

THE QUESTION OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF ECCLESIAL COMMUNION

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Since the publication of the Final Report of ARCIC I, the question of the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood has emerged as one which our dialogue must address as we seek the way towards reunion. The present paper seeks to clarify some of the issues involved.

ARCIC I recognized koinonia to have a central place in the dialogue taking place between our two traditions. Our discussion will be situated, therefore, within the context of koinonia. Is the ordination of women undermining koinonia? Do recent developments challenge us to think afresh what koinonia should mean for us? The answer to these questions will be sought within the framework of the ecclesiology clarified by ARCIC I.

The argument of the paper will proceed as follows: 1) the present state of the theological problem, as it is viewed within the perspective of Roman Catholic theology, will be discussed; 2) the ecclesiological principles provided by ARCIC I towards the clarification of the issue will be recalled; 3) reactions to the problem within the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions will be commented upon.

1. DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM WITHIN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

1.1 The recent emergence of the problem in its present form

The concrete question faced by contemporary theology is, in fact, very recent. In his encyclical, Pacem in terris (1963), Pope John XXIII pointed to the fact that "women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity" so that they "demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and public life", as one of the "distinctive characteristics" of our age⁽¹⁾.

This development in the Western World has set the question of the role women should play in the Church's life in a completely new context, and it confronts contemporary theology with an issue "which classical theology scarcely touched upon"⁽²⁾. In his Preface to a collection of essays on the question by Orthodox theologians, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann describes them as "a very preliminary, very tentative, reaction to a problem which, since the Orthodox Church has never faced it existentially, remains for her a casus irrealis"⁽³⁾. There can be little

doubt that his words describe the outlook of many members of our two communions before this question, as a rapidly changing cultural situation gives it a new meaning and urgency.

Moreover, one may well judge that scholarly discussion of the question is still in its early stages⁽⁴⁾. Roger Gryson introduced his historical study, The Ministry of Women in the Early Church, with the observation, "The question of the ministry of women in the Church arises today with ever-increasing insistence. The adherents of the status quo readily claim a tradition which goes back, so they say, to earliest antiquity; the partisans of evolution reject this argument as insufficient. Generally, however, neither one side nor the other has a precise knowledge of the early tradition of the Church in this matter". And he concludes his work: "I...hope that my book suggests some prudence and conveys some solicitude for the nuances of the problem to those whose zeal or unawareness of the complexity of the problems involved may sometimes lead them too quickly, either in one direction or the other, to make peremptory statements which cannot be in the kindest sense, anything but premature, because not sufficiently substantiated"⁽⁵⁾.

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the grounds upon which both sides to the debate base their case. Suffice it to say that the theological rationale proposed for and against a retention of the traditional practice leaves one far from satisfied to this point.

1.2 The Roman Catholic Church's authoritative response to the problem

It is very important for those seeking to enter into dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church in this and other matters to appreciate the theological complexity of the process whereby authoritative teaching finds expression within our communion. It is one of the salient characteristics of our tradition that it seeks to articulate the demands of the Gospel with a living voice for each successive age. Properly understood, this is not an expression of authoritarianism or legalism, but an ultimate expression of the reality of koinonia: the reality of communion finding self-expression, in order that God's people may recognize and remain faithful to the Gospel truth in the midst of their involvement in the cultural and historical change which is the condition of the Church during its time of pilgrimage.

The second Vatican Council sees this living voice as finding expression in what it calls "authentic" teaching (cf. Lumen gentium, n.25). By this term it means that the teaching is that of the Church itself, as opposed to the expression of the theological opinion of an individual or a group. The authority of such teaching, therefore, does not derive from the force of the arguments it may propose in support of the positions it adopts, but from the fact that the pastoral office has been exercised to express the mind of the Church itself.

It must be noted, however, that this voice, speaking authoritatively in the name of the Church, has a grammar with many modalities. These must be understood if one is to assess its contribution to the on-going life of the Church.

