

Sacramental sexuality and the ordination of women*

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Kilmartin's theory denies the infallible efficacy of the sacramental sign.

In a recent paper, a theology of sexuality was sketched as a basis for the consideration of the moral questions posed by the fertilization *in vitro* of human ova. Such a theology could not but carry over into other fields of considerable ecumenical concern. A contemporary focal point for that concern is the much discussed issue of the ordination of women. If the further development of that theology in the present essay is to be kept within reasonable bounds, it must be understood to require as its preface that earlier ITEST article in which its scriptural ground, or perhaps support, was proposed.¹ Even

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¹D. Keefe, "Biblical Symbolism and the Morality of *In Vitro* Fertilization," *Proceedings, ITEST Conference on Fabricated Human Life*, October 1974. Reprinted in *Theology Digest* (Winter, 1974), pp. 308-323.

so, the sum of the present article cannot amount to more than an introduction to the questions which such ordination raises and a pointer to the direction in which their solution lies.

In broadest outline, that earlier paper tied the transvaluation of cosmic or nonhistorical sexual symbolism,² e.g., that of the Babylonian mythology, to a conversion to the worship of the Lord of history, a worship which is integral with faith in the fundamental goodness of creation. More precisely, such faith causes or is constituted by this transvaluation. The cosmic religions expressed their ambivalent experience of the universe in terms of an ambivalent relation between the sexes, a relation whose liturgical expression variously required priests who were kingly, and priests who were castrate; virgin guardians of the temple, and temple prostitutes. The metaphysical expression of this experience oscillated between a dualist alienation of the principles of transcendence and immanence, and their monist identification.³ Its supreme poetic integration is the tragedy,⁴ in which human futility and human dignity are found implacably and eternally opposed.

That cosmic ambivalence found the feminine principle, in all its manifestations, irreconcilable with that of masculinity; the exaltation of the one is inevitably the suppression of the other. Human existence thus experienced and a cosmos thus structured cannot be called good; their salvation must come from their dissolution, from the elimination of those antagonisms which are encountered universally.⁵ The

²M. Barth, *Ephesians: Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6*, *Anchor Bible*, Vol. 34a (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1974), p. 687.

³P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 231ff.

⁴Werner Jaeger, *Paidia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, I, tr. H. H. Hight, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 237-281; *ibid.*, III (1963), p. 92.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 110, 156ff, wherein appears a commentary upon Heraclitus's famous dictum, "It is necessary that things should pass away into that from which they are born. For things must pass into another the penalty and compensation for their injustice according to the ordinance of time." Anaximander's discovery of a cosmic order of justice is a liberation from the mythic notion of fate by the substitution of a no less fatal physical necessity, the relentless application of the iron laws of thermodynamics.

experience of all qualification of reality and of all differentiation as injustice, as strife and pain puts limits upon what salvation can mean. From this cosmic point of view, the escape from evil, from the fallenness of things, is by deliverance from all qualitative differentiation. The religious, and later the theoretical, explorations of this salvation found that two modalities were possible to it: the masculine one of absolute transcendence, the transcendence of an unqualified self, and the feminine one of an absolute immanence, the immanence of the absolute community. In either mode an utter serenity, an unqualified consciousness, is attained; the past is concluded and the future foregone in an intuition of the real which refuses value to whatever is resistant to undifferentiated unity. This vision has been competitive with Christianity from its beginnings, and continues so to be in our own day.⁶

The faith of the covenanted people of Yahweh in the goodness of historical creation, in the goodness of the covenanted history of Israel, was simultaneously a refusal to accept the cosmic conflict between transcendence and immanence, between God and his creation. This faith was identical with an experience of order in history under Yahweh's lordship. Within this covenant experience evil was not encountered as a blind inevitability in the universe; rather it was experienced as the result of a free refusal of Yahweh's good creation. Such a refusal could not avoid a return to the cosmic religion, lived out in a pagan use of sexual symbols. No longer expressive of the good creation, such a use was seen as unholy, as whoring and fornication, and at the same

⁶The universal solvent for all problems, difficulties, and suffering, from this point of view, is always a return to the lost primal unity; only thus is the spectre of injustice exorcised. This solution to the problems posed in contemporary theology is well known in ecumenical circles; it seeks for the primal unity of Christians in a least common denominator of doctrine, liturgy, and morality. The temptation posed to Catholic participants in such discussions is considerable, for they also are frequently against injustice. A fair example of the Catholic discovery of injustice in the nonordination of women is George Tavard's *Women in Christian Tradition* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973), whose axial theme is the equation drawn between injustice and the admission of religiously significant sexual differentiation. This equation is founded upon an egalitarian—and cosmic—reading of Galatians 3:28 which, if taken seriously, simply puts an end to the sacramental worship of Roman Catholicism. See esp. pp. 77 and 96.

time as idolatry. The prophetic condemnation of this infidelity to Yahweh condemns it as adultery, for Yahweh is understood to be in a marital relation to his people, to the good creation formed by his continual presence to it as the Lord of history. By this marital presence, which knows no primal ambivalence, Yahweh affirms the immanent good of his creation in a word which the New Testament knows to have been irrevocably given and uttered into the good creation.⁷ That word is his covenant, the definitive institution of a free people whose freedom is their history, their worship of the Lord of history. In this worship they are delivered from slavery to the cosmic powers through the continual offer of a future which transcends their past, and in which they can be sustained by him alone. His word is not uttered in vain; it evokes the created response which is wisdom, the splendor and fulness of his creation. This response the Old Testament recognizes to be feminine; by this insight the cosmic notion of the feminine is transvalued, and the new realization enters, through the appropriation process which is the worship of Yahweh, into the reassessment of the marital relation itself. This process is impeded by the fallenness of the covenanted people, who hesitated then as now before the demands of historical existence. Their fallenness is portrayed in the prophets by the imagery of a woman unfaithful to her marriage, who turns away from Yahweh, the giver of life, toward slavery and death. But the prophetic protest against Israel's and Judah's sin, however concerned with the threat of divorce and abandonment by Yahweh, concludes in the later books with the assurance of his forgiveness and the final confirmation of Yahweh's covenant with his bridal people. Out of this struggle emerged a consciousness of the strict connection between the good creation, the covenant, and the marital relation: all of these involve the same conversion, the same transvaluation, the same historical existence, the same faith.

