

September 1975

## Thomas on Mary and Woman: A Study in Contrasts

William J. Cole S.M.  
*University of Dayton*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/udr>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#), and the [Philosophy Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Cole, William J. S.M. (1975) "Thomas on Mary and Woman: A Study in Contrasts," *University of Dayton Review*. Vol. 12: No. 1, Article 6.

Available at: <https://ecommons.udayton.edu/udr/vol12/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Dayton Review by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact [mschlangen1@udayton.edu](mailto:mschlangen1@udayton.edu), [ecommons@udayton.edu](mailto:ecommons@udayton.edu).

## Thomas on Mary and Woman: A Study in Contrasts\*

William J. Cole, S.M.

In the age in which we live, try as we might for one reason or another, in no matter what walk of life we might be, we cannot avoid the topic of this last session of Aquinas Week: *Womanhood and a Community of Persons*. For those who have even a cursory acquaintance with St. Thomas' doctrine on woman, there may very well be wonderment that the two phrases "Womanhood" and "Community of Persons" can be related in any way.

You might suspect from what I have said up to now that you are in for an attempted defense of Thomas' doctrine on woman. I assure you that nothing is farther from my mind, since I agree with one of my Dominican professors of seminary days who, in speaking about the attempts of his fellow Dominicans to defend Thomas's stance on the Immaculate Conception, characterized them as "an unfaithful fidelity." I rather fear the contrary: that after you have heard the first part of my exposition: Thomas on Woman, you might apply to Thomas the words of Marc Antony at the funeral oration for Caesar: "I have come to bury Thomas, not to praise him." I make no apologies, however, for the extreme negativism of the first part of this paper, since not only does fidelity to the record require it, but it is also imperative in view of the undeniable truth (so often spoken about in the works of authors in the feminist movement) that St. Thomas' theory about woman has influenced (and still does influence) the Church and civilization down to our present era.

It would be a disservice to the truth not to state categorically that in the mind of the Angelic Doctor woman *as such* is inferior to man in every conceivable way: 1.) her very nature, she is born inferior; 2.) her way of acting, which springs from her qualities of soul and body and 3.) her clearly inferior role in human generation. And it is precisely because she is inferior that she must live in subjection to man—a man must rule over her for her own good.

In his treatise on man, in which he has one entire question and four articles "on the production of the woman," St. Thomas begins by asking questions he would never have dreamed of asking in regard to the male sex: "Whether the Woman Should Have Been Made in the First Production of Things?" The first objection is rather instructive:

It would seem that the woman should not have been made in the first production of things. For the Philosopher says (*De Generatione*, ii, 3) that the *female is a misbegotten male*. But nothing misbegotten or defective should

\*Excerpts from this manuscript were read as part of the conference

have been in the first production of things. Therefore, woman should not have been made at that first production.<sup>1</sup>

The very fact that an objection taken from Aristotle could be phrased in such a way immediately makes one suspicious that Thomas may have a low opinion of woman because the objection is really equivalent to asking: "How could God, who was presumably involved in the first production of things, have created such an inferior creature?" As a matter of fact, Thomas' answer confirms the justice of our suspicions; for in his reply,<sup>2</sup> he begins by a categorical affirmation: "As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten." For Thomas, there is no necessity to prove this statement, but simply to explain how it comes about. This leads us to Aquinas' theory, which has been labeled "a biological naturalism."

The active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of a women comes from a defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence; such as that of a south wind which is moist, as the Philosopher observes (*De Generatione Animal.*, iv. 2).<sup>3</sup>

How could Thomas state more clearly the essential inferiority of woman. Her very existence implies inferiority; it would almost seem that she is a result of chance ("a south wind blowing"), and an "incidental being," as Simone de Beauvoir characterized Thomas's description.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, Thomas is quick to see that this objection of woman's being almost an afterthought, "beside the intention of nature"<sup>5</sup> is something that has to be explained if the Lord, Who is evidently responsible for the differentiation of sexes, is not to be blamed:

As regards human nature in general, woman is not misbegotten, but is included in nature's intention as directed to the work of generation. Now the general intention of nature depends on God, Who is the universal author of nature. Therefore, in producing nature, God formed not only the male, but also the female.<sup>6</sup>

In other places, Thomas will attempt to answer the difficulty by distinguishing the "intention of a particular nature" from "the intention of a universal nature,"<sup>7</sup> or a "first intention" from a "second intention of nature."<sup>8</sup> The reason always given to justify the permission of a defective human being of the female sex is that "both sexes are required for the perfection of the human species,"<sup>9</sup> or woman understood as "a helper in the work of generation."<sup>10</sup>

We will come back to this point later in considering woman's inferiority to man in the work of generation, but suffice it for now to see that Thomas states unequivocally that there was really only one reason why it was necessary that woman should even exist at all—generation:

It was necessary for a woman to be made, as the Scripture says, as a *helper* to man; not, indeed, as a helpmate in other works, as some say, since man

can be more efficiently helped by another man in other works, but as a helper in the work of generation.<sup>11</sup>

Nothing could be clearer than Thomas's statement that "when nature is unable to bring a thing to a greater perfection it brings it to a lesser; thus when it cannot produce a male, it produces a female, which is a misbegotten male. (*De Generatione Animal.*, ii, 3)"<sup>12</sup>

Although it is undeniable that for Thomas woman is inferior to man, yet in his opinion, her existence is not totally detrimental to mankind, since she fulfills limited tasks. Dr. Margaret Maxey claims that "Thomas is led to interpret woman's biological defectiveness . . . as a divinely willed asset: woman contributes to the common good by generating members of the human species."<sup>13</sup>

As we have already intimated, St. Thomas sees no difficulty in what a modern author interpreting Thomas has described as a "divinely ordained hierarchy in relations between man and woman,"<sup>14</sup> in which the woman definitely occupies a lower place. She was "made on purpose, deliberately planned by God."<sup>15</sup> It is quite clear for Thomas that if the primitive state of man were considered, i.e., if man had not sinned, if he had remained as he came forth from God, then "there would have been some inequality, at least as regards sex, because generation depends upon diversity of sex,"<sup>16</sup> and he frankly states in a reply to an objection:

The cause of inequality could be on the part of God; not indeed that He would punish some and reward others, but that he would exalt some above others . . . Inequality might also arise on the part of nature without any defect of nature.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas is perfectly consistent in his doctrine. Whether he considers the production of woman in general or Eve in particular, his verdict is always the same. For example, he asks the question of whether in the primitive state, a condition of perfect innocence, of at least relative perfection, woman would have even been born. His two objections and his own replies are instructive not only in corroborating our previous assessment of Thomas' judgment concerning woman's inferiority, but also in instructing us regarding Thomas' opinion of man's power in the state of innocence.

Objection 1. It would seem that in the primitive state woman would not have been born. For the Philosopher says (*De Gener. Animal.*, ii. 3) that woman is a misbegotten male, as though she were a product outside the purpose of nature. But in that state nothing would have been unnatural in human generation. Therefore in that state woman would not have been born.

Objection 2. Further, every agent produces its like, unless prevented by insufficient power or ineptness of matter: thus a small fire cannot burn green wood. But in generation the active force is in the male. Since, therefore, in the state of innocence man's active force was not subject to defect,



nor was there inept matter on the part of the woman, it seems that males would always have been born.

Reply Objection 1. Woman is said to be a misbegotten male, as being a product outside the purpose of nature considered in the individual case: but not against the purpose of universal nature, as above explained.

