the Church's consciousness as to the woman's role in the Church, because in the Church the mission of the Spirit and the mission of the Son is extended and the *Paschal Mystery* of Christ together with the *Mystery of Pentecost* is actualized by the good will of God the Father as an indissoluble internal unity and synergy. The Pneumatocentric role of the woman, according to the *recycling from Mary to Eve*, is extended into the Church's era, in the same way as the Adam-Christ typological relation is extended into it.

This becomes clearer, when it is more fully realized that the Church's era is the *eighth day* (ὄγδοη ἡμέρα) of creation in the whole plan of the divine economy. Hence, while the Adam-Christ Christocentric iconic typology befits the man, the Pneumatocentric functional typology befits the woman, as it were, as this was sealed upon the person of the Virgin Mary, who became through the creative operation of the Spirit upon her the *one who is full of grace* (κεχαριτωμένη) and the prototype of the charismatic persons *par excellence*.

As it is well known, the sacramental priesthood in the Church is the priesthood of the great and only High-priest, Jesus Christ, through whom it is referred to God the Father, and hence, the bearer of the fullness of the priestly authority, i.e. the Bishop, is the *icon* of Christ who is placed in the Church as a type of him, exercising this authority in the name and in the place of Jesus Christ, the only High-priest. In an analogous manner the *charisms* in the Church, having as a *source* the saving work of Christ, have reference to the Holy Spirit and are operated through his power in the body of the Church. The Christocentric *iconic typology* which befits the man, putting forth the bearer of the priestly authority as an icon, a type and representative of Christ, allows only men to participate in the priesthood of Christ, who recapitulated in himself the old Adam. The Pneumatocentric *functional typology* which befits the woman, putting forth the creative operation of the Holy Spirit in the person of the Virgin Mary for the incarnation of God's Logos, assigns to the woman the role of an exceptional bearer of the special charisms which are supplied by him.

This consciousness of the Church, confirmed by the models of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, was imprinted upon the *ab initio* unanimous and theologically consistent ecclesiastical practice, through which Christ's priesthood is assigned to the man, whereas the special

charisms of the Holy Spirit befit the woman. The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a third century composition which has survived in a Syriac translation, has transcribed this consciousness of the Church in a characteristic manner: *Hic locum Dei sequens sicuti Deus honoretur a vobis, quoniam episcopus in typum Dei praesedet vobis. Diaconus autem in typum Christi abstat; ergo deligatur a vobis. Diaconissa vero in typum Sancti Spiritus honoretur a vobis. Presbyteri etiam in typum apostolorum spectentur a vobis.* The putting forth of the Bishop as a type of God, facilitated the typological parallelism of the deacon as a type of Christ and of the deaconess as a type of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the *Christ-Priesthood* iconic typology is certainly different from the *Holy Spirit-Deaconess* typology, which is purely functional, because it has a clear reference to the incarnation of God's Son and Logos. In other words the typological relation of the woman with the third person of the Holy Trinity is not particularly self-sufficient, as it is generally claimed by the Russian theologians, but is a functional relation and is referred to the Mystery of the divine economy which is in Christ.

The typological distinction between a deacon and a deaconess (Christ-Holy Spirit) is further strengthened by the verbs which are used respectively, because, whereas in the case of the deacon the verb specifies an organic relation to the body of the local Church (*abstat* = *παρίσταται* = stands before), in the case of the deaconess it specifies an assignment of honour (*honoretur* = *τιμᾶται* = is honoured).

This distinction is clearer in the related text of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which represents a fuller development of the typology of the *Didascalia*. In this text the Bishop is put forth as *the earthly God after God. As for the deacon he should stand before him as Christ to the Father and should minister to him in everything blamelessly, as Christ, doing nothing of himself, but always doing whatever is pleasing to the Father. As for the deaconess let her be honoured among you as a type of the Holy Spirit, saying or doing nothing without the deacon, just as neither the Paraclete says or does anything of himself, but, glorifying Christ, waits upon his will. As for the presbyters they should be considered among you as types of the apostles*⁴⁷.