Thus baldly summarized, the Old Testament symbolism announces a reversal of the pagan assessment of the masculine-feminine polarity: that polarity is now the structure of the creation which is good, and the bi-sexuality which once signaled the ambivalence of the finite world becomes the symbol of the reciprocity of God's love for the peo-

⁷M. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 688.

ple he has made his own, and their love for him. As this is seen to be the meaning of the holy, so also the marital relation is transformed, to become a religious sign and realization of the covenant which grounds it.⁸ In this transformation, the world ceases to be an ambivalent reflection of masculine value and feminine disvalue; that ancient antagonism is concluded. The masculine henceforth is so by a creative and life-giving love, not by isolation from or suppression of a destructive femininity, while the feminine is so by her mediation of that love, not by subordination to an alien power. Nor is this symbolism dispensable, as peripheral to Judaism, for it is integral to the revelation itself; Yahweh is known only in his election of his people, and that elective love is marital.⁹

This Old Testament use of marital symbolism is given its highest development in the Pauline letters, particularly in Ephesians, whose marital doctrine is rooted in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh."¹⁰ In this letter Paul integrates the First and Second Adam theme of Romans 5 and I Corinthians 15, the Church as Body theme of I Corinthians 12, the tangled intimation of the sexual bipolarity of the human image of God which we find in I Corinthians 7 and 11, and the passing reference in II Corinthians 11 to the Church as the Bride of Christ in an unexplored comparison to Eve. His struggle to express the truth he had received culminates in a contrapuntal theology of the New Creation, the New Man and the New Bride whose Head purifies her by the sacrifice of his body and blood, by which sacrifice he is "one flesh" with his body.¹¹ In this New Creation

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 630, footnote 85, citing J. Pedersen's *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, I-II, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 702, in which Barth expressly refers to God's marital covenant with Israel; Georges Azou, *In The Formation of the Bible*, tr. Josepha Thornton (St. Louis: The B. Herder Book Co., 1963), proposes the same idea (pp. 60-61); John L. McKenzie's "Aspects of Old Testament Thought," *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, II (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), pp. 752-753, para. 95-8 should be read in this connection. See also K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III, ed. G. Bromley and T. Torrance (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1961), pp. 197-198, wherein Barth refers to marriage as the supreme manifestation of God's covenant.

⁹ Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 707.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 615, 618, 669, 720.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 614, 618-9, 645, 723, 720ff.

Christ is the incarnate image of the unseen God; the letter to the Colossians puts him at the center of the universe and of humanity. But he is thus Image and Creator as Head of the Church, his Bride; he is Image as sacrifice, as priest, as the Second Adam to her whom the patristic reflection designated the Second Eve. By this bipolarity Christ is incarnate, and Image.

Luke adds a further modulation to this marital symbolism, in the parallel accounts of the descent of the Spirit upon Mary, whereby she becomes the *Theotokos*, and upon the apostles at Pentecost, where, in what may have been a celebration of the New Covenant, a commemoration of the body and blood of the sacrifice, the Church comes to be.¹² The patristic meditation upon the interrelation of these themes has found in Mary's virginal motherhood of our Lord the archetype of the Head-Body relation which constitutes the Church: It is by Christ's mission from the Father that his Spirit inspires at once the freedom of Mary's "Fiat" and the New Creation within her body, a child whose masculinity was conceived by her immaculate response to God's elective love.¹³ By Mary's free worship, the New Covenant is given, and the New Israel is formed, in and to whom God is definitively present, because made man. The masculine-feminine dialectic is identical in Acts: the descent of the Spirit of Christ creates the Church in a moment of ecstatic freedom whose *prius* is the Eucharistic Immanence of the risen Christ. The "one flesh" of Mary's conception of her Lord is identically the "one flesh" of the Church's celebration of her Head, the sacramental consummation of the New Covenant which she, in the integral freedom of her worship, conceived.

The theological development of these themes has found in Genesis 2:24 the summary of the New Creation, the

¹²J. Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Revised by William F. Albright and C. S. Mann. Anchor Bible, Vol. 31 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), p. 232. See also O. Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship, Studies in Biblical Theology* 10 tr. A. Stewart Todd and James B. Torrance (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1966), p. 21, footnote 1, and W. Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (New York, 1976), pp. 158-9.

¹³This meditation seems to have begun with Irenaeus, probably in response to the gnostic use of Ephesians 5 alluded to by K. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 644-645. Tavad, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70, provides an interesting commentary upon Irenaeus's development of these themes.

New Covenant, the New Adam and the New Eve, *Una Caro*.¹⁴ There also, inchoate, is the charter of all Christian sacramentalism, the revelation that God's creative freedom is most powerfully exercised in the creation of our own free response to him, a creation in and of the Church by the presence in it of His Son. This sacramental structure of reality, and of the good creation which is created in Christ, is the warrant for Christian freedom and the basis for Christian morality: it provides the meaning and the significance of human life and history. This meaning, this value and truth, is not abstract, not a matter submitted to the judgment of scholarship and theory. It is a gift, not a necessity of thought, and it is given concretely in the life of worship which is our existence in Christ, our communion in the 'one flesh' of his union with his Church.

It is then evident that there is in Catholic worship an indispensable emphasis upon the religious significance of the masculine-feminine bipolarity. This "great mystery" has as its primary locus the relation of Christ to the Church; it is signified sacramentally by the Eucharist and by marriage. The question now before us is whether this Catholic and sacramental valuation of human sexuality is also integral to the effective symbolism of the sacrament of orders.