Reply Objection 2. The generation of woman is not occasioned either by a defect of the active force or by inept matter, as the objection supposes; but sometimes by an extrinsic accidental cause: thus the Philosopher says (*De Animal, Histor.*, vi. 19): The northern wind favors the generation of males, and the southern wind that of females: sometimes also by some impression in the soul (of the parents), which may easily have some effect on the body (of the child). Especially was this the case in the state of innocence, when the body was more subject to the soul; so that by the mere will of the parent the sex of the offspring might be diversified.<sup>18</sup>

If Eve, as the first woman, is considered by Thomas, his interpretation of her only confirms his conviction of woman's inferiority. Unlike his great predecessor, Augustine, Thomas does not dwell on Eve's greater guilt in the Fall<sup>19</sup> (we shall see his doctrine on this a little later); he simply considers the biblical evidence of Genesis, in connection with Pauline interpretations, as clearly indicative of woman's lower place. Genesis interpreted by Thomas clearly means: God approves the primacy of the male.<sup>20</sup>

St. Thomas with the tradition observes that man, the male, was created first and that as the Apostle Himself said, "The man is not for the woman, but the woman is for the man (1 Cor., 11:9).<sup>21</sup> And in the actual creation was not Eve taken from Adam's rib to show not only that she was a helpmate like unto himself ("Flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone") but also inferior as having been made from him? It seems to me that Thomas even goes beyond St. Paul in his interpretation of woman's subordinate position when he gives his reasons why woman (Eve) should have been made from man. The first reason sees a special likeness between God and the first man and a consequent dignity, in which the woman does not share:

First, in order to give the first man a certain dignity consisting in this, that as God is the principle of the whole universe, so the first man, in likeness to God, was the principle of the whole human race. Wherefore Paul says that God made the whole human race from one (Acts, viii, 26).<sup>22</sup>

The third reason makes it clear that as God is the principle of Adam, so Adam is the principle or head of Eve.

As the Philosopher says (*Ethic*, viii, 12), the human male and female are united, not only for generation, as with other animals, but also for the purpose of domestic life in which each has his or her particular duty, and in

which the man is the head of the woman. Therefore, it was suitable for the woman to be made out of man, as out of her principle.<sup>23</sup>

Even in the minutest details, Thomas insists that Adam (man) is greater than Eve (woman). St. Thomas interprets *Genesis* as saying that the male was not created in paradise, but placed there afterwards. Only then was the woman made from man. Now if it is objected that this should not have been because "man is greater than woman and therefore much more should man have been made in paradise,"<sup>24</sup> Thomas will answer that "woman was made in paradise not by reason of her own dignity, but on account of the dignity of the principle from which her body was formed."<sup>25</sup> No wonder Simone de Beauvoir could castigate both Thomas and Aristotle as defining woman negatively, i.e., in relation to the virile principle, on which she depends, but whose virility she lacks:

Woman is woman through the lack of virility: that is the fate to which every female individual must submit without being able to modify it.<sup>26</sup>

The logical consequence of all that we have read in Thomas up to now is that woman's nature and actions flowing from that nature are somehow inferior to man's nature and actions, notwithstanding the fact that nowhere does Thomas deny that there is only one human nature, shared in by male and female. As it was put so bluntly by Ferdinand Prat, S.J., in his *Theology of St. Paul*, woman "is like the image of an image."<sup>27</sup> In other words, she is almost like a divine afterthought, one who is not quite a person in the same way her husband is. Indeed Thomas makes this point quite clear. While not denying the intellectual (human) nature of woman, whereby woman, like man, is an image of God; yet, he claims that somehow man is an image of God in a way woman is not, because woman must be referred to man:<sup>28</sup>

Reply Objection 1. The image of God in its principal signification, namely the intellectual nature, is found both in man and in woman. Hence after the words, To the image of God He created him, it is added, Male and female He created them (*Gen.*, i. 27). Moreover it is said *them* in the plural, as Augustine (*Gen. ad lit.*, iii. 22) remarks, lest it should be thought that both sexes were united in one individual. But in a secondary sense the image of God is found in man, and not in woman: for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature. So when the Apostle had said that man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man, he adds his reason for saying this: For man is not of woman, but woman of man; and man was not created for woman but woman for man.

If, for Thomas, woman is inferior to man in not being the image of God in the same sense that he is, does this mean that the soul, whereby an individual of the human race is like to God, his Image, is different, less perfect, inferior in woman as compared with her male counterpart? Father George H. Tavard surveying the

doctrine of Thomas in his recent book, *Woman in Christian Tradition*, has no doubt that it does.<sup>29</sup>

Because for an Aristotelian the soul is the form of the body, in Thomas's eyes, the female soul must be different from the male soul. And as the female body, in the biology of Aristotle-Aquinas, is a freak of nature, definitely inferior to the physical perfection of the male body, the feminine soul must also be less perfect than the male soul. Although Thomas is far less pessimistic than Augustine as to the effects of sin and does not see a causality, but only an instrumentality, between concupiscence and the transmission of original sin, the overall impact of his thought has been more devastating for the Christian conception of womanhood. Both agree that woman is made only for procreation; she is a helpmate for man in the only area where he cannot be served better by a male. But while Augustine finds no inferiority of woman at the level of her soul, Thomas extends to her soul the inferiority of her body.

This inferiority of soul is shown by a "greater weakness than in man."<sup>30</sup> Casual examples, sometimes even ludicrous, show how engrained was Thomas' opinion of the weakness of woman. If he speaks about contemplation, he will gratuitously offer the comment, basing himself on St. Augustine that "woman denotes the lower reason."<sup>31</sup> If he considers ceremonial precepts of the Old Law and refers to *Numbers XIX*, in which God commanded the Israelites "to take a red cow in memory of the sin they had committed in worshipping a calf," he will come to the preposterous conclusion that:

The figurative reason of this sacrifice was that the red cow signified Christ in respect of his assumed weakness, denoted by the female sex; while the color of the cow designated the blood of His Passion.<sup>32</sup>

Since Thomas was an intellectual and set such store by reason, it is not surprising that he would find a particular note of woman's inferiority in her weakness in reasoning powers. For Thomas, woman was unstable of reason and this in some way was to be attributed to her weakness of body. Notice the patronizing tone of Thomas' description of woman's weakness in regard to continence (control of bodily appetites) and his easy dismissal of what he would consider unusual cases:<sup>33</sup>

The human soul is the form of the body, and has certain powers which make use of bodily organs. The operations of these organs conduce somewhat to those operations of the soul which are accomplished without bodily instruments, namely to the acts of the intellect and of the will, in so far as the intellect receives from the senses, and the will is urged by passions of the sensitive appetite. Accordingly, since woman, as regards the body, has a weak temperament, the result is that for the most part, *whatever she holds to, she holds to it weakly*; although in rare cases the opposite occurs, according to Prov., xxxi. 10, Who shall find a valiant woman? And since small



and weak things are accounted as though they were not, the Philosopher speaks of women as though they had not the firm judgment of reason, although the contrary happens in some women. Hence he states that we do not describe women as being continent, because they are vacillating through being unstable of reason, and are easily led, so that they follow their passions readily.