Definitive teaching - described by Lumen gentium (n.25) as "tamquam definitive tenenda" - calls for an "absolutely strict and irreformable assent" from all who wish to remain within the Church's communion⁽⁶⁾. Such teaching is not the normal manner of expression of the Church's magisterium. None of the teaching of the recent Vatican Council is of this kind. The interpretation of such non-definitive teaching as that of the Council calls for many distinctions which bring to light the great variations that must be recognized in the authoritative import it has in the life of the Church. Karl Rahner notes "the distinctions to be made between wielders of the teaching authority in the Church (individual bishops, the collective episcopate, the Pope, a general council); the distinctions to be made between the doctrines taught (revealed truths, truths not revealed but necessarily linked with revelation as its presupposition or its consequence etc.); the distinctions to be made between the types of authority claimed by the teacher and in his intention of binding his hearers; the distinctions to be made between the 'theological qualifications' of the truths proposed (dogma, common teaching, irreformable truths, reformable truths which still demand a conditional assent etc.); the distinctions to be made in the assent of the hearer (from the absolute assent of faith to a genuine but not necessarily irreformable inner assent and on to mere 'obedient silence')"⁽⁷⁾.

To one observing the Roman Catholic Church from outside this may seem to involve an excessive legalism; but reflection should convince us that it is only through such a variety of modalities that the living voice which expresses the mind of the Church can find a realistic expression of obedience to the Gospel truth. Moreover, the nature of these modalities implies that further dialogue within the Church communion is not only possible but necessary, in order that the articulation of the demands of the Gospel may be carried forward.

One must admit that this has been somewhat obscured by the fact that in the recent past pastoral authority has been used to restrict dissent from non-definitive authoritative teaching. Francis Sullivan, of Rome's Gregorian University, points out that "during the pontificate of Pius XII, there was a tendency in some circles of Catholic theology to attribute infallibility to the ordinary magisterium of the pope, and to require a response to it that hardly differed from the response required by a solemn definition"⁽⁸⁾. He notes that official pronouncement regarding the obligatory character of papal teaching reached a high point in Pius XII's encyclical Humani generis (1950)⁽⁹⁾. As Karl Rahner points out, however, the restrictive words of Pius XII's encyclical, included in the earlier draft of the number of Lumen gentium to which we have referred, were dropped in the final text⁽¹⁰⁾.

Thus, while the text of Lumen gentium makes no reference to the possibility of legitimate dissent from authoritative teaching, the Council's Theological Commission, in replying to an emendation proposed by some bishops to the draft text, clearly indicated that they "were aware of the possibility of legitimate dissent from ordinary papal teaching"⁽¹¹⁾. In other words, the complex process through which the Church's authoritative voice is articulated involves the reception of that teaching.

What we have said to this point clearly implies that theologians have an important contribution to make as the Church's voice seeks to give articulation to the truth of the Gospel in successive ages. This question was dealt with by the Church's International Theological Commission in a series of theses drawn up at its meeting in Rome in 1975⁽¹²⁾. These theses echo the experience of the Church in the years following the Council. They point (in Thesis 8) to the "critical" contribution theology must make to the articulation of the Church's faith: "the theologian's task of interpreting the statements of the past and present magisterium, of putting them into the context of the whole of revealed truth, and of seeking a better understanding of them with the aid of the science of hermeneutics, brings with it a function that is in some sense critical. This criticism, of course, must be positive, not the destructive kind".

We should not be surprised, the Commission noted (Thesis 9), that "a certain tension" sometimes arises between the magisterium and theologians. This should cause no surprise for "wherever there is authentic life there is tension"; it should serve as "a lively stimulus and incentive for both sides to perform their respective tasks in communion with the other, following the method of dialogue". This dialogue (according to Thesis 10) "can be extremely profitable for both sides: the magisterium can achieve a deeper understanding of the truth of faith

and morals which it preaches and safeguards, while the theological understanding of faith and morals can gain greater certainty from its corroboration by the magisterium".

What has just been set out provides the background necessary for an evaluation of the Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood (Inter insigniores) issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1976, and its ruling: "the SCDF judges it necessary to recall that the Church, in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination" (n.5).