II

Within the communion of Roman Catholicism, ordination has traditionally been reserved to men. This reservation was first put in question within the less tradition-oriented Protestant communions; the question is now raised by Catholic theologians. Because the sacramental principle is

¹⁴I. de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et L'Eglise au Moyen Age. Etude Historique. Révue et augmentée* (Paris Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1949), pp. 139-209, provides an indispensable account of the development of the *Una Caro* terminology in its application to the Eucharist from Jerome onward through the 12th century. Before Berengarius, its dialectic served to unite the 'three bodies' of the Eucharistic worship: The Church, the crucified and risen Lord, the Body of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The interrelation of marriage and Eucharist was again emphasized by Bossuet, see G. Bacon, "La pensée de Bossuet sur l'Eucharistie, mystère d'unité," *Revue des sciences religieuses*, xlv (1971), 209-239. Most recently A. Ambrosiano has returned to the topic in "Mariage et Eucharistie," *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 98 (1976), 289-305.

so integral with the Church, any theological discussion of it is inevitably also an ecclesiology. Disputes over the ordination of women tend to become disputes over the nature of the Church, and thus to range beyond the limits of the initial subject matter. In fact, the ordination of women is often advocated as the implication of a more fundamental argument.

A most instructive development of the ecclesiological and sacramental theology which is found connected with the ordination of women has been presented in a recent article by Edward Kilmartin.¹⁵ Kilmartin has been teaching and writing in this field for some twenty years; his theological credentials are of a very high order. It may not be too much to say that no more cogent statement of the theses underlying the advocacy of women's ordination is available in English.

The basic concern of Kilmartin's article is the inadequacy of the *ex opere operato* doctrine of the Eucharistic worship. He finds this device employed in such a fashion as to disintegrate the organic unity of Eucharistic worship; specifically, it reduces the role of the laity in the congregation to mere passivity while reserving to the consecrating priest the substance of the worship. The ecclesial-pastoral context of priestly office is ignored when the priest is seen as directly representing Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass, and as representing the Church only because the Church is inseparable from her head; rather, the priest should be understood as "directly representing the Church in a special way, and so serv(ing) as transparency for Christ"(250). Kilmartin finds

¹⁵E. Kilmartin, "Apostolic Office: Sacrament of Christ," *Theological Studies*, 36:2 (1975), 243-264. In the course of this article, Kilmartin's discussion will be cited by enclosing the page numbers of his articles in parentheses. Kilmartin's ecclesiology, while of an evident ecumenical interest, is not essential to that interest; see Emmanuel Lanne's "L'Eucharistie dans la recherche œcuménique actuelle," *Irénikon*, 48:2 (1975), 201-214. The controversy within Catholic theology which surrounds views such as Kilmartin now proposes is well illustrated by C. J. Vogel, "Die Eucharistie heute," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 97:4 (1975), 389-414, responded to by Alexander Gerken, "Kann sich die Eucharistielehre ändern?," in the same issue. Joseph Finkenzeller has recently addressed the same questions as Kilmartin. "Zur Diskussion über das Verständnis der apostolischen Sukzession," *Theologische-praktische Quartalschrift*, 123:4 (1975), 337-340, and "Das kirchliche Amt und die Eucharistie," *Theologische-praktische Quartalschrift*, 124:1 (1976), 3-14.

the root of the mistake in the Vatican II insistence upon the priority of the sacrificial presence of the Eucharistic Christ to his Body over all other modalities of Christ's presence to the Church.

By way of corrective, Kilmartin examines the meaning of the Church's apostolicity, and concludes that this meaning is to be derived from the fundamental mode of the immanence of the Risen Christ in the Eucharistic community. Kilmartin understands this fundamental presence of Christ to be a presence by faith (256-7). This faith is of course caused by the gift of the Spirit, a gift given by the risen Christ. The Spirit inspired in the apostles that faith which is the faith of the Church; the Church is made to be Church by this faith, the first effect of the presence of the Spirit. The faith of the apostles is then a secondary consequence; Kilmartin understands them to be dependent upon the prior faith of the Church. Their 'apostolic office' is consequently a participation in the power of the Spirit only as this power is mediated to them by the Church (257): they participate only indirectly in the priesthood of Christ, as do all other Christians. Thus understood, apostolicity is not a 'character' or an 'office' or a 'power' distinct from the one gift of the Spirit, mediated by the Church, which is faith. There is no question then of an ontological reality passed on from the apostles to their successors by the sacrament of orders in such wise that any bearer of the apostolic character is dependent for that character upon a line of direct succession by ordination from one of the apostles upon whom that office first rested, whether by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, or by a mission from the risen Christ. Rather, office in the Church is understood now to be a function committed to an office holder by the Church in which apostolicity primarily resides.

This view of office as functional rather than as ontological removes from it any intrinsic characteristic which the Church must consider as visibly and historically constitutive for Eucharistic worship and thus for the Church itself. Instead it is the Church's faith, seen as a spiritual *anamnesis* of the sacrifice of the Cross, which is constitutive for the worship as for the Church; absent this *anamnesis*, there is no Eucharist (255), no Body of Christ, no presence of

Christ, no Church. If the *anamnesis* is given, no particular ordination ritual may be insisted upon as necessary for the Eucharist, for Eucharistic presence is by faith, not by an *ex opere operato* effective consecration by a priest of the bread and wine of the sacrifice. Rather, the Eucharistic worship is now seen to be a social action, one forbidding any "complete disjunction" between the visible representation of the mystery and the faith of the local community. This is to announce the liturgical nullification of any "complete disjunction" between the representation of the faith of the community and the representation of the sacrifice of the Cross which is the ontological *prius*, the cause, of the community's faith. The Eucharistic liturgy is now dominated by a cosmological reading of Galatians 3:28 to which the marital imagery of Ephesians and Colossians is unknown (257-8, 263; note error in footnote 71). But the social action which is normative for a Catholic understanding of the Eucharist is not some neutral association, but the sacramental union of marriage. Kilmartin's ecclesiology ignores this. The radical consequence of his theology is that the Church is not caused by the sacramental-historical event of Christ's sacrificial relation to the Church in and by which he is sacramentally present as at once priest and sacrifice. Rather, the Church is caused, created, by the presence of the Spirit sent by the risen Christ, who is 'not here.' The ontological Eucharistic presence is identified with faith.