St. Thomas did not even use the fiction of "feminine intuition" to explain instances where women seem to reason as well as, or even better than men. Consider the following case: St. Thomas poses the fact that contemplation (or meditation, rational consideration) is the proper intrinsic cause of devotion. He notices and brings up the fact that "devotion is frequently found in men of simplicity and members of the female sex, who are defective in contemplation."<sup>34</sup> Will he answer the objection by conceding in any way that rational thinking can also be exercised by females? Remember they must do it if they are to be said to have devotion, according to the Thomistic theory. No, the answer is to be found in the fact that "in simple souls and women devotion abounds by repressing pride."<sup>35</sup>

Thomas' conviction regarding the lack of rationality on the part of woman leads to some startling conclusions. If he were living in our day, he would have no difficulty whatsoever in interpreting the evidence that Miss Mary Woods, the President's secretary, gave before Judge Sirica. He would simply discount it or perhaps better still, he would not even have permitted the good lady to testify:<sup>36</sup>

I answer that, as stated above, the authority of evidence is not infallible but probable; and consequently the evidence for one side is weakened by whatever strengthens the probability of the other. *Now the reliability of a person's evidence is weakened, sometimes indeed on account of some fault of his, as in the case of unbelievers and persons of evil repute, as well as those who are guilty of a public crime and who are not allowed even to accuse; sometimes, without any fault on his part, and this owing either to a defect in the reason, as in the case of children, imbeciles and women, or to personal feeling, as in the case of enemies, or persons united by family or household ties . . .*

How low can a woman sink? Because of her inferior position, she cannot be held to be at fault in giving unreliable testimony. She really can't help it. And lest this be thought of simply as a ludicrous opinion from the past, it might be well to observe with Elizabeth Farians in her "Status of Woman in the Church"<sup>37</sup> that "there are at least twenty canons in the Code of Canon Law which not only restrict women, but which also insult and degrade them. These canons range all the way from classifying women with the minors and insane to excluding them from the priesthood."

Although it is true, as we have already mentioned, that St. Thomas' focus unlike that of St. Augustine's, is not on woman as a sinner; he was not uninfluenced by



the tradition in this regard, which saw the woman as the weaker creature, the seducer, and regarded Adam as the stronger of the two sexes, who could have resisted the devil's lies but who was led astray more out of love for his wife than out of a desire for his own advantage. Eve is "a symbol of all the failings of humanity, especially of women."<sup>38</sup> Thomas, of course, did not need any theory about woman's sin to justify her subordinate place, but he agrees with the tradition in seeing the greater punishments of the woman as a result of her greater guilt, and especially the penalty of an intensification and confirmation of her subordination to man.<sup>39</sup>

Punishment corresponds to guilt. Now the woman was more grievously punished than the man, as appears from Gen., iii. Therefore, she sinned more grievously than the man.<sup>40</sup>

Considering the fact that Thomas is convinced that one sins more grievously inasmuch as one has more knowledge,<sup>41</sup> or has a certain position of eminence as Adam had as "the head of the woman"<sup>42</sup> it would seem that he could not possibly consider the woman's sin as greater merely because of his own subjective view that she received greater punishment. As a matter of fact, he does attempt a further explanation.<sup>43</sup> Actually, the only way that he can attribute more guilt to the woman is by means of subtle distinctions. In the first place, he is forced to admit that "if we consider the condition attaching to these persons, the man's sin is the more grievous." Why? Quite frankly, "because he was more perfect than the woman."<sup>44</sup> But that is not the full story. Thomas, quite consistent with the rest of his treatise on sin, claims that "the gravity of a sin depends on the species, rather than on a circumstance of that sin," and then proceeds to show that if Adam and Eve's sins were both sins of pride and therefore in the same genus, yet, as "regards the species of pride, the woman sinned more grievously." Let us consider the three reasons given by Thomas:

But as regards the species of pride, the woman sinned more grievously, for three reasons. First, because she was more *puffed up than the man*. For the woman believed in the serpent's persuasive words, namely that God had forbidden them to eat of the tree, lest they should become like to Him; so that in wishing to attain to God's likeness by eating of the forbidden fruit, her pride rose to the height of desiring to obtain *something against God's will*. On the other hand, the man did not believe this to be true; wherefore he did not wish to attain to God's likeness against God's will: but his pride consisted in wishing to attain thereto by his own power. Secondly, the woman not only herself sinned, but suggested sin to the man; wherefore she sinned against both God and her neighbor. Thirdly, the man's sin was diminished by the fact that as Augustine says (*Gen. ad lit.*, xi. 42), he consented to the sin out of a certain friendly good-will, on account of which a man sometimes will offend God rather than make an enemy of his friend. That he ought not to have done so is shown by the just issue of the Divine sentence.

It is therefore evident that the woman's sin was more grievous than the man's.

Strangely enough, even though woman is the greater sinner, she is only employed as an instrument. Consider the following objection and Thomas' response.<sup>45</sup>

Objection 1. The order of the first temptation was not fitting. For just as in the order of nature the angel was above man, so was the man above the woman. Now sin came upon man through an angel: therefore in like manner it should have come upon the woman through the man; in other words the woman should have been tempted by the man, and not the other way about.

Reply Objection 1. In the act of tempting the devil was by way of principal agent; whereas the woman was employed as an instrument of temptation in bringing about the downfall of the man, 1) both because the woman was weaker than the man, and consequently more liable to be deceived, and because, 2) on account of her union with man, the devil was able to deceive the man especially through her. Now there is no parity between principal agent and instrument, because the principal agent must exceed in power, which is not requisite in the instrumental agent.

It seems evident that we have not only a question of respect for the interpretations of Augustine, the Fathers, and the tradition working, but a kind of isogesis, rather than exegesis, influenced by what Thomas actually thought of woman's place, conceived in a Middle Ages' mentality.

Here we must note a particularly paradoxical aspect of woman's sinfulness. Even if woman sinned more grievously than man, still precisely because she was neither as perfect as man, nor in his privileged position in regard to human generation, her sinfulness could not have the same disastrous effects on the human race, at least as this sin relates to the transmission of original sin. St. Thomas asks "whether, if Eve, and not Adam, had sinned, their children would have contracted original sin,"<sup>46</sup> and he answers:

I answer that, The solution of this question is made clear by what has been said. For it has been (A.1) stated that original sin is transmitted by the first parent in so far as he is the *mover in the begetting of his children*: wherefore it has been said (A.4) that if anyone were begotten materially only, of human flesh, they would not contract original sin. Now it is evident that in the opinion of Philosophers, the active principle of generation is from the father, while the mother provides the matter. Therefore original sin is contracted, not from the mother, but from the father: so that, accordingly, if Eve, and not Adam, had sinned, their children would not contract original sin: whereas, if Adam, and not Eve, had sinned, they would contract it.

St. Thomas uncritically accepts the theory that various uncleannesses, including what he calls "the uncleanness of a woman," were "figures of various sins." Shock-

ing as such an interpretation may be to the sensitive modern mentality, yet the fact that Thomas accepted it gives some indication of the place that he ascribed to woman.<sup>47</sup>

The uncleanness of a woman suffering from a flow of blood denotes the uncleanness of idolatry, on account of the blood which is offered up. The uncleanness of sexual intercourse and of the woman in child-birth signifies the uncleanness of original sin. The uncleanness of the woman in her periods signifies the uncleanness of a mind that is sensualized by pleasure.

Perhaps even more startling than the derogatory interpretation of the ritual uncleanness of the Old Testament is his use, or abuse, of the misogyny of the writer of the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*. He is treating a question which is not even related as such to woman: whether outward pain is greater than interior sorrow, and he uses a misogynous scriptural quotation to sustain his argument.<sup>48</sup>

On the contrary, It is written (*Ecclus.*, xxv. 17): The sadness of the heart is every wound (Douay,-plague), and the wickedness of a woman is all evil. Therefore, just as the wickedness of a woman surpasses all other wickedness, as the text implies; so sadness of the heart surpasses every outward wound.