On the one hand, the Roman Catholic theologian must receive this ruling with a genuine docility and openness which is grounded in the recognition that the Holy Spirit uses the voice of the Church for the maintaining of the Gospel truth in every age. On the other hand, the precise nature of its contribution to the articulation of the demands of the Gospel must be assessed. Its teaching is not definitive; it concerns a question which has emerged in its present form only recently; it obviously calls for the "critical" collaboration of the theologian to which reference has already been made⁽¹³⁾.

Moreover, as the wording of the ruling which we have quoted already intimates, the framing of the document itself invites a continuing dialogue which will lead to a deeper understanding of the issues involved. The following considerations make this clear:

- 1) The form in which the document is issued indicates a use of authority which is reserved. Certainly the "authentic" character of the document's ruling, as giving expression to the living voice of the pilgrim Church itself, is placed beyond all doubt by the fact that it was "approved" by Paul VI, who "confirmed it and ordered its publication" (n.41). But on the other hand it has the form of a "Declaration", a form of pronouncement which has a comparatively low degree of authority in the protocol of the Holy See. This particular form is described by one canonical authority as "an interpretation of existing law or facts, or a reply to a contested point of view"⁽¹⁴⁾. Another commentator concludes, with regard to the canonical status of the pronouncement, "There is no question of a new law...(nor) should it be seen as a final word which...closes off all further discussion"⁽¹⁵⁾.
- 2) The fact that an official Commentary was issued by the Doctrinal Congregation together with the Declaration clearly implies that a further deepening of the question is called for.

- 3) The Declaration acknowledged the inadequacy of previous discussion of the question: "we are dealing with a debate which classical theology scarcely touched upon" (n.4); the arguments proposed by "scholastic doctors", it is noted, "modern thought would have difficulty in admitting or would even rightly reject" (n.7). The companion Commentary makes a similar comment: "the question has been complicated by the fact that...arguments adduced in the past in favour of the traditional teaching are scarcely defensible today" (Intro.).
- 4) To those familiar with the mode of expression of the documents of the Holy See, the Declaration is remarkable in its repeated use of qualified wording in its taking of position. As one commentator puts it, the text "seems to echo, shall we say, the voice of a strong minority opinion... At key places in its presentation, the document inserts weak or qualifying phrases, not normally found in papal documents"⁽¹⁶⁾.

1.3 The issue behind the problem: what is prophetic fidelity to the Church's tradition?

In the end, however, the principal reason why further discussion is called for is to be found in the very nature of the issue which the question raises: how is the once-for-all truth of the tradition which lives in the Church to be interpreted within the context of a profound shift in cultural awareness?

The Declaration, Inter insigniores, expresses the issue clearly: "the Church intends to remain faithful to the type of ordained ministry willed by the Lord Jesus Christ and carefully maintained by the Apostles" (n.6); "In the final analysis it is the Church, through the voice of her Magisterium, that...decides what can change and what must remain immutable" (n.23)

Catholic thinkers who judge that the traditional practice should be changed, however, suggest that an authentic fidelity to the tradition may call for a change in what has undoubtedly been the accepted practice. For example, Carol Stuhlmueller argues that the Roman Catholic Church has "always emphasised the necessity to read the Scriptures within the life setting and pastoral needs of the Church of each new age"⁽¹⁷⁾. He sees a model for this within the development of Israel's traditions: "God expected his people...to learn from the experience and sound advice of their surrounding culture...to allow for cultural and even unexpected developments within each institution...(and) to see His holy will operative in the political and economic factors responsible for the developments"⁽¹⁸⁾. He

suggests that if Israel saw great developments within the limited confines of its cultural situation, the Church today which "manifests an extraordinary variety of cultures...must adapt itself to each situation so that its emphases in doctrine and morals as well as its styles of leadership and its prophetic stance for the oppressed will vary greatly"⁽¹⁹⁾. In conclusion, he points to the central norm which shaped this development: "Israel discerned what forms were good and what forms were bad by the intuition of Yahweh's personal, compassionate love. This revelation purified and enhanced whatever was accepted within the chosen people. It exercised its influence most rigorously in the preaching of the prophets who championed the rights of the poor, the neglected, the 'minorities'"⁽²⁰⁾.