Kilmartin draws a number of conclusions from this notion of apostolicity; they are those already familiar to the Christianity of the Reformation: (1) Priestly character can no longer be considered the power to consecrate, for the functional nature of the priesthood excludes such a power; (2) Apostolic office is required, not for the Church's liturgy, nor because the power of orders makes the priest the direct representative of Christ, *alter Christus*, but because the priest must be linked historically to an office instituted by Christ for stewardship over the faith; (3) The role of the priest in the Eucharistic liturgy is the ritual expression of the faith of the Church; apart from this faith there is no Eucharist; (4) There can be no ordination except to a function in a local Church; all absolute ordination to the Church at large is excluded; (5) The priest cannot distribute the fruits of the Mass, because he is not an *alter Christus*; (6) Protestant Eucharists cannot be judged invalid for failure of valid orders;

they must be judged only in terms of the relation they signify and symbolize between "the comprehensive ecclesial reality" and the Eucharist; (7) There can be no basic objection to the ordination of women, since priests represent directly not the Christ but the one Church which, according to Galatians 3:28, transcends all masculine-feminine distinction; (8) The pope is not the vicar of Christ in the sense of effectively playing the role of Christ.

The logic of Kilmartin's reasoning is unassailable; once the original concession is made, the conclusions he arrives at are inevitable, as are others which he does not pursue, but which will be pursued here. When the presence of the risen Christ to the Church, by which the Church is created, is understood to be a presence by faith, there is in view an ecclesiology completely different from that which understands the Church to subsist and be caused by the somatic and sacrificial immanence in her of the risen Lord as the un-failing consequence of her visible and historical worship. In the technical language of classical sacramental theology, Kilmartin's theory denies the infallible efficacy of the sacramental sign (*sacramentum tantum*) and as a necessary consequence denies the infallible effect (*res et sacramentum*) of that sign. All saving efficacy of the Cross is now detached from any free human activity save that of Jesus on the Cross, and even the efficacy of the Cross is no longer referred to any contemporary historical event or structure. The Christian's worship is now reduced to an absolute simplicity: that *anamnesis* of the Cross which is without any identifying characteristics which might distinguish it from nonworship. The refusal of the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the sacramental sign (i.e., the denial of the distinct reality of the *res et sacramentum*, whether the baptismal or priestly character, the event of absolution, the sacrifice of the Mass as the re-presentation of the Cross—in brief the denial of the reliable historicity of Christian worship) rejects the intrinsic value of all human and historical reality. Any alternative is seen to tend toward a vainglorious theology of the Church triumphal, a theology which does not understand how the significance of the Cross must include the denial of our own significance.¹⁰

For Kilmartin then, the reformation of Catholic

¹⁰ Walter Bornkamm, *Luthers Auslegen der Galater*: 2f, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963), pp. 277-280, presents the radical in-

Eucharistic worship requires its being telescoped: the sacramental sign (*sacramentum tantum*) is dispensable because without any intrinsic significance and without any spiritual and creative efficacy; it then follows that there is no sacramental effect of such a sign, an effect which itself signifies and causes union with the "whole Christ" but is not itself that union (i.e., no *res et sacramentum*). All that remains is the Cross of Christ and the salvation which it causes. Christ's deed empties human history of meaning, instead of filling it with meaning; His deed is discontinuous with all of ours in this life, doomed as our lives are to complete inefficacy, for without him we can do nothing, and he is not here but in his Kingdom, the only *res sacramenti*. The denial of the good creation which this theology entails is obvious. We should not then be surprised that attached to it is the refusal of the marital symbolism by which the Old Testament and the New have known and uttered the goodness of creation.

The union of the faithful with Christ can no longer be understood in Kilmartin's theology as the union of the Head and the Body, for such a comprehension, native to the classical theology, rests upon the supposition that marriage is a sacrament, a historical sign of worship whose un-failing effect, the marriage bond (*res et sacramentum*), is a sign of the greater mystery to which it can only point, the

interpretation of Galatians 3:28 upon which ecclesiologies such as Kilmartin's rest: insofar as our justification is concerned, we are bound to no external work whatever (*nulli prorsus uni externo operi sumus alligati*). And the consequence is accepted: the man of faith is without a name, without species of difference, without "persona" (*homo sine nomine, sine specie, sine differentia, sine persona*). Luther himself of course refused to deduce social revolutions from his doctrine, a point of view which is entirely consistent with its dehistoricizing thrust. The distinction between the *volkisch* and the *religious* sense of Galatians 3:28 is still controlling in D. Albrecht Oepke, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Galater*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Evangelischer Verlaganstalt, 1957), pp. 90-91: "Da das zweite Glied unmöglich in Sinne der Sklaven (1 Cor. 1, 20ff), das dritte nicht in dem der Frauenmanzipation gemeint sein kann (1 Cor. 11, 7 ff; Col. 3, 18; Eph. 5:22ff) so wäre es ebenfalls verfehlt, das erste in Sinne eines blossen Internationalismus verstehen zu wollen." Nonetheless: "Die Glaubigen sind in Christus zu einer Person verschmolzen." The religious unity in Christ with which Galatians is concerned has no particular social relevance: *non alligati sumus*; between the sacred and secular a disjunction is set which no "works" can bridge, which no sacramental sign can transcend.

union of the faithful in Christ. That the marriage bond, with its exclusivity, its indissolubility, its sexual bipolarity, is a sacrament means at a minimum that Christ is to his Body as bridegroom to bride. The classical theology reinforces this relation by its insistence upon the historical immanence of the sacrifice of Christ in the historical Church. The marital dialectic of the Eucharistic 'one flesh' is eliminated with the elimination of all concrete somatic presence of the sacrificed and sacrificing Christ to his Body, to the Bride for whom the sacrifice is offered and by which she is created through the gift to her, in her history, of the Spirit. That dialectic falls within the condemnation of *ex opere operato* historical efficacy of all sacramental signs, whether marital or Eucharistic. Head and Body are now blended in a unity transcending all masculinity and femininity (we are referred to Galatians 3:28), a unity which must become a logical identity as soon as the inability of any historical and intrinsically differentiated symbol to signify it sacramentally is seriously accepted. Of this Christ-faithful union the most complete union fallen humanity knows has nothing to say, being utterly transcended by it. Sacramental signs have been reduced to a programmatic gesturing, of some social and psychological value, but without any intrinsic relation to our salvation, for that faith has no historical expression which may be relied upon. This isolation of ritual from ontological significance and efficacy is the hallmark of the decadent scholasticism of the 14th and 15th century; its rejection of all secondary causality prepared the way for the 'total corruption' pessimism of the Reformation: the road is a well travelled one.