Unfortunately this is not just an aside because Thomas makes a concrete application of this doctrine when he considers the question of public teaching on the part of woman. He will not sanction it "Lest men's minds be enticed to lust, for it is written, 'Her conversation burneth as fire.' (*Ecclus.* 9:11)"<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps nothing shows how engrained the notion of woman's inferiority is for Thomas than the examples he uses in almost every section of his theological tracts. What is less sexless than a consideration of the Holy Trinity; yet when Thomas ask the question: "Whether it must be said that the three persons are of one essence," he uses as an illustration: "That woman is of a *handsome figure*; or this man is of *perfect virtue*."<sup>50</sup> If Thomas considers God's absolute power and asks the questions: Can God make the past not to have been? Again his choice of examples falls upon woman, and fallen woman at that: "God can remove all corruption of mind and body from a woman, but the fact that she has been corrupt cannot be removed from her."<sup>51</sup> If he proceeds to the treatise on religion and turns to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, he observes almost as an instinctive reaction:

Because the holocaust was the most perfect kind of sacrifice, none but a male was offered for the holocaust *because the female is an imperfect animal*.<sup>52</sup>

If he discusses citizenship, he is careful to observe that "women are not competent to be citizens absolutely speaking."<sup>53</sup> Nothing seems to be outside his scope as far as illustrating woman's inferiority. He even cites the case of the bride who is silent through bashfulness when her parents give her away to the bridegroom.<sup>54</sup> Thomas



excuses her if she shows no dissent. "The words of the parents are taken as being the maid's, for the fact that she does not contradict them is a sign that they are her words." He comments on the special care needed to see that a woman is preserved from the vice of drunkenness since she is not forceful enough to resist pleasures. Modern women will find Thomas' classification here outrageous:<sup>55</sup>

Virtue includes relationship to two things, to the contrary vices which it removes, and to the end to which it leads. Accordingly a particular virtue is more requisite in certain persons for two reasons. First, because they are more prone to the *concupiscences which need to be restrained by virtue, and to the vices which are removed by virtue*. In this respect, sobriety is most requisite in the young and in women, because concupiscence of pleasure thrives in the young on account of the heat of youth, while in women there is not sufficient strength of mind to resist concupiscence. Hence, according to Valerius Maximus, among the ancient Romans women drank no wine.

As derogatory as it might be to classify women with youth swayed by passions or with imbeciles, as he does on other occasions, I would suggest that it is the pattern of depreciation which is most inimical to women, for from the time that woman is created until the final Resurrection of the Dead, Thomas finds woman's inferiority a given fact, if not sometimes a bothersome worry. In order to justify Adam and Eve against the objection to marriage from the fact that no couple was ever related to one another as they were, since Eve was created from the rib of Adam, it did not suffice for Aquinas to demonstrate that this carnal generation was unlike any other and did not create a father-daughter relationship. He had to bring in the divine operation which could have produced anything it wanted from Adam: Thomas argues that Eve was

not formed from him in the natural way a man begets his like, but by divine operation, since from Adam's rib a horse might have been formed in the same way as Eve was.<sup>56</sup>

This is certainly a grotesque representation, but it does emphasize the gratuity of woman in the Divine Plan as seen by Thomas. If her only real necessity is for generation, then all the illustrations given are explainable, and it is quite logical that Thomas should wonder aloud if women will continue to exist when eschatological perfection has been reached at the time of the Resurrection. His answer is much more positive than that of St. Augustine whom he quotes as an authority,<sup>57</sup> who opined: "Those are wiser, seemingly, who doubt not that both sexes will rise again."<sup>58</sup> Although Thomas in the body of the article writes that a "diversity is becoming to the perfection of the species, the different degrees whereof are filled by this very difference of sex and quantity," which might seem to imply inequality based precisely on sex, yet in the answers to the objections which prompted the question, he maintains that "strength of soul will be in all, both men and women,"



and that woman's frailty of nature, as regards both body and soul, will no longer hold, because "the difference in those points will be not on account of the differences of sex, but by reason of the differences of merits."<sup>59</sup> Let us end on this positive note—at least in the next life, which will last forever, women will not be inferior!

Up to now we have only alluded in passing to the fact that if woman is inferior in her very existence, it is a logical consequence that she should be so in the process of generation. The point has already been made that her necessity is related to the generative process, *and to that only*, "since man can be more efficiently helped by another man in other works."<sup>60</sup> But Thomas insists further on woman's inferiority, for in the one thing for which she is necessary she is still deficient, inferior to man. It would really be a mistake to assume that Thomas grants woman anything but a deficient role even in her speciality. If fathers and mothers are both to be "loved as principles of our natural origin," yet "strictly speaking, the father is to be loved more." Why? Aquinas replies: "Because the father is the principle in a more excellent way than the mother . . . he is the active principle while the mother is a passive and material principle."<sup>61</sup> In so many ways, he categorically affirms that the "father is a more noble principle than the mother" in human generation.<sup>62</sup> Why? Thomas never tires of explaining it in terms of activity and passivity:

Among perfect animals, the active power of generation belongs to the male sex, and the passive power to the female.<sup>63</sup>

For Thomas, it is equivalent to say active, or more noble part, and passive, or deficient part.<sup>64</sup> In his theory the active agent, the man, makes "use of the woman," (to use the depreciating expressions which Thomas and his contemporaries used).<sup>65</sup> The idea that the situation could be approached from the woman's angle: "that there is only one thing that woman need men for would never have occurred to him."<sup>66</sup> Thomas' biological explanation replies on Aristotle's:

The active power, as Aristotle said, is in the male semen. The woman provides the material element which has so far a vegetable kind of life . . . This material is transformed by the power in the male semen so as to bring into existence a sensitive being.<sup>67</sup>

One can see the obvious reference to the Aristotelian theory of matter and form: Thomas sees woman's contribution as providing the matter which the form transforms and animates. Perhaps a good analogy is the one provided by Arlene Swidler in her attempt to interpret Thomas. She refers to the growth of plants and claims that for Thomas, "the male role is like the seed, the female like the earth. The female simply nourishes what the male has planted."<sup>68</sup> Although this may be an exaggeration, it does bring out woman's essential passivity and consequent inferiority in the birth process.

This inferiority of the woman is caustically referred to by Rosemary Lauer, when

with some justice, she described woman as a kind of obstacle to be overcome in the generation process:

Women, in fact, offered a resistance to the implantation of the human form; and if the father was not sufficiently virile to overcome this resistance completely, his offspring might resemble their mother thus presenting all their lives a silent testimony to their father's inadequacy.<sup>69</sup>

As Father Tavad explains so well,<sup>70</sup> the sources of these ideas in Thomas are to be found in the anthropology and biology of Aristotle, especially in his *De Generatione Animalium*, in which there is an application of hylomorphism to the process of generation:

The efficiency of the form depends on the balance of docility and resistance in the recipient matter. When there is no resistance, the outcome perfectly reflects the form, and the child is male; where matter—that is, the woman—resists, the outcome is unlike the form and the child is female. In milder cases, the sex is still male although the face looks like the mother's.<sup>71</sup>

The Scholastics follow Aristotle but insist that the being which fulfills the function of the form should be considered the more perfect, the head of the other. There can be no question for them (and this includes St. Thomas) of two coequal principles. The male principle is perfect, and the other fulfills itself only by cooperation with male perfection.<sup>72</sup> In brief, there can be no doubt for Thomas that woman is inferior in generation, “that the father ranks above the mother.”<sup>73</sup> We can affirm without fear of contradiction that St. Thomas is convinced that man is above woman in dignity and that this is so by a divine plan, and therefore, unchangeable.<sup>74</sup>

Just as there can be no doubt that Thomas considers woman inferior to man, so too is it undeniable that Aquinas considers woman subject to man. While most of Thomas' references will relate to the husband-wife situation, it will become clear in this section that Thomas ascribes a universal subjection of man to woman on account of the woman's inferiority.