Observing this exchange, the Orthodox theologian Thomas Hopko is critical: "What characterizes the 'Protestant' theological spirit and method, which we now see adopted by many Roman Catholics, is more than anything else its acceptance of the world and its history as providing the vital context for theological thought and analysis...the tradition of the Church is reduced to historical actions and decrees, and both the Church and tradition (including the Bible) become 'objects' of theological examination and reflection"⁽²¹⁾. In his judgment, for one who undertakes a genuine theological interpretation of the tradition, "the Church is the 'subject' of theological thought and activity, with the secular world and human history being among the many 'objects' of her examination, evaluation and judgment. In this perspective...the Church is essentially known and lived as a sacramental community with an identity and continuity in space and time guaranteed to her by the action of God's Holy Spirit"⁽²²⁾.

Each of the three statements we have cited points to an important principle which must contribute to the resolution of the question of how the once-for-all mystery of Christian tradition is to be interpreted in successive cultural contexts⁽²³⁾.

It is only through a theology which integrates these three principles that an adequate theology of the mystery of communion (koinonia) in the Church's tradition can be achieved. This integration calls for further theological dialogue if we are to find the answer to the question of whether fidelity to the Church's tradition excludes or invites the ordination of women to the ministerial priesthood.

2. THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES PROVIDED BY ARCIC I TOWARDS THE CLARIFICATION OF THE ISSUE

It is well to remember that we do not take up the question of the articulation of the demands of the Gospel within the Church's koinonia as it were ex nihilo. It will be helpful to recall some of the essential elements of ecclesiology in which ARCIC I judged that our two traditions are at one.

2.1 The abiding presence of God's truth in the Church

In the first place, koinonia involves the mystery of the abiding presence of God's truth in the Church, since it "signifies a relation between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality"; its "heart" is "union with God in Christ Jesus through the Spirit" (Introd. n.5)⁽²⁴⁾. It is by the "action of the Holy Spirit" that "the authority of the Lord is active in the Church" (Authority I, n.3), so that "by sharing in the life of the Spirit all find within the koinonia the means to be faithful to the revelation of their Lord" (ibid. n.4).

Because "Christ is God's final word to man - his eternal Word made flesh... The person and work of Jesus Christ, preached by the apostles and set forth and interpreted in the New Testament writings, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are the primary norm for Christian faith and life. Jesus, as the Word of God, sums up in himself the whole of God's self-disclosure. The Church's essential task, therefore, in the exercise of its teaching office, is to unfold the full extent and implications of the mystery of Christ, under the guidance of the Spirit of the risen Lord... (the) combination of permanence in the revealed truth and continuous exploration of its meaning is what is meant by Christian tradition" (Elucid. Authority, n.2).

This abiding presence of God's truth is absolutely fundamental to a sound understanding of koinonia; it gives meaning to all that follows.

2.2 The articulation of this truth within the Church

It is necessary for this articulation to take place; and, under God's Spirit, the Church is competent to achieve it: "In its mission to proclaim and safeguard the Gospel the Church has the obligation and the competence to make declarations in matters of faith... When conflict endangers unity or threatens to distort the Gospel the Church must have effective means for resolving it" (Authority I, n.18).

This articulation of the rule of faith by the Church is a gradual and complex process: "At times there result conflict and debate. Customs, accepted positions, beliefs, formulations, and practices, as well as innovations and re-interpretations, may be shown to be inadequate, mistaken, or even inconsistent with the Gospel" (Authority I, n.18). "When (conciliar) decisions affect the entire Church and deal with controverted matters which have been widely and seriously debated, it is important to establish criteria for the recognition and reception of conciliar definitions and disciplinary decisions... This process is often gradual, as the decisions come to be seen in perspective through the Spirit's continuing guidance of the whole Church" (ibid. n.16).