Through this text clarifications are provided for understanding the functional typological relation of the woman to the Holy Spirit

47. *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, ii, 57, 10.

with reference to the mystery of Christ. Therefore, the *Christ-Priesthood* iconic typology distinguishes and specifies the relation of the woman to the priesthood in absolute analogy to the relation of the distinct economy of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The *iconic Christocentric typology* of the priesthood and the *functional Pneumatocentric typology* of the special charisms are denoted respectively by the function of the deacon and the deaconess in the body of the Church as a clear extension of the particular function of the man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy between the promise and the fulfilment of the promise in Christ.

It is in this framework of the particular roles of the man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy, that one can understand more fully on the one hand the models of the Lord and the Theotokos, and on the other hand the whole Pauline teaching concerning the woman and her relation to the man as his *glory* in the operation of the body of the Church. It is very typical that in the text of the *Apostolic Constitutions* the relation of the deaconess, who is honoured as a *type of the Holy Spirit*, to the deacon, *who stands as a type of Christ*, is described by way of reference to the Pauline teaching concerning the relation of the man to the woman, since the deaconess should be honoured in the Church *saying or doing nothing without the deacon, just as neither the Paraclete says or does anything of himself, but, glorifying Christ, waits upon his will*.

This functional Pneumatocentric perspective in the understanding of the role of the woman in the Church obviously attributes a deeper theological content to the whole teaching of apostle Paul concerning the woman, which should not be interpreted, as is usual, by strictly non-theological criteria, as for example, by reference to the woman's social position in New Testament times, etc. The question concerning the role of the woman in the plan of the divine economy was equally fundamental as the question concerning the corresponding role of the man. Therefore, it could not be relativised either in the apostolic kerygma or in the consciousness of the Church. Besides, the exemplars of the Lord and of the Theotokos constitute absolute criteria of continuous affirmation of the apostolic tradition on the subject of integrity, and thus the ecclesiastical practice, which was consistent with it, unanimously related the priesthood which derives from the work of Christ to men and the special charisms which are derived from the work of the Holy Spirit particularly to women.

The Church's consciousness concerning the distinct roles of the

man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy also specified by analogy the distinction of their role in the new humanity in Christ. Thus the supreme functional Pneumatocentric typology offsets the equal participation of the woman in the priesthood of Christ, which befits man according to the iconic Christocentric typology. These typological references, however, are certainly, as we saw, not simple theoretical correlations, but reflect real functional distinctions in the plan of the divine economy and have, therefore, a direct reference to this inner relation between Christology and Pneumatology.

Indeed, in the historical life of the Church on the one hand the maintenance through the unity of the divine economy of the revealed distinction of the roles of the Logos of God and of the Holy Spirit results in the clear distinction of the roles of the man and the woman in the operation of the body of the Church; and on the other hand, every misunderstanding, or overturning of this distinction, or of the inner unity in Christ, results in a confusion, not only of the roles of the man and the woman, but also of the relation of Christology to Pneumatology in the operation of the theanthropic organic constitution of the Church.

Thus, the unbalanced overstress on Pneumatology at the expense of Christology of the Montanists and the Kollyridians resulted not only in the disincarnation of the institution of the Church by means of a projection of the eschatological perspective of the impending descent of the spiritual Jerusalem, but also in the complete weakening of the soteriological significance of the inner relation of Christology to Pneumatology through the weakening of the sacramental experience. Under the prism of this one-sided Pneumatocentric understanding of the Church, through which the Christocentric ontology of the Church evaporates and becomes transferred to monosemantic eschatological expectations, overstress is placed upon the importance of exceptional charisms of the Holy Spirit against the Priestly authority which has a purely Christocentric character; hence, the projection by the Montanists of the absolute superiority of the charismatic class over the priesthood in the Church. In the last analysis, the reverse or even overturning of the relation of Pneumatology to Christology by the Montanists, naturally resulted in both the weakening of the *Christocentric ontology* of the Church and of the *Christocentric character* of the priesthood, and also the over stressing of the special charisms of the Holy Spirit and of the role of the charismatic class in the accomplishment and operation of the whole mystery of the Church.

Under this spectrum the woman's participation in the peculiar

charismatic priesthood of the Montanists was a natural outcome not only of their hypertrophic Pneumatology and, by extension, of their erroneous Ecclesiology, but also of the traditional special relation of the woman to the particular charisms of the Holy Spirit (cf. the prophetic charism of Philip's daughters, etc.). Yet, even through the above side effects of the one-sided development of Pneumatology at the expense of Christology we find that our own positions are confirmed with regard to both the peculiar relation of the role of the woman to the more particular economy of the Holy Spirit in the plan of the divine economy, and the specific significance of this peculiar relation for the understanding of the place of the woman in the Church and especially of her relation to the priesthood of Christ.