Aquinas states categorically that the “woman is in need of man not only on account of generation but also for governing.”<sup>75</sup> He compares man to woman as ruler to subject basing himself on Aristotle's *Politics*.<sup>76</sup> As for the wife, she “is under her husband's authority” purely and simple,<sup>77</sup> and “she should be ruled by her husband, as Augustine says.”<sup>78</sup>

Through the years, there have been many attempts to attempt to describe woman's subjection to man as head of the house in such a way as to suggest that it implies no inferiority on the part of the woman, but simply corresponds to the imperatives of social living if people are to live together in such a way as to promote the common good of the family group. Thus Father Henry Sattler, in *A Philosophy of Submission*<sup>79</sup> points out that there must be a head in the family; you simply can't have two

heads. Now, even though he admits that woman is not intellectually inferior to man, the woman, he claims, is more fitted to be "the heart of the home," and not the head.

Similarly, one of the most popular commentators on St. Thomas in recent years, Father Walter Farrell, O.P., made a vain attempt to exculpate Thomas from any accusation of imputing inferiority to woman because of the subjection demanded by St. Thomas. He begins his defense by defending St. Thomas from a charge which, to my knowledge no one brings up against him seriously; namely, that woman is the slave of man, purely and simply subject to man for his utility. He then proceeds to insist that:

the domestic subjection is an ordinary requisite for order; it is subjection, not inferiority. Of course, when more than one free individual is living together and working for a common end there must be someone in charge, one governor, one director. Certainly this subjection is not inferiority; . . . Rather, this subjection is a statement of difference, of unequal gifts that counter-balance each other, making of man and woman a balanced whole. Among the peculiar gifts of man, Thomas mentions discretion of reason, which beyond doubt means excellence in speculative reasoning; leaving the obvious corollary to be drawn, namely, that woman excels in practical reason.<sup>80</sup>

The most charitable thing that we can say about Father Farrell's explanation of Thomas' stand is that it represents an ingenuous attempt to reconcile Thomas and our modern world (at the least the world of the 1940's), but that it really is not Thomas, but a Thomistic reappraisal. An examination of Thomas' doctrine can leave no room for doubt. On one occasion he asked the question: Whether in the state of innocence man would have been master over man? He distinguishes two kinds of mastery, one involved in the relation of master to slave and the other concerned with man as "master of a free subject, by directing him either towards his proper welfare, or to the common good," and shows that the latter, not the former, would have existed in paradise "because man is naturally a social being" and even in paradise, "he would have led a social life." He then points out that:

a social life cannot exist among a number of people unless under the presidency of one to look after the common good; for many, as such, seek many things, whereas one attends only to one. Wherefore, the Philosopher says, in the beginning of the Politics, and wherever many things are directed to one, we shall always find one at the head directing them. Secondly, if one man surpassed another in knowledge and virtue, this would not have been fitting unless these gifts conduced to the benefit of others, according to 1 Pet. iv. 10, As every man hath received grace, ministering the same one to another. Wherefore Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei*, xix. 14); Just men command not by the love of domineering, but by the service of counsel: and (*ibid* 15): The natural order of things requires this; and thus did God make man.<sup>81</sup>



Now it is precisely the fact that "the man is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of man" and that man is superior in knowledge and virtue which makes his position of dominance unchallengeable in the family, i.e., man is always the ruler and woman is always the subject because woman is inferior. One simply cannot use the argument of the necessity of having a president or head for any social group to exculpate Thomas from the charge of imputing subjection to woman because of inferiority. This will become abundantly clear as we consider various evidences of woman's inferiority which Thomas adduces as justification for her subjection to man.<sup>82</sup>

Since "man is the head of the woman," Thomas maintains that "it was suitable for the woman to be made out of man, as out of her principle." This gives "the first man a certain dignity consisting in this, that as God is the principle of the whole universe, so the first man, in likeness to God was the principle of the whole human race."<sup>83</sup> The comparison between Adam, the man, and God intimates more clearly than explicit words the woman's subjection to man. However, Thomas makes his point of view as explicit as possible when he states that even in paradise, in the state of innocence the subjection of woman to man would have existed. Note that there is no appeal here to the necessity of a head because every group must have one. No, the head must be the male, for a reason which was perfectly obvious to Thomas:

The subjection of woman to man results from the perfection of the male and the imperfection of the female sex.<sup>84</sup>

The subjection can be very well called "ontological," since there is not merely a certain subjection for the common good, but a woman's very being makes her a subject. Although the reason given by St. Thomas for woman's formation from the rib of Adam specifically excludes the idea that woman is a slave of man:

Nor was it right for her to be subject to man's contempt as his slave, and so she was not made from his feet.<sup>85</sup>

still a modern author can speak about St. Thomas' subjecting woman more profoundly than slaves, "for in her subjection is natural as it is not in a slave."<sup>86</sup> Whatever the validity of this objection, it remains true that for Thomas woman's subjection is in the natural order of things because of woman's "frailty of nature as regards vigor of soul and strength of body."<sup>87</sup> Sometimes Thomas insists upon woman's weakness and the necessity of providing for her welfare as a reason for her subjection, but it is clear that this is founded in her inferiority: It would be contrary to good order (unnatural), Thomas claims, ". . . if some were not governed by other wiser than themselves. So by a kind of subjection, woman is naturally subject to man, because in man the power of reason predominates."<sup>88</sup> He goes on to state that "inequality among men" is "not excluded by the state of innocence." It is clear from the objection to which Thomas is responding that there is no denial of the fundamental thesis: "woman is naturally of less strength and dignity than man" because "the agent is always more honorable than the patient."



Thomas does see the natural subjection of woman confirmed and even intensified as a punishment for sin.<sup>89</sup> He faces the difficulty of how the subjection of woman to man can be described as a punishment for sin when this subjection "results from the perfection of the male, and the imperfection of the female sex," and responds:

The subjection of the woman to her husband is to be understood as inflicted in punishment of the woman, not as to his head-ship (since even before sin the man was the head and governor of the woman), but as to having now to obey her husband's will even against her own.<sup>90</sup>

A quick perusal of the many examples of woman's subjection in Thomas' theological tracts show how thoroughly it infiltrated his theological thinking. Discussing contemplation, Thomas will maintain that "the higher reason which is assigned to contemplation is compared to the lower reason which is assigned to action, and the husband is compared to his wife, who should be ruled by her husband, as St. Augustine says (*De Trin.* xxi 3, 7, 12)."<sup>91</sup> One asks: Why the comparison, which has so little to do with the article, unless the doctrine of woman's subjection to man was so clear that it would clarify a more abstruse doctrine.<sup>92</sup>

Even when there is a question of adultery, the offense of the guilty wife is described as being against nature "with regard to the authority of the person under whose authority she is placed."<sup>93</sup> This subjection is so much a part of woman that even if she becomes a public sinner and a solemn penance is required on her part, then special provision should be made for her lest in doing a prescribed penance, she rid herself of the sign of her subjection. Consider how deeply engrained the idea of woman's subjection must be for Thomas to have posed this objection and to have responded as he did:<sup>94</sup>

*Objection 1*—When a solemn penance is imposed on a man, he has to cut his hair off. But this is unbecoming to a woman because of 1 Cor., 11:15. Therefore, there should be no solemn penance for her.

*Ad 1*—A Woman's hair is a sign of her subjection, while a man's is not. Therefore, it is not proper to cut her hair when doing penance as it is for a man.

According to Thomas, woman is so subject to man that there are many things that she simply cannot do. Some might appear as minor restrictions on her liberty such as her inability to give alms without her husband's consent,<sup>95</sup> the impossibility of her making vows without her husband's permission,<sup>96</sup> the cancelling of vows of a woman because she is under the authority of husband and parents,<sup>97</sup> or even the rule that she should not baptize if a man is available "because the head of the woman is the man . . . and the head of the man is Christ." (1 Cor. 11:3)<sup>98</sup> Other restrictions, on the contrary, appear more demeaning since they more directly concern woman's status in the Church.