As Kilmartin observes, his ecclesiology requires that the one Church "transcend all masculine-feminine distinction." Once the sacrifice of the Mass is dismissed by the reduction of the presence of Christ in the Church to a presence by faith, all concrete qualification of historical human existence loses religious value, because every such qualifica-

¹⁰O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament. Studies in Biblical Theology*, 4 (London: S. C. M. Press, 1950), p. 30, uses Colossians 1:24, II Corinthians 1:5 and I Peter 4:13 to establish that the Body of Christ into which we are baptized, the Church, is the crucified and risen body of Jesus. This theme had been more particularly developed in "La délivrance anticipée du corps humain d'après la Nouveau Testament," *Hommage et Reconnaissance: Recueil de travaux publié a*

tion stands in contradiction to the ineffable *Una Sancta*, the Church which has no immanence in the historical humanity it utterly transcends: absent the Head, absent also the Body. The antihistorical cosmic salvation is restored, again androgynous, the nullification rather than the fulfillment of creation in the Image of God.¹⁷ Such an ecclesiology makes of the Christ an *Ueberschick* whose transcendence is rationalized; no longer in mysterious union with his immanence, his transcendence is controlled by an inexorable a priori logic which forbids such immanence. His unique sacrifice submits to the same logic, to become the nullification rather than the sustenance and support of our historical significance, our worship. Once the proposition is accepted that the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ on the Cross admits no representation in the Mass, this cosmic nullification of history is already in effect. The event of the Cross then has the mythic quality of an event *in illo tempore*, "once upon a time," a moment entirely discontinuous with our fallen futility.

l'occasion du 60e anniversaire de Karl Barth. Cahiers Théologiques de l'Actualité Protestante, Hors Série, 2 (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1946), pp. 31-40, in which he also makes some attempt to accommodate the "mysterious identity of Christ-Church to the marital symbolism of Ephesians 5:22ff. This attempt requires a careful avoidance of the Head-Body language of Ephesians and Colossians, by which the duality-in-unity of Christ and the Church as the antitype of the marital 'one flesh' is affirmed, for in Cullmann's theology there is no Christ-Church union to be symbolized by marriage: there is only an identity, mysterious no doubt, but still identity. Thus he understands the 'one flesh' of Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:31, leaving quite unresolved the difficulty of understanding how the inherent duality of marriage can have any reference to the much-insisted-upon identity of Christ and his Church. In this connection, see his *Baptism in the N.T.*, 45, note 1. Cullmann's reading of Galatians 3:28 is consistent with his reading of 'one flesh'; "every difference between men and women here disappears" (*Baptism*, 65). For Cullmann as for Kilmartin, the faith role of the congregation in worship excludes all *ex opere operato* sacramental efficacy. In his controversy with K. Barth over infant baptism, Cullmann insists upon the absolute passivity of all incorporation by baptism into the Body, which knows no moment of free becoming, contra the doctrine of Ephesians 5:21-33, in which the Body-Church is in a relation of freedom to the Head who is Christ. Despite Cullmann's well-known stress upon salvation history, his ecclesiology is finally reducible to an eschatology between the Cross and the Parousia, nothing of significance effected through the use of historical human freedom. The parallel between Cullmann's development and Kilmartin's seems clear.

Whether such a theology as Kilmartin has offered is always and everywhere satisfactory to those who advocate the ordination of women may be doubted; certainly some would consider their ordination consistent with the traditional notion of the priesthood. But it is upon notions such as his that most systematic justifications for the ordination of women rest;¹⁸ at a minimum they play down the sacrificial aspect of the priestly office as the corollary of the contention that the priestly role is not that of an *alter Christus*, and therefore not limited to men. Rather, the priest should be understood as *altera ecclesia*, as Kilmartin has suggested; sometimes one hears *alter Spiritus*. With whatever accent the redesignation is proposed, the meaning of the Catholic worship is transformed: the Mass, the Eucharistic celebration, becomes a faith-response to the Event *in illo tempore* which voids history of significance, the event of the Cross. The response which is faith is thereby problematic, for it can be annexed to no effective sign: the new notion of worship cannot permit sacramental efficacy. We begin to hear again echoes of the late medieval dissolution of all experienced meaning by means of logical analysis, a dissolution which so separated the elements of reality as to deprive the created world of immanent value as of transcendent significance, and so of mediation of God. Upon this we cannot delay, save to observe that the decision to reduce all worship to faith can rest only upon a reduction of all human life in history to significance. If this be the remedy for such exaggerations as have been foisted upon the sacramental worship of Roman Catholicism, one cannot but wonder at the diagnosis.

That Kilmartin does not push the logic of his reworking of the Eucharist to its cosmic extremity is clear enough; neither did the *sanior pars* of the Reformation, but the objections to such extrapolation are themselves irrational, as the Calvinists pointed out to the Lutherans, and the sacramentarians to the Calvinists. When theology does not find its unity in the historical tradition of the Church, by which the revelation is mediated, that unity will be found in the ideal immediacy of God.¹⁹ Only the former position is Catholic; the latter is cosmic, founded upon the logical isolation of God from man which, in default of the historical revelation, is understood to be ontological as well. Between the Catholic and the cosmic there is no bargaining space. When it is urged that the theological principle which travels under the tag of

ex opere operato has served only to corrupt the Eucharist worship of the Church, the appropriate therapy would appear to be the renewal of the primacy of the reality which is to be understood over the speculative devices by which theologians have managed to misunderstand it. One cannot reasonably abandon the ecclesial tradition because it has been misunderstood by theologians or liturgists; to do so is to make the same mistake against which the original complaint had been lodged. It is really not possible to restore the true function of the lay congregation in the Eucharist by unfrocking the priest if the reason for so doing is that his performance is a nullity in any event: what is left to be presided over? Are women then to be ordained on the grounds that they are no more futile than men?