8. The Institution of Deaconesses

It was under this functional Pneumatocentric perspective of the role of the woman that the operation of many special orders of charismatic women (*prophetesses, deaconesses, widows, virgins*, etc.) were always understood in the Church. The institution of the deaconesses, however, is of particular significance for our present subject-matter, mainly because of the type of the ordination which is performed for the consecration of deaconesses to this particular ecclesiastical ministration⁴⁸.

The Pneumatocentric understanding of the role of the deaconesses is explicitly put forth, as we saw, in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and in the *Apostolic Constitutions*; hence, deaconesses are seen by the ecclesiastical tradition as *exercising a function of the charismatics* in the wider spiritual mission of the Church. Any tendency to understand the ministration of the deaconesses as a real priestly relation to the sacrament of priesthood is excluded not only by the severe prohibition of their performance of priestly duties, but also by the explicit exclusion of any possibility for them of promotion through canonical sacramental ordination to the degree of presbyter. The sacrament of priesthood includes and presupposes the possibility of canonical promotion to the three degrees of the priesthood. If the «ordination» of deaconesses constituted an entry into the priesthood, then their exclusion from promotion to the other degrees of the priesthood would be unthinkable.

48. Cf. especially E. Theodorou, *op. cit.*

The *Apostolic Constitutions* link the mission of the deaconesses to the accommodation of special needs in the performance of the whole spiritual work of the Church, *for we are in need of a deaconess for the many needs of a woman. And first of all in the case of the illumination of women the deacon shall only anoint their forehead with the holy oil, and after him the deaconess shall anoint them; for there is no need for women to be seen by men*⁴⁹. Thus, they admonish to proceed to the *ministerial appointment* (προχέρισμα) of deaconesses *for the ministration of women. And so, when in the case of some houses you cannot send a man deacon to women on account of the unbelievers, you shall then send a woman deaconess on account of the minds of the corrupted ones*⁵⁰.

The duties of the deaconesses within and outside the nave varied; everything, however, as it is known, was related to meeting special needs⁵¹. Epiphanius observes in a synopsis of the institution of the deaconesses in the ecclesiastical consciousness, that this institution was necessary on account of *the modesty of the female gender, or for the time of the bath (= baptism), or for attending to a suffering of pain and when there is a need to undress the body of a female, so that it may not be seen by men who perform priestly functions, but by a deaconess, who is to take care of what is commanded by the priest at a time when a woman is in need and on the occasion of the nakedness of her body*⁵².

The ministration of the deaconess was certainly related to the ministry of the deacon, since, being honoured as *a type of the Holy Spirit*, she had to relate her work to the deacon, who was standing by as *a type of Christ, doing or saying nothing without the deacon, just as neither the Paraclete says or does anything of himself, but, glorifying Christ, waits upon his will*⁵³. Thus, the deaconess, being classed according to her office in the *Apostolic Constitutions* among the so-called *lower clergy* (sub-deacons, readers, cantors), does not partake equally with the deacon in the distribution of the *blessings*⁵⁴; like the rest of the lower clergy, she does not have the right to *excommunicate*

49. *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, iii, 16, 2.

50. *Ibid.*, iii, 16, 1.

51. E. Theodorou, *op. cit.*

52. Epiphanius, «Adversus Haereses», 5, 9. PG 42:744.

53. *Constitutiones Apostolicae*, ii, 26:6.

54. *Ibid.*, viii, 31, 2-3.

(ἀφορῶζειν)⁵⁵, as the deacon has, because *these are servants of the deacons*; she cannot bless or do any of those acts *which presbyters or deacons do*, because *it is not permissible to anyone to do the work of a deacon*, namely, to anyone from among the lower clergy⁵⁶; and more generally she is obliged to be confined to the strict duties specified during her ministerial appointment.