For woman, according to Thomas, there could be no ministry of the word, no

official teaching, and certainly no priesthood, because such a role would be a fundamental contradiction of their God-willed subjection to man. St. Thomas is denying the ministry of teaching (which he calls the grace of the word) to women, relies heavily on St. Paul.<sup>99</sup>

The Apostle says (1 Cor., xiv, 34): Let women keep silence in the churches, and (1 Tim., ii, 12): I suffer not a woman to teach. Now this pertains especially to the grace of the word. Therefore, the grace of the word is not becoming to women.

In the body of the same article, Thomas answers the question directly. After allowing for the possibility of a woman's teaching privately, he definitely excludes women from publicly addressing themselves to the whole church. The first of the reasons he gives for this exclusion is instructive. (The other two while interesting: incitation to lust and lack of wisdom in women, as a rule, need not detain us here; they may be examples of woman's inferiority, but not of her subjection.)

First and chiefly, on account of the condition attaching to the female sex, *whereby woman should be subject to man, as appears from Gen. iii. 16.* Now teaching and persuading publicly in the church belong not to subjects but to the prelates (although men who are subject may do these things if they be so commissioned, because *their subjection is not a result of their natural sex, as it is with women, but of some thing supervening by accident*).

By far the most serious exclusion due to woman's subjection to man is from the possibility of receiving the priesthood. As far as Thomas is concerned, a woman is radically incapable of the priesthood. He maintains that even if everything were done which is necessary for the valid conferring of orders, a woman simply would not receive the sacrament. Thomas gives as a reason the absolute requirement of the Sacrament of Orders that it signify "eminence." As Thomas says,<sup>100</sup>

Since a Sacrament is a sign, not only the thing, but the signification of the thing is required in all sacramental actions.

Thomas maintains that one can only have the thing (the entire sacramental rite, the intention of conferring etc.), but one cannot possibly have what is signified by orders:

Since it is not possible in the female sex to signify eminence of degree, for a woman is in a state of subjection, it follows that she cannot receive the sacrament of orders.<sup>101</sup>

Perhaps in no other place is woman's inferiority and subjection shown so devastatingly as in her exclusion from the special service of God and her fellow men which is inherent in the Christian priesthood.

Before investigating whether it is possible to suggest a corection of Thomas' doc-

trine on women by an appeal to other places in his theological works, let us refer to the modern criticisms of Thomas. Modern research has utterly destroyed the myths of male activity and female passivity based as they were on faulty biology. The theory of woman's inferiority, either as the object of generation or as a partner in the generative process, has lost all scientific credibility.<sup>102</sup> Of course, Thomas' error, while almost universally held, did have its opponents among the ancient Greeks and even Thomas' contemporaries, as George Tavard convincingly demonstrates,<sup>103</sup> but still it remained for our times to utterly demolish the supposition of woman's inferiority due to biology.<sup>104</sup>

Along theological lines we meet a corresponding rejection of the subjection and inferiority that Thomas ascribes to woman whether because of his interpretation of the Genesis story or St. Paul's application of it to the circumstances of the first century Christians. "A divinely ordained hierarchy" sanctioning the subordination of women is flatly rejected. The assumption that to be first created entails precedence in dignity and authority is questioned on evolutionary and theological grounds.<sup>105</sup> Along with many others, Cardinal Leger interprets the account of Eve's creation from the rib of Adam in such a way as to stress her essential equality. He points out that scholars have shown that "the Sumerian word 'TI' and its corresponding hieroglyph can mean equally 'rib' and 'life';" and he concludes that:

the episode of *Genesis II* would therefore mean that woman was made out of the very life of man . . . the identity of nature between man and woman is being stressed.<sup>106</sup>

The most important thing in the Genesis story is that woman is seen as an equal part of an organic unit and, as Cardinal Leger observes,<sup>107</sup> "the fact that woman received a name so closely resembling that of man (ish, ishah) signifies, once again, equality of man and woman in dignity and nature." Even the fact that she is called a helper indicates no inferiority, as Thomas mistakenly thought. What should be accented is that woman is to man a "helper *like himself*." It is rightly observed that even the word helper indicates no inferiority. In fact, according to one scholar, we can biblically establish the fact that "helper" does not mean inferiority, for in the twenty-one times it is found in the Old Testament, helper (ezer) in 16 cases "indicates a superior who assists us."<sup>108</sup>

Thomas' interpretation of woman as being more guilty of the first sin than man, especially as measured by the greater punishment is attacked in the light of modern exegesis,<sup>109</sup> and even such a staunch traditionalist as Gertrud Le Fort points out that "it is entirely wrong to say that Eve fell because she was the weaker. The Bible story shows clearly that she was the stronger and had the ascendancy over man."<sup>110</sup> While we may think of this statement as an exaggeration in the other direction, nevertheless it shows how far we have come in rejecting Thomas' doctrine on woman. Even the traditional term used for Eve, "seducer" is now more usually ascribed to the devil himself.<sup>111</sup>



But most important of all, exegetes and theologians, reassessing the exegesis of Genesis, now declare that before the Fall the husband did not have dominion over the wife, as Thomas thought. Father John L. McKenzie would see Thomas and those who thought like him as really missing the point:<sup>112</sup>

the importance of the contrast which the story points between woman as God made her and woman as she existed. In Hebrew society also woman was a depressed class: the storyteller was not attempting a feminist reform, but he wished to state that in the beginning it was not so.

Karl Rahner, surely one of the world's leading theologians, states categorically that the sacred writer in Genesis is revealing the equality of woman, and he has no sympathy with those who see the formation of Eve from Adam's rib as a sign of her subordination.<sup>113</sup> In fact, modern interpretations in theology and exegesis show clearly that anti-feminine prejudice, which existed at the time of the sacred writings and into the Christian era down to our times, has been read retroactively into Paradise and made a patriarchy out of it. It is also extremely likely that the actual low state of marriage, and woman's place in it, had a great influence on the interpretation of the scriptural curse of the husband's dominion.<sup>114</sup>

Scriptural scholars and theologians are now also extremely conscious of the *cultural setting* of the anti-feminine texts in the New Testament, which they rightly point out as an explanation of the rules against women in the beginning Church. But, even more importantly, current theology serves us well in demythologizing the supposed biblical doctrine of the subordination of women by pointing out important principles: "it is necessary to assess a citation by its source." Applying this to New Testament citations of Old Testament passages, especially in Genesis, Karl Rahner would maintain that we have a special problem, and we simply cannot assume that a literal, anti-feminine interpretation is forever canonized by the Pauline passages St. Thomas refers to so often. Father Rahner asks:

It is really possible to use 1 Cor. 11:8-12; Eph. 5:28-30; Tim. 2:13 to prove the "literal" interpretation of the story in Genesis of the formation of Eve from Adam's rib.<sup>115</sup>

The process whereby the scholars complete their reassessment of the Bible's verdict on woman seems to be clear, at least in its main outlines, since once the old interpretation of woman's subordinate creation is not only questioned, but successfully disposed of, then even the New Testament texts, depending so much on this interpretation, must give way to the revolutionary New Testament texts. As Sidney Callahan points out, recent biblical scholarship has rediscovered the emphasis of the sacred writers upon woman's equality and has thus confirmed as the dominant Christian teaching St. Paul's assertion: "In Christ there is neither male nor female, . . . but you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28)<sup>116</sup>

There can be no doubt, that whatever the present-day failings of the Church,



inasmuch as it is only very slowly and painfully, starting along the long path of the redressment of past wrongs inflicted upon women, whereby it will make its actions conform to its insights, still the doctrine in honor is one of the equality of woman and a clear rejection of Thomas' doctrine. Let Vatican Council II speak for the Popes, especially John XXIII and Paul VI, the theologians, and the entire Christian world when it points out:<sup>117</sup>

Where they have not yet won it, women claim for themselves an equity before the law and in fact.