III

The most immediately appealing objection to the restriction of orders to men is that it is unjust, that it entails a religious subjugation of women, and their ontological subordination: in brief, that this practice, however time-honored, accounts to an indignity. The charge is a serious one, but its correctness is not self-evident, except on grounds of a cosmic egalitarianism. These have been found wanting, not applicable to the human reality; the good creation by whose goodness justice is given its Christian meaning, is a rejection of the egalitarian cosmos in which all differentiation is accounted unjust.²⁰ If we are to take the charge of injustice with that seriousness which it merits, we must place it in a Christian frame of reference, that of the Eucharistic celebration.

¹⁸Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975) is a fair illustration. He assumes the anti-sacramental stance proper to Protestant theology from its inception, with the expected results.

¹⁹Luther's insistence upon the objectivity of Christ's Eucharistic presence, as forced upon him by his loyalty to Scripture, is in considerable tension with the theological account of that presence, which looked upon it as a special instance of divine omnipresence. The event-character of the Eucharistic worship having been abandoned with its sacrificial character, the Eucharistic presence becomes accountable for only in non-historic terms.

²⁰C. Tavad, *op. cit.*, pp. 184, 191, 195; P. Jewett, *op. cit.* has the same difficulty as Tavad in admitting that the "submission" language with which Paul points to the paradigmatic relation of the Church

This is the celebration of the definitive presence of the Lord of history in his people, the liturgical promulgation of the Good News of the definitively Good Creation whose goodness is by the Trinitarian missions of the Son and the Spirit into the world. This sending of the Son by the Father, and the Spirit by the Father and the Son, is not distinct from the creation of the world. If we are truly to understand what it is we celebrate, it is necessary to rid our imaginations of the exaggerated reading of Anselm which later theology accepted in the distinction between a "natural" creation by the One God, and a subsequent Trinitarian presence in the world simply *propter peccatum*.²¹ The mistake of this theology was that it made the Incarnation of the Son merely incidental to the world of man and to his history, and reduced the role of the Spirit to one of repair, rather than admit the creativity the liturgy has affirmed of him. But the Christocentric theology which began with Scotus finds it impossible to maintain the distinction which Thomas accepted between a natural creation *ad imaginem*, and a supernatural *recreatio*: the Creator and the Christ are one God: as incarnate, Christ is also his Image, the adequate utterance into creation of the truth of God. This truth is not information about an abstract deity, but the truth of God's relation to his creation. This truth is the revelation, concretely uttered into the world at the moment of Mary's acceptance. But truth and reality cannot be distinguished: if the truth of creation is concrete in the Christ, so also is the reality of creation: his lordship, his revelation and his creation are the same, his headship and his imaging.

The good creation which is actual in Christ is not then to be thought of as an object or thing "placed outside its causes" as an older theology expressed it in quite nominalist terms. The victory of Christocentrism is required by the

to her Head need not and cannot be understood as demanding the ontological inferiority of the feminine. Karl Barth's explanation of 'submission' as existence within the order of creation (examined in pages 69-82) is also used by M. Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 709. This coincides with the phraseology used by Voegelin and von Rad to which reference was made in the article to which the present article is sequel. See footnote 1.

²¹M. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 654, 731.

doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception, in which Christ's grace is understood to be effective in history prior to the Incarnation, and effective precisely as creative. His Lordship transcends all time, and all time is meaningful, historical time only by that Lordship, through which its discrete moments are unified and valorized. His lordship is similarly transcendent to space, making it a world; to humanity, making it the people, the Church; in all its exercise, his transcendence is effective by his immanence. He is the creator-redeemer, present in his creation as Image, by a communication which is *ex nihilo*, without any antecedent possibility. His presence is so total as to be in personal identity with himself, not the suppression of any human being by its subordination to his divinity, but the constitution of his own humanity in the evocation of the integrally free affirmation of it in that acme of worship which is Mary's conception of her Lord. Her affirmation is constitutive for his imaging; precisely, it is the constitution of his masculinity, which was not imposed upon her, but conceived by her in untrammelled freedom as the total expression of the perfection of her worship, as her femininity is that in which the Good Creation worships: the wisdom and loveliness by which it glorifies God in the celebration of the presence of the Lord.

It is this dialectic within creation, now as in the creation, that Ephesians 5:22ff describes. Christ's lordship, his presence in creation, is his submission to sin and death, and the sacrifice of the Cross, at once the triumphant qualification of his creative mission from the Father, of his obedience and of his Lordship, and the pouring out of his Spirit upon his Bride, the Second Eve, the Church itself, *Sancta societas qua inhereamus Deo*, caused by the offering of his body and his blood. As Mary is intelligible only within the masculine-feminine polarity by which she is *Theotokos*, the Church is intelligible only through the polarity by which she is *Sponsa Christi*, continually redeemed by his sacrifice, continually rejoicing in, celebrating the Good News of the Good Creation which is in his Image. The reality of his presence is her food and drink, her daily bread. As Christ is the Christ by his total self-giving, the Church is Church by her response to the gift, the worship by which she mediates the more abundant life he died to give us. In this mediation, the distribution of the bread of life, she is the Second Eve, taken from the side of Jesus on the Cross, the Second Adam.

It is as priest and as sacrifice that Christ is present to the Church; it is by his sacrifice that the Church is designated the Body of which he is the Head. The Eucharistic Body which the Church distributes and by which he lives is the one flesh of her union with her Lord. If we admit the historicity of this union, we must admit the historicity of its polar elements, and recognize with Paul that it is in this union the full value of human sexuality is to be found; this is what the sacramentality of marriage means. Nothing in the relation between Christ and the Church is unjust, for both exist by their total affirmation of the other; in this mutuality the Good Creation is actual in its imaging of God.