It is self-evident that this is the case of an important institution of the charismatic order, which has no special connection with the sacrament of priesthood. Thus, St Epiphanius records this ecclesiastical consciousness, stressing that as regards the ordination of women, *since the office of keeping good order and ecclesiastical lawfulness was well secured with good understanding and by the measure of canons, only of deaconesses was there any need in the ecclesiastical office, and mention was also made of widows, the most advanced in age of whom he ordered to be called presbytises (= elder ladies) but not presbyteresses or priestesses*, because the order of deaconesses was instituted *not for priestly functions, nor for allowing anything of the sort*⁵⁷. It is in this light that Canon 11 of the Synod of Laodicea (4th century) should be interpreted, *concerning the matter that the so-called presbytises, i.e. those who have the privilege to take the first seats, should not be made leaders in the Church*⁵⁸.

The ecclesiastical lawfulness, well secured by a measure of canons, instituted the order of deaconesses as a distinguished order of charismatic women, endowed with special charisms of the Holy Spirit and offering ministrations in the Church as a type of the Holy Spirit, i.e. according to the type of the operation of the Holy Spirit in relation to the economy of Christ; and hence it never linked deaconesses to the sacramental priesthood and never accepted their identification with the degree of the deacon, *although neither were the deacons in the ecclesiastical order entrusted with the performance of any sacrament, but only with serving what was performed*⁵⁹. In this light the institution of the deaconesses belongs to the special orders of the charismatic women instituted by the Church (prophetesses, widows,

55. *Ibid.*, viii, 28, 7-8.

56. *Ibid.*, viii, 28, 5-6.

57. Epiphanius, «Adversus Haereses», 59. PG 42:744-745.

58. Cf. also N. Afanasieff, «Presbytides or female Presidents», *Women and the Priesthood*, New York 1983, 61ff.

59. Epiphanius, «Adversus Haereses», 59. PG 42:745.

virgins, etc), while their ministerial appointment (προχειρίσις) in the specific ministry was done by some sort of ordination (χειροτονία), i.e. *laying on of hands* (χειροθεσία), which corresponded to the special content of the ministry assigned to them and which could not be seen as comparable in content with the canonical sacramental ordination of the deacon.

Conclusions

On the basis of the above exposition one could draw the following conclusions on the subject under discussion:

I. The issue of the relation of woman to the priesthood, which specifies the related issue of the possibility of the ordination of women, has always been a fundamental *theological* and *ecclesiological* one, because it was realized as such in the life and consciousness of the Church and was also *de facto* typified in the specific canonical act, without any particular reference to the underlying theological structure, or to the ecclesiological consequences which followed it. The models of the Lord, the Theotokos and the Apostles constituted the sufficient defence both of the Pauline teaching concerning the *man-woman* relation in the new reality in Christ, and the particular apostolic tradition and practice on this matter. Thus, the deeper theological underlying structure of the unanimous ecclesiastical consciousness remained overcast in the patristic and canonical tradition of the Church. The present study has sought to uncover this theological underlying structure in order to show more fully this theological foundation of the Church's consciousness and act concerning the issue of the priesthood of women.

II. The ontological identity and the equality of honour of male and female according to the order of creation, whereby not only the man but also the woman were created *in the image and likeness* of the Creator, enjoy a determinate significance for the theological approach to the issue of the priesthood of women. Thus, according to the order of creation the woman is not only *an icon of an icon* (image of an image) of God, but also an icon of God equally with man. Hence, the distinctions of the Pauline teaching, which view man as God's icon and head and the woman as man's glory and body, cannot be traced to the order of creation. These distinctions are mainly understood according to the logos of the divine economy since it was to this logic that through the fall of the protoplasts the logic of creation was subject.

Consequently, it was through the fall that on the one hand the order of creation was overturned and on the other hand the prelapsarian relations of man and woman were altered. The alteration of these relations caused a certain ordering not in the sharing of the responsibility for the fall to the detriment of the woman – since the sharing of the responsibility for the fall was common to both the man and the woman – but in the particularization of the ministerial roles of the man and the woman in the whole plan of the divine economy which is in Christ. Hence, through the particularization of the ministerial roles of the man and the woman their relations to each other were specified as being those of *head* and *body*, or *icon* and *glory*.