The Council approves of such a claim and then flatly rejects any violation of these rights:

With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent.<sup>118</sup>

*The New Catholic Encyclopedia* in its article on Woman really points out the new direction of Church thinking. Starting with a 1945 statement of Pius XII: "As children of God man and woman have a dignity in which they are absolutely equal" and "Man is not superior to woman, nor woman to man."<sup>119</sup> It states categorically: woman in union with man represents humanity; natural law manifests the self-identity of every human being as an image of God; the stereotype of social-sexual roles is invalid. The Church and society must recognize variables in individual persons and discard sexual role stereotypes or be ridiculous.<sup>120</sup>

If, in a certain sense, Thomas' doctrine on the inferiority and subordination of woman is culminated and synthesized in his exclusion of women from the priesthood, then it is only to be expected that women in the Church would see the battle for inclusion as the final stage of the Church's recognition of women's equality in fact, as well as in theory. It seems obvious that the reason given for exclusion has been discarded by modern theologians and exegetes: woman's native inferiority which precludes the possibility of exercising an office of eminence whereby she has some authority over others. So it is not surprising to find theologians and exegetes agreeing on the fact, against Thomas, that it is only a man-made custom which excludes woman from the priesthood. Already back in 1963 in a work prepared for Vatican II, a Swiss woman, Dr. Heinzelmann, drawing upon St. Thomas' psychology and metaphysics, pointed out in her *Frau und Konzil* that woman's soul does not differ from man's and therefore can receive the sacramental character of ordination as well as his.<sup>121</sup> Some think that in the last decade all the genetic and theological difficulties connected with woman's supposed inferiority have been so overcome that there really remains specious argument which Thomas himself never used (he really didn't have to) such as "it has never been done," and more particularly, "How would the people accept a woman priest," with all the imagined consequences of pregnant priest, etc., that such an image evokes. Dr. Margaret Maxey<sup>122</sup>

assesses the situation quite candidly and predicts success in woman's struggle to crash this last churchly barrier to full equality as Christians:

The denial of ordination to women is but a consistent conclusion from the premise that woman's *sexuality* nullifies her access to any institutionalized religious power to fulfill functions ordained for the service and concern of others. Sexual liberation is overtaking such a premise.

If St. Thomas, the greatest Doctor of the Church and one of the greatest minds our universe has produced, was in error about woman's fundamental equality with man, it should not be surprising to find in the writing of this genius the seeds of his own self-corrections. One thinks of the process being used to correct Paul. *Galations* 3:28 which speaks about the essential equality of man and woman in the Lord is used to correct the anti-feminine passages of *Timothy*, *Corinthians* and *Ephesians*. So the question arises: Can this be done with Thomas? I think that it can and I would like to suggest ways of doing it along the lines of his general theological doctrine and his specific references to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We can start with the idea that Thomas stresses: if woman was formed from the rib of man, yet she was formed immediately by God as man was. Adam made no human contribution; it was a totally divine operation by which she received the same human nature that man received.<sup>123</sup> Dr. Gertrud Heinzelmann rightly points out:<sup>124</sup>

that when Thomas claimed human reason and will independent of matter, he contradicted his justification of feminine subordination. Woman's equality and full humanity follow the Thomistic thesis that the soul is "an immaterial reality created by God." Thus, what is fundamental in man as a human being—his reason and his will—is independent of physiological structure.

There is only one *human nature* given by God, and it seems impossible, not to see a contradiction between what Thomas borrowed from Aristotle and the culture of his times in regard to woman's *inferior* nature, and other Thomistic doctrine. Rosemary Lauer, for example, justly observes that, according to Thomas, there can be no greater or lesser degree of possession of an essence; therefore, correcting Thomas by Thomas, we could say that woman is either as fully human as man or she is not human at all.<sup>125</sup>

Dr. Lauer follows through on this argument and shows that if man and woman have the same human nature and are thus of the same species, then the metaphysical position of Thomas makes demands which contradict an attribution of inequality to woman.<sup>126</sup>

One may easily show that St. Thomas' metaphysical position absolutely demands that all differences between beings of the same species be regarded as "accidents." Consequently, to maintain scientifically—in St.

Thomas' sense of this term—that women are such and such by nature requires that one show that a certain “accident” or set of “accidents” which belong to all women and to no men (the physical organs of generation, which are what they are by reason of “accidents,” would fulfill this requirement) are necessary cause of at least one other accident. Then this accident would be “natural” to women.

To date, no one has ever produced this type of demonstration that any manner of acting, any particular degree of intellectual ability, or any special emotional makeup is “natural” to women. Indeed, such a demonstration is impossible, for women, as a matter of fact, *differ markedly in these characteristics*.

Another allied argument concerns the human soul. Here again Thomas could use his own psychological teaching for self-correction. Aristotle claimed that only the male possessed human nature in its fullness and is thus able to communicate the “form” of humanity to his offspring. Now for Thomas, the *form* is the *soul*, which in his (and the Catholic view) is given by God, not the human parents.<sup>127</sup>

Indeed, Thomas gives some indication that he could accept an equality in human nature. In one place, he frankly admits that *intellect*, which is so much insisted upon in his rational approach, is “possessed by woman as well as by man.”<sup>128</sup> Then, too, the image of God is neither male nor female. There is a certain equality established which is confirmed by Thomas' use of the classic equality text of the New Testament:<sup>129</sup>

We must understand that when Scripture had said, to the image of God He created him, it added, male and female He created them, not to imply that the image of God came through the distinction of sex, *but that the image of God belongs to both sexes*, since it is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction. Wherefore the Apostle (Col. iii. 10), after saying, According to the image of Him that created him, added, Where there is neither male nor female (Vulg., neither Gentile nor Jew).

Thomas is quite clear that all men and women are called to perfection;<sup>130</sup> All are called to the perfection of charity;<sup>131</sup> and the reception of grace, by which one measures his closeness to God is not limited by the female sex, as is shown in the case of the Virgin Mary, but depends, in the first place, on the free decision of God.<sup>132</sup> So, woman, whose *natural* inferiority is so inculcated by Thomistic doctrine, can be “found to be better than many men as regards the soul,”<sup>133</sup> since she has the possibility of greater charity, as Thomas indicates when he considers why women, not men, should have first seen the Risen Lord.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, in a beautiful citation of John Chrysostom, Thomas finds that sex is no barrier to spiritual strength, that woman can surpass man.

Reply Obj. 3. As Chrysostom says (*Hom.*, i, *De Machab.*), in earthly contests



fitness of age, physique and rank are required; and consequently slaves, women, old men, and boys are debarred from taking part therein. *But in the heavenly combats*, the Stadium is open equally to all, to every age, and to either sex. Again, he says (*Hom. de Militia Spirit.*): In God's eyes even women fight, for many a woman has waged the spiritual warfare with the courage of a man. For some have rivaled men in the courage with which they have suffered martyrdom; and some indeed have shown themselves stronger than men.