Does the Eucharistic worship in which this relation is concrete require the alterity between Church and *alter Christus* which the classical view of apostolicity supposes to be essential to the Eucharist? Does it require a sacramental representative of the Head, in order that his sacrifice be sacramentally offered, and his Body sanctified by communion in one flesh with him? The affirmative response which the sacrificial and event-character of the Eucharist requires does not at first glance force the conclusion that women should not be ordained, however much it may suggest it. If Christ's masculinity is inseparable from his relation to the Church, it is evidently appropriate that the priest who stands in his place in the Eucharistic celebration should be male. But is it necessary? Does masculinity enter into the very significance of the Eucharistic consecration, of the words of institution, by which the sacrifice of the Cross is re-presented? To assert such an integration of masculinity with the priesthood is to assert also that human sexuality, masculine or feminine, is integral with the personal existence in Christ which is personal participation in the Church's worship. This integration is the fundamental assertion of Ephesians 5:21-33, an assertion not in tension with that of Galatians 3:28.²² The latter

²²The interpretation of Galatians 3:28 which Joseph Fitzmyer has contributed to the Jerome Biblical Commentary (II, 242a) reads, "Secondary differences vanish through the effects of this primary incorporation of Christians into Christ's body through 'one Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:13). This verse is really the climax of Paul's letter." At first glance, this language has considerable affinities with the Lutheran caseology cited in note 16, as with the contemporary views of Kilian and Tavard. The implications which a literalist reading of, e.g., Fitzmyer's summary statement has for Catholic sacramentalism

speaks of the full equality of all human beings in Christ; to construe this as removing all religious significance from masculinity and femininity is to presuppose that our unity in Christ is unqualified, undifferentiated, which Paul notoriously denies. Whatever heretofore undiscovered meanings exegesis may find in Galatians 3:28, Paul's enlistment in unisex will not be among them. But it is in the Letter to the Ephesians that the sacramentality of our sexual bipolarity is assured, by the discovery of the meaning and significance of

have been pointed out. It is curious that even after the 1965 endorsement by Danlelou (Cf. Tavard's citation, *op. cit.*, p. 217, note 19) and its later popularization via the Catholic Theological Society of America (Vol. 24 [1969] of the *CTSA Proceedings*) in this country and the works of Hans King internationally, the recent commentaries on Galatians pay little attention to the bearing of 3:28 upon women's ordination. Pierre Bonnard, *L'Épître de Saint Paul aux Galates* (2nd ed., révue et augmentée (Delachaux et Niestlé, 1972), writes, of the distinction between male and female, "Dépassées et non supprimées, ces distinctions ne sont pas abolies dans l'église" (pp. 78-79). John Blyth, in *Galatians: A Discussion of St. Paul's Epistle*, Householder Commentaries, No. 1 (London: St. Paul Publications, 1969), writes, "St. Paul is discussing. Who are the heirs of Abraham? His answer is that the distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female are irrelevant here. All Christians are equally heirs" (p. 327). Franz Mussner, in *Der Galater Brief, Herder Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, Vol. IX (Freiburg: Herder, 1974), writes, "Der Apostel will damit selbstverständlich nicht sagen, dass derartige Unterschiede äusserlich nicht mehr bestehen—Mann bleibt Mann und Frau bleibt Frau, auch nach der Taufe—, aber sie haben jegliche Heilsbedeutung vor Gott verloren." Mussner does exclude any identification of Christ and the faithful, but when he tries to elucidate further what the baptismal unity might be, he falls back upon metaphor: "Diese 'Heils-sphäre' noch näher zu bezeichnen, ist sprachlich kein möglich" (pp. 264, 265). "Im übrigen redet hier Paulus von einem Mysterium, das sich begrifflich nicht vollkommen fassen lässt, am wenigsten mit Kategorien moderner Existenzanalyse" (p. 266). The categories Paul uses in Ephesians 5:21-33 evidently do not occur to Mussner as applicable here. And this is odd. Heinrich Schlier has been more sensitive to the issues raised by Galatians 3:28. In the 13th edition of *Der Brief an der Galater. Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über das Neue Testament Begründet von Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer*, Siebente Abteilung (Göttingen 1965), he remarks, albeit in a footnote, "Erkennt man diese Einschränkung der Aussage in V. 28, so hütet man sich, aus ihm direkte Folgerungen für die Ordnung des kirchlichen Amtes oder auch der politischen [sic] Gesellschaft zu ziehen. 1. kirchlich Amt beruht ja nicht direkt auf der Taufe, sondern auf der Sendung, und die politische Gesellschaft ist niemals identisch mit dem Liebe Christi" (Note 4).

sexual love in the relation between Christ and his Church. This Pauline understanding of marriage is grounded in the 'one flesh' of Genesis 2:24;²³ it does not at all depend upon the sentence passed on the fallen Eve. For Paul, the full meaning of Genesis 2:24 is found in the relation of Christ to his Church; in this relation, marriage has its ground, as from it masculinity and femininity draw their value and significance. These are indispensable to the New Testament as to the Old, to the Good Creation in the image of God, and to the New Creation in Christ.

The citation of Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31 establishes the continuity of Paul's theology of marriage with that of the Old Testament, wherein it was seen to be holy with that holiness which belongs to the unfallen condition of humanity: sexual bipolarity belongs to the Good Creation.²⁴ Paul merely takes this insight and adapts it to the New Creation in Christ: the relation of Christ, the Head, to his Body which is the Church reflects the Old Testament covenantal relation between Yahweh and his people. What was there implicit is now explicit: the meaning of marriage, in which the truth of sexuality is given its concrete and historical expression, is a matter of mystery, to be discovered in its wellspring, the mutuality of Christ and the Church, in which the full meaning of masculinity and femininity is given, and given in the Revelation whose truth is appropriated, not by human cleverness, but only in worship. Only thus is its mystery respected, and the full significance of human sexuality realized into history.