This process calls for a creative fidelity to the tradition, and a theological reflection upon what this entails such as we have already discussed. ARCIC I was well aware of this: "All generations and cultures must be helped to understand that the good news of salvation is also for them. It is not enough for the Church simply to repeat the original apostolic words. It has also prophetically to translate them in order that the hearers in their situation may understand and respond to them" (ibid. n.15)⁽²⁵⁾.

The process of discerning the Gospel's demands involves the whole believing community: "The perception of God's will for his church does not belong only to the ordained ministry but is shared by all its members... the interaction of bishop and people...is a safeguard of Christian life and fidelity" (ibid. nn. 6 and 18)⁽²⁶⁾. Within this process, "the bishops have a special responsibility for promoting truth and discerning error" (ibid. n.8). But what we have set out already makes it clear that when they articulate the truth it is the truth which lives in the whole communion to which they give expression.

In their work of giving expression to the Church's faith, the bishops will seek to be at one, not only with the living faith of the local Church in which they preside, but also with the other Churches with which they are collegially united in koinonia: "In spite of diversities each local Church recognizes its own essential features in the others and its true identity with them. The authoritative action and proclamation of the people of God to the world therefore are not simply the responsibilities of each local Church acting separately, but of all the local Churches together" (ibid. n.8). "A local Church cannot be truly faithful to Christ if it does not desire to foster universal communion, the embodiment of that unity for which Christ prayed" (ibid. n.13).

The various orders of primacy among bishops, particularly that of the bishop of Rome, promote and facilitate the articulation by the episcopal order of the truth which lives in the Church: "Primacy fulfils its purpose by helping the churches to listen to one another, to grow in love and unity, and to strive together towards the fulness of Christian life and witness" (ibid. n.21).

The process of articulation which we have described is directed to an enunciation of the public rule of Christian faith and practice, which has as its subject, not an individual or a group within the believing community, but the Church itself. Given the complexity of the process which must take place within the Pilgrim Church as it strives towards this enunciation, not every expression of this authoritative voice is permanent and definitive: "the Church exercises teaching authority through various instruments and agencies at various levels... The welfare of the koinonia does not require that all the statements of those who speak authoritatively on behalf of the Church should be considered permanent expressions of the truth" (Authority II, nn.26 and 27).

The Church will only exercise its full responsibility for the articulation of the demands of the Gospel if this articulation of the rule of faith can, when the need arises, be decisive and final: "the Church can make a decisive judgment in matters of faith, and so exclude error... situations may occur where serious divisions of opinion on crucial issues of pastoral urgency call for a more definitive judgment" (ibid.).

3. REACTIONS TO THE PROBLEM WITHIN THE ANGLICAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNIONS

3.1 Aspects of the question on which they are not divided

There is a large area of agreement between our two communions as they face this question. It would be widely agreed that the question, in the form in which it is being put today, is a new one, and that it is still in an early stage of maturation. It would be agreed that this demands our entering into a difficult and lengthy process of discernment. We would be agreed, moreover, that this should involve the whole believing community, within the framework of the ecclesiology which has been outlined⁽²⁷⁾.

It should be noted in this regard, that behind the immediate issue lie other questions which we would agree call for clarification: in particular the theology of male and female sexual identities and roles⁽²⁸⁾.

Essential to this process of discernment must surely be the experience of a more active participation by women in the life and ministries of the Christian community. In this we would also find agreement. The Declaration, Inter insigniores, notes that it is desirable "that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their role is of capital importance, both for the renewal and humanization of society and for the rediscovery by believers of the true face of the Church" (n.40). There are many ways which are not being availed of, in which women could contribute within the accepted discipline to the public life of the Church. It is only through this experience that, under the Holy Spirit, the Church may discern their true place in her midst.

We would also be in agreement that the question is one which the Church can not leave unanswered. To do so in a cultural moment of dramatic awakening to the discriminations which have existed against women would be scandalous and irresponsible. The common heritage of ecclesial awareness which unites our two communions convinces us, therefore, that the Holy Spirit will be present to the Church as it arrives at a definitive answer to this question.