The ministerial role of the woman was related to the loosening of the bond of Eve's disobedience, without which the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God and the recapitulation of the old Adam in Christ would have been impossible, since Eve *became through disobeying the cause of death for herself and for the whole of humanity*. The loosening of the bond of Eve's disobedience was accomplished through the obedience of the Virgin Mary, *who became through her obeying the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole of humanity*. It is apparent that while Eve represents the old humanity, Mary represents the transfiguration of that old humanity through the birth of the new humanity in Christ. Thus, while the case of man is related more to the *recycling* «ἀνακύκλῆσις» from the new to the old Adam, the ministerial role of the woman is related to the *recycling* from Mary to Eve, *because there was no other way for loosening what had been tied* (through Eve's disobedience).

The particularity of the ministerial roles of the man and the woman in the plan of the divine economy, in which everything comes to pass from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit, was correlated to the distinction in it of the mission of the Son from the mission of the Holy Spirit, which was understood in terms of the promise and the fulfilment of the promise in Christ. Thus, while the Son and Logos of God had to recapitulate in himself the old Adam, the Holy Spirit had to prepare and make possible the incarnation from the Virgin Mary, which did indeed take place from the Holy Spirit and from Mary the Virgin.

The particularity of the mission of the Holy Spirit in comparison to the mission of the Son for the *recycling from Mary to Eve* was fulfilled through the creative descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin Mary, whereby the *synergy* of the Son and the Spirit for the

redemption of the human race was achieved, as it is highlighted in the patristic tradition.

III. The Holy Spirit, as the creative power of the ancient world, operates in the Virgin Mary the transfiguration of the old humanity through its purification, makes her a *new place* of the power of the Most High which overshadowed her and grants to her in a wondrous and creative manner the necessary *birth-giving power* (δύναμιν γεννητικὴν), so that she may become a *first-fruits of our own lump not seminally but creatively through the Holy Spirit*. Thus, at the Annunciation the Virgin Mary became a recipient of the creative manifestation of the Holy Spirit, through whom *the recycling from Mary to Eve was fulfilled and it came to pass that the first conjunction (i.e. that of Eve) was dissolved by the second*, so that the new Adam who recapitulated all things in himself might become incarnate. Hence, the Annunciation of the Theotokos could be characterized as the supreme prefiguration of Pentecost.

IV. The special relation of the ministry of the Virgin Mary to the mission of the Holy Spirit for the dissolution of the bond of Eve's disobedience, made the Virgin the supreme recipient of the special charisms of the Holy Spirit, the one who is full of grace and the exceptional type of the charismatics (Κεχαριτωμένη). Thus, it was from the Virgin Mary and through the creative power of the Holy Spirit that the Son and Logos of God became incarnate, the Saviour of the world, whereby she was put forth as a type of the Church.

V. The traditional typological relation of the ministry of the *motherhood* of the Virgin Mary to the *motherhood* of the Church remains basically Pneumatocentric, because both the Virgin and the Church receive the Spirit, through whose operation Christ is born and the offspring of the new humanity, which is in Christ, are brought into the world. Yet, although the function of the Theotokos is initially Pneumatocentric, i.e. it is related in a more special way to the work of the Holy Spirit, the function of the Church is Christocentric, i.e. it is related in a more special way to the economy of Christ through the operation to the salvation which has been already accomplished in Christ.

VI. The particularity in the plan of the divine economy of the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the functional role which was fulfilled through the Virgin Mary is also extended to the Church's epoch.

Thus, in the Church the priesthood of Christ, who recapitulated in himself the old Adam, befits the man, whereas the special charisms of the Holy Spirit, who operated creatively in the Virgin Mary for the dissolution of the bond of Eve and the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God, befit the woman, who is functioning within the body of the Church and is honoured as a type of the Holy Spirit.

VII. The Pneumatocentric typology of the woman is different from the Christocentric typology of the priesthood. Indeed, while the *Christ-priesthood* typology is iconic and presents the relation of the one and only High-priest to the bearers of the priesthood of Christ in the Church, the *Spirit-woman* typology does not refer, as it is claimed by certain Russian theologisers, to the relation of the third person of the Holy Trinity to the female, but to the functional relation of the special mission of the Holy Spirit to the distinctive role of the woman in the whole plan of the divine economy which is in Christ. Under this prism the Christocentric typology of priesthood is an iconic typology and has a reference to the mystery of Christ. Thus, in comparison to the iconic Christocentric priesthood of the priests in the Church, the Pneumatocentric function of the woman is analogous to the mission of the Holy Spirit and its operation has a direct reference to the mystery of Christ. Yet, just as the distinction of the roles of the Son and the Holy Spirit highlights their *Synergy* and does not alter their equality and common honour in the Church, so also the functional distinction of the roles of man and the woman does not remove their natural equality and common honour.