Paul has no difficulty in expressing the sacrificial nucleus of Christ's marital relation to his Body, the Bridal Church. He has no difficulty in asserting the full equality of husband and wife, they are to be mutually submissive, each seeking the good of the other, without any ontological superiority on neither side. Nor is there much difficulty today in seeing that the covenantal relation which must govern the Church's bridal response to the Christ is also the norm for the wife in marriage; her virtue, like her husband's, is covenant virtue. Our whole problem lies in language, in finding words responsive to the truth of the marital relation thus derived. / our language is tainted by its cosmic origin and by our penchant for rationalization. Paul's language can be under-

stood only when one keeps firmly in mind that its meaning is governed not by ordinary usage or by ordinary common sense; these are not in service of the revelation which he serves. Paul's use of such antagonistic words as fear, submission and the like, to describe the appropriate reaction of the Christian wife to her husband is entirely misunderstood when it is forgotten that we do not know what this language means in any adequate sense.²⁵ We do know that Paul is neither a dualist nor a monistic egalitarian; he insists at once upon the full equality, the full human dignity, of both sexes, and also insists upon their difference and irreducibility. This is simply incomprehensible to our ordinary and quite pagan way of thinking, as the history of theology shows quite plainly. There is no room here for an examination of the history in the Old and New Testament of Paul's language; it is evident enough that such words are used in relation to the old Israel and the New without any consequent demonization of Yahweh or of his Messiah, although this use involved a complete reassessment of their meaning. One may then assert the real difference in the masculine and the feminine modes of worship in the Church without placing a greater ontological value in one than in the other; only in a cosmic religious context does qualitative differentiation imply indignity.

Nor is this qualitative differentiation between man and woman of only occasional significance; it characterizes our creation and our existence. It is not simply by a violation of the marriage bond that one profanes the sacramental significance of one's sexuality, but by whatever expression of sexuality that contravenes the meaning which is revealed in Christ's relation to the Church, and the Church's reciprocal relation to Christ. This is the foundation of Paul's condemnations of promiscuity; it underlies the "Pauline privilege" as well. We are members of the Body as masculine or as feminine, not as members of a qualitatively indifferent fellowship; there is no aspect of our worship, or of our existence "in Christ" which is neuter, in which our sexuality is without significance and sacramentality.

If it be true that masculinity and femininity are thus sacramental, and that all human existence is engaged

²³M. Routh, *op. cit.*, p. 734; see also pp. 641, 703.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 645.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 630-715.

in this signing, it must follow that the only paradigms by which the mystery, the meaning, of masculinity and femininity may be approached are those provided by the marital relation between Christ and his Church, between the Head and the Body, a polarity intrinsic to the New Covenant, to the New Creation, to the imaging of God. The appropriation of this sacramental truth is identical to the worship of the Church, for in and by this worship the Good News which is preached and celebrated is no more or less than the truth of humanity which is revealed in Christ.

No one can enter into this worship except as a man or a woman, as the bearer of an existential meaning which is holy, and whose affirmation is inseparable from one's prayer. The content of this affirmation is the self, which is uttered, not to a neutral and merely reciprocal Thou, but to another mystery by whom one's own is itself affirmed in an utterance which is not repetitive but responsive to oneself. In this mutuality, that of the Covenant, the meaning of masculinity is complete in Christ's sacrificial relation to the Church, and the sacramentality of every masculine existence is tested by its conformity to that model. The meaning of femininity is complete in the Church, and the sacramental truth of all feminine existence and worship is tested by its conformity to that model. There has been very little attention paid to the historical content of this sacramentality, even in Catholic theology, and it is evidently not possible to make up for that neglect by any less strenuous device than a thorough re-examination of the entirety of the Catholic tradition: scriptural, patristic, liturgical, and also cultural. But short of that endeavor, we are not entirely ignorant, not entirely controlled by stereotypes.

The Catholic insistence upon the sacramentality of masculinity and femininity rests upon the Catholic faith in the historical actuality of the Head-Body relation of the sacrificing and sacrificed Christ to the Church in the event of the Eucharistic worship. If this sacrificial Head-Body relation is not actual in the here and now of our worship, then the marital relation has nothing to signify, and sexuality becomes religiously unimportant, deprived of sacramentality, as all our worship is deprived. Reduced to faith, no expression of our worship has any intrinsic historical importance, and no problem exists with regard to the ordination of women, or indeed with regard to anything else, insofar as intrinsic struc-

ture and value are concerned. Much of contemporary moral theology is already embarked upon this path. But if we reject this nihilism, admit the transcendent importance of being a man or a woman, then the other consequences of sacramental realism *ex opere operato* also follow; they are in brief the negatives of those which Kilmartin has drawn and to which we have already referred. Particularly, the sacramentality of feminine existence and worship is that of the historical Church, *altera ecclesia*, which cannot be identified with or assimilated to the worship of the consecrating and sacrificing priest, *alter Christus*, in the Eucharistic celebration; the alternative is that merger of Christ and his Church which would make of them one nature, *viva physis*.²⁸ But between this monophysitism and the *una caro* of the marital symbolism which celebrates rather than suppresses the dignity of sexuality, there is all the difference which separates the Judaeo-Christian faith in the goodness of the historical creation from all its counterfeits and from their devaluation of the humanity which God made in his image, as of the history through which the good creation is redeemed. Many voices now urge this devaluation, not least those advocating the ordination of women to the priesthood. If the argumentation proposed above is valid, then there can be no ordination of women in the Church. It would mean a radical devaluation of human sexuality and of history, not an advance but a retreat into a surrogate for the Good Creation, into a world untouched by the goodness of God's creative and recreative act, into a world God never made. □

²⁸H. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, tr. L. C. Sheppard (London: Burns & Oates, 1950), p. 29, points out the dangers of ecclesiological monophysitism, in which the Church becomes an object of worship. Any identification, in the Eucharistic celebration, of the Body which is the Church with the Body which is sacrificed for the Church has that consequence.