3.2 Practical responses to the question within our two communions

Confronted with a question of such urgency, the Anglican Church's existing provisions for Church order are subjected to extreme pressures and strains. The Anglican communion has not been able to respond to the question with a united voice. This raises important issues for our Churches at the present stage of our journey towards reunion which could well be the occasion of growth and new vitality. How will the Anglican communion be able to respond with a united voice to the decisions called for by the Final Report of ARCIC I? What does the Anglican response to the present question indicate concerning readiness to accept the provisions of Church order described in the Final Report? In particular, how strong is the practical commitment to the Final Report's understanding of koinonia, of those who - relying upon a sectional judgment rather than a judgment of the Church itself - have reacted so hastily before the challenge of the question? One fears that the consequences of their action, as far as the common welfare is concerned, will become only too clear in the harm it does to the Anglican communion itself.

Within the Roman Catholic communion, while many bishops, theologians and faithful remain, no doubt, open to the possibility of a change to the existing norm, should the process of articulation eventually lead the Church to that point, it is unthinkable that any practical steps be made contrary to that norm before

the voice of the Church settles the matter in a way which leaves no room for doubt.

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Whatever the/outcome, the negative consequences of such disregard for the Church order which safeguards the koinonia would, for the Roman Catholic, far outweigh whatever was achieved by such an action.

The question which our Churches face is essentially linked with the full implications of a life in koinonia. The problems we now face invite us to consider these implications afresh.

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NOTES

- (1) Cf. also Vatican Council II, Gaudium et spes, n.29.
- (2) Inter insigniores, n.4.
- (3) Women and Priesthood, ed. Thos. Hopko, Crestwood N.Y. (St Vladimir's) 1983, p.7.
- (4) Cf. Hyang Soc' Chung Yoon, "Publications: 1975-77", in Women and Priesthood, ed. C.StuhlmueLLer, Collegeville (Liturgical) 1978, where "comprehensive bibliographies" are referred to. This volume, sub-titled, "Future Directions: A Call to Dialogue from the Faculty of Catholic Theological Union at Chicago", contains twelve scholarly critiques of the Declaration, Inter insigniores. Many publications have appeared in the last decade. Australia's latest publication on the place of women in contemporary society, The Force of the Feminine, ed. Margaret Franklin, Sydney, 1986, contains several articles on the question of the ordination of women.
- (5) Trans. by J.Laporte and M.L.Hall, Collegeville (Liturgical) 1980, pp.xi and 114.
- (6) Karl Rahner, commenting on the Council's text in H.Vorgrimler (ed.), Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, vol. 1, N.Y., 1967, p.210.
- (7) Op.cit., p.209.
- (8) Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church, N.Y. (Paulist) 1983, p.154.
- (9) Op.cit., p.155, citing a passage which concludes: "if the Supreme Pontiffs, in their official documents, deliberately pass judgment on a matter hitherto controverted, it is evident to all that, in accordance with the mind and intention of the same Pontiffs, that question can no longer be considered a subject for free debate among theologians".
- (10) Op.cit., p.210.
- (11) Sullivan, Magisterium, p.166. Ch. 7 of this work is devoted to the discussion of non-definitive teaching and the response it calls for from the Catholic faithful. He describes the response appropriate in one who finds serious reasons for dissenting - what Lumen gentium (n.25) calls "religiosum voluntatis et intellectus obsequium" - in these terms, "I am obliged to renounce any obstinacy in my own opinion, and to adopt an attitude of docility towards the teaching" (p.164).
- (12) Sullivan discusses these theses at length in Ch.8 of Magisterium. The versions cited below are from his text.
- (13) Sullivan points to the fact that authoritative papal teaching of this century has been recognized by the magisterium itself to need correction, Magisterium, p.157.
- (14) F.Morrissey, The Canonical Significance of Papal and Curial Pronouncements, Toledo (Canon Law Soc. of America) 1974, p.10.
- (15) D.Bonner, Women and Priesthood, ed.StuhlmueLLer, p.81.