VIII. The consciousness of the Church, experiencing continuously and uninterruptedly the whole mystery of the divine economy in Christ, has preserved unchanged the content of the distinctive roles in it of the man and the woman and has stressed for obvious reasons the peculiarity of the relation of the man to the priesthood of Christ, and of the woman to the special charisms of the Holy Spirit for the secure realization and operation in the Spirit of the *body of Christ* in the history of salvation.

IX. Any overturing, altering or reversing of the distinctive roles of the man and the woman in the Church in accordance with the rationality of the divine economy presupposes or entails a corresponding overturning, altering or reversing of the relation of Pneumatology to Christology in the Church. Thus, an overemphasis of Christology at the expense of Pneumatology entails a compression of

the charisms of the Holy Spirit in the name of an autonomous hierocratic or clericalistic understanding of the structures of the Church, whilst an overemphasis on Pneumatology at the expense of Christology entails a weakening of the Christocentric ontology of the Church and by extension of the Christocentric character of priesthood in the name of one-sided charismatic understanding of the structures of the Church. It is in this light that one may understand the fact that the issue of the priesthood of women is inseparably connected with implicit or explicit diversifications from the common ecclesiological teaching of the Church of the first centuries and of the era of the Ecumenical Councils.

X. The indisputable Christocentric character of the priesthood of Christ is obviously appropriate to the particularity of man's role in the operation of the body of the Church. Therefore, the Pneumatocentric character of the distinctive function of the woman in the whole plan of the divine economy excludes the woman from transcending the limits specified for her in the epoch of the Church, because the whole mystery of the divine economy from creation to the eschaton is constantly operating in it. Thus the Orthodox Church, insisting on the criteria of the long-lived ecclesiastical consciousness and of the patristic tradition, understood the role of the woman in the body of the Church according to the type of the Virgin Mary and hence she honoured the charismatic women as types of the Holy Spirit and instituted the operation of the charismatic orders of women in the wider spiritual work of the Church (deaconesses, prophetesses, widows, virgins, etc.).

XI. The *appointment* (προχέρισις) of deaconesses in the ancient Church through a special type of *ordination* (χειροτονία) cannot be interpreted through the type of the canonical sacramental ordination, because it referred to a special *laying on of hands* (χειροθεσία) for the purpose of exercising a well-established ecclesiastical ministry. The well-established function of the deaconess was on the one hand strictly distinguished from the priestly authority and from the sacrament of the priesthood, and on the other hand it had reference to the ministry of the deacon, through whom alone the work of the deaconess had a reference to the ministry of the local ecclesiastical body. Thus, the type of *ordination* of the deaconess can be rightly understood not only through a simple comparison of the various types of ordination, but also through the expressed ecclesiastical consciousness concerning this

institution and its function, according to which the *appointment* of deaconesses was identified with their consecration in the order of the charismatic women of the local Church.

XII. In the Orthodox Church, as also in the Roman Catholic Church, the relation of Christology to Pneumatology, expressed in the doctrine of the *Christocentric ontology* of the Church and of the *Christocentric character* of priesthood, on the one hand excludes the relation of the woman to the priesthood, but, on the other hand, favours the extensive development of the well-established orders of charismatic women for the fuller operation of the charisms of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. Thus in the Church, the priesthood of men as a type of Christ and the function of women as a type of the mission of the Holy Spirit highlight more fully not only the inner unity and *synergy* of the distinguished functions of the man and the woman in the mystery of the divine economy, but also the well-balanced appropriation of the *Paschal mystery* of Christ and the *mystery of Pentecost* in the *mystery of the Church*. The peculiarity of the roles of the man and the woman does not at all denote a *superiority* of the man or an *abasement* of the woman, just as the incarnation of the Son and Logos of God does not introduce a superiority of Him over the Holy Spirit in the equal honour of the relations of the persons of the Holy Trinity.