- (16) Stuhlmüller, Women and Priesthood, p.10. This author lists such examples as the following: "The Sacred Congregation...judges it necessary to recall that the Church...does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination" (n.5 - "non agnoscere admittendi"); "The Catholic Church has never felt..." (n.6 - "nunquam sensit"); "the magisterium has not felt the need" (n.8 - "nunquam necesse habuerit"); "It is true that these facts do not make the matter immediately obvious" (n.13 - "non quidem talem evidentiam affereunt, ut quique proxime perspicua sint"); "the attitude of Jesus and of the apostles, which has been considered as normative" (n.18 - "ut norma habitus est"); "This norm...is considered to conform to God's plan for his Church" (n.24 - "quia putatur conformis esse"); "It is not a question here of bringing forward a demonstrative argument, but of clarifying this teaching by the analogy of faith" (n.25 - "non intenditur ut argumentum demonstrativum afferatur").

It has been noted that this manner of expression parallels Pius XII's teaching concerning polygenism (several sets of parents at the origins of the human race) in the encyclical, Humani generis (1950): "in no way is it apparent how this position can be harmonized with what is proposed in the founts of revelation and with positions of the Church's magisterium (concerning Original Sin)". Today it is commonly recognized that this teaching does not close the question, if good reasons can be brought forward showing that these authorities do not necessarily lead to that conclusion.

- (17) Women and Priesthood, p.25, citing Vatican Council II, Dei verbum, n.8.
- (18) Op.cit., p.28.
- (19) Op.cit., p.29. Cf. p.35, where the role of the prophets is underlined in the "dramatic transitions" which took place in Israel's life.
- (20) Op.cit., p.44.
- (21) Women and the Priesthood, ed. Hopko, p.173.
- (22) Op.cit., p.173. The principle enunciated here is an absolutely fundamental one, essential to the understanding of koinonia in which the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican communions have a common heritage, and which they can not afford to neglect in the theological ferment of the present day. Hopko's application of the principle, however, shows itself in need of further clarification, when he goes on to declare, "The Orthodox Church does not have a teaching of 'dogmatic development'...The Orthodox also do not have a magisterium that speaks finally on any matter of faith and practice" (p.177).
- (23) ARCIC I addressed itself to this problem, Elucidation on Authority, n.2.
- (24) References given are to the Final Report of ARCIC I.
- (25) Elucidation on Authority, n.2. indicates differing theological understandings of "this combination of permanence in the revealed truth and continuous exploration".

- (26) Cf. the parallel text of Vatican Council II, Dei verbum, n.10: "Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of god, which is committed to the Church. Holding fast to this deposit, the entire holy people united with their pastors remain always steadfast in the teaching of the apostles...so that in holding to, practicing, and professing the heritage of the faith, there results on the part of the bishops and faithful a remarkable common effort". Joseph Ratzinger commented on this text: "If one compares the text with the corresponding section of the encyclical Humani generis (DS 3886), the progress that has been made is clear. The latter had stated, in a strictly antithetical way, that the divine saviour had 'entrusted his word neither to the individual believers, nor to the theologians as such for its authentic explanation, but solely to the teaching office'...Thus this short section presents us also with an important achievement of a renewed theology of the laity, seen here in connection with the theology of the word and making clear not merely the secular function, but also the truly ecclesial and spiritual function of the layman", in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, ed. H.Vorgrimler, N.Y., 1969, p.196.
- (27) As Sullivan points out, "history shows that it has sometimes taken a rather long time for even the decrees of an ecumenical council to obtain universal reception. Therefore it would be risky to base a judgment on the phenomenon of dissent until a sufficient period of time had elapsed to show whether teaching was...to obtain...genuine assent", Magisterium, p.168.
- (28) Cf. Hopko, Women and the Priesthood, p.100: "The fact that human nature, enhypostasized in a number of persons, is created by God as male and female is undeniable. Why this is so, what is its meaning, and how are the sexes to interrelate to be reflective of...(the) divine Prototype has not been sufficiently explained in Christian tradition... the demand for a clear and distinct explanation of the theological meaning of human sexuality is with us now, and attempts must be made to meet this demand". Hopko finds recent Protestant attempts to frame such a theology on the part of Karl Barth and P.K.Jewett unsatisfactory (ibid.).