Thomas, of course, could very well use his doctrine on the freedom of the Spirit in assigning gifts to whomever He will as a basis for destroying an alleged inequality. If one is more perfect inasmuch as one approaches the Source, God, by the reception of His gifts, particularly grace which confers a divine likeness, than woman is no longer inferior as woman, but superiority or inferiority is to be measured by closeness to God. Thomas must admit that these gifts do not come with sexual labels.<sup>135</sup>

Thomas does state implicitly that the "quality of charity" (by which there is *real inequality* because of greater or lesser closeness to God):<sup>136</sup>

depends, not on any *natural virtue*, but on the sole grace of the Holy Ghost Who infuses charity. Wherefore the quantity of charity depends *neither on the condition of nature nor on the capacity of natural virtue, but only on the will of the Holy Ghost Who divides His gifts according as He will*. Hence the Apostle says (*Eph., iv. 7*): To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ.<sup>137</sup>

Thomas is quite modern in seeing participation in a process, a system, as a means of assuring *peace*. If women receive gifts, according to God's good pleasure, just as men do, then they too must be allowed to make their contribution according to their talents. What a prescription this is for overcoming the restlessness and frustration, induced by exclusion, and how successfully *in action* it can show the fallacy of an accepted female ineptitude for public action, based on a supposed inequality.<sup>138</sup>

Just as in the natural body the various members are held together in unity by the power of the quickening spirit, and are dissociated from one another as soon as that spirit departs, so too in the Church's body the peace of the various members is preserved by the power of the Holy Spirit, Who quickens the body of the Church, as stated in *Jo., vi. 64*. Hence the Apostle says (*Eph., iv. 3*): Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Now a man departs from this unity of spirit when he seeks his own; just as in an earthly kingdom peace ceases when the citizens seek each man his own. Besides, the peace both of mind and of an earthly commonwealth is better preserved by a distinction of duties and states since thereby the greater number have a share in public actions. Wherefore the Apostle says (*1 Cor., xii. 24, 25*) that God hath tempered (the body) together that there

be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another.

Reference has already been made to Thomas' use of the basic equality text in the New Testament (*Gal.*, 3:28). Actually he uses it on a number of diverse occasions to corroborate different positions. Since in Christ, there is neither male nor female, then "just as a layman can baptize as Christ's minister, so can a woman;"<sup>139</sup> and a woman can be a sponsor in confirmation.<sup>140</sup>

If the application of this verse could be extended to the whole of Thomistic doctrine, there obviously exists the same possibility to correct Thomas as there is to correct the modern Church, which uses this text to proclaim the reality of equality (some would say a wish!):

There is therefore in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex because 'there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free-man, there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Jesus Christ.' (*Gal.*, 3:28)<sup>141</sup>

In concluding this section, we express our conviction of the truth of Mary Daly's assertion:

The deep roots of Thomas' thought—his Philosophical conceptions of the body-soul relationship, of intellect, of will, of the person, and his theological ideas of the image of God in the human being and of man's last end—clearly support the genuine equality of men and women . . . Thomas surely would not propose as 'Thomistic doctrine' the harmful and untenable ideas (that he did) were he alive today.<sup>142</sup>

We can very well ask if there is the same possibility of Thomistic self-correction in his Marian doctrine as there is in the rest of Thomistic treatises. It seems obvious that an exaltation of woman in the person of Mary must have contributed something of a counter-balance to woman's subordinate place. Dr. Lundbery has observed:<sup>143</sup>

While the idea of the subjection of women was fully accepted by the church and aristocracy, at the same time they developed with equal enthusiasm the counter-doctrine of the superiority of women to men. The cult of the Virgin and of chivalry flourished simultaneously, the cult of the lady growing out of that of the Virgin. It is obvious that a theory which regarded the worship of a lady as next to that of God and conceived her as the main-spring of brave deeds, a creature half romantic, half divine, must have done something to counter-balance the dogma of subjection.

Discounting the exaggerations in the statement, can we not say that it is logical that Thomas' doctrine on Mary should redound to an appreciation of woman's essential dignity? And yet, we must frankly admit that for the most part, a consideration of Thomas' doctrine on Mary and woman is such a study in contrast that

it would follow that woman's ordinary inferiority is not lessened, but enhanced by comparison with the extraordinary, exceptional woman, who was the Mother of God. Bearing this danger in mind, I will describe the undoubted *contrast* between Mary and all other women and then search for any indication in Thomistic writings of the possibilities of feminine responses similar to Mary's.

Certainly the Angelic Doctor believes with the Church of his time and ours that Mary is blessed among all women "because she was predestined by God to be and actually became His Mother."<sup>144</sup> He sees Mary's other gifts as being a preparation for (a purification from original sin—not an Immaculate Conception—and freedom from any actual sin, venial or mortal), and accomplishment of (the virginity before and in childbirth)<sup>145</sup> or a consequence of (virginity after childbirth and the Assumption)<sup>146</sup> Mary's Divine Maternity.

Other gifts such as her extraordinary fullness of grace<sup>147</sup> or even her confirmation in righteousness in this life<sup>148</sup> are all allied to her role as Mother of God. Thomas will even go so far as to exempt her from concupiscence, at least in the derogatory sense of the "fomes, the rebellion of the lower powers against reason."<sup>149</sup> He concedes to her the gifts of wisdom, prophecy, and the grace of miracles with some reservation befitting her condition as a woman.<sup>150</sup> In a certain sense, Mary can be for Thomas even a Dispensatrix or Mediatrix of grace, although there is no insistence on this point.<sup>151</sup>

There is a strange contrast, in the "Marian" sections of Thomistic writings, between the high esteem Thomas the theologian shows for Mary, the woman, and the low esteem he expresses in passing for woman in general.

One might almost say that Thomas exalts Mary to the threshold of the divinity because there can be only one Mother of God. Consider this objection and response about the possibility of God doing better than He did!

Obj. 4. Further, Christ as man is full of grace and truth, and has the Spirit without measure; and so He cannot be better. Again created happiness is described as the highest good, and thus could not be better. And the Blessed Virgin Mary is raised above all the choirs of angels, and so cannot be better than she is. God cannot therefore make all things better than He has made them.

Reply Obj. 4. The humanity of Christ, from the fact that it is united to the Godhead; and created happiness from the fact that it is the fruition of God; and the Blessed Virgin from the fact that she is the mother of God; have all a certain infinite dignity from the infinite good, which is God. And on this account there cannot be anything better than these; just as there cannot be anything better than God.<sup>152</sup>

He sees Mary as glorified above all creatures, because she most closely approached the source God and His Son, Jesus Christ<sup>153</sup> while, of course, maintaining



her creaturehood. A particularly telling salute to Mary's dignity, if we consider the Angelic Doctor's theology of the angels, is his exalting her far above those pure intellectual spirits, whom we call angels. She excels then in fullness of grace, closeness to God, and in her purity.<sup>154</sup>

And yet, throughout the tract on Mary, we come up against Thomas' evident misogyny time and time again. Mary had wisdom, but used it for contemplation; she couldn't use it for teaching, since this did not befit the female sex;<sup>155</sup> she had the gift of miracles, but it wasn't proper for her to use it while she lived because those who taught (the men) were to confirm Christ's doctrine by their miracles.<sup>156</sup> It was right to trace the genealogy of Christ to Joseph, "Lest in that marriage slight should be offered to the male sex, which is indeed the stronger"<sup>157</sup> the male sex is more noble than the female sex, and for this reason He (Christ) took human nature in the male sex. But lest the female sex should be despised (evidently Thomas never thought he despised it), it was fitting that He should take flesh of a woman;<sup>158</sup> and finally many examples of the usual depreciation of woman in the process of generation.

The biology is deficient, as we observed earlier, but Thomas is convinced that even in the birth of Christ there is an "imperfection of the female power," "something imperfect in the seminal order," whose deficiencies were corrected by the Holy Spirit's power in His use of Mary's pure blood.<sup>159</sup> And there is the inability of Mary as a woman (as a *patient*, receptacle) to actively cooperate in Christ's conception.<sup>160</sup>

On the other hand, it would be unfair to Thomas not to admit that there are instances in which he sees Mary, even as a *woman*, as excluded from deficiencies of the female sex. We saw earlier that he thought of Mary as not being subject to the concupiscence by which the lower powers rebel against reason.<sup>161</sup> Unlike her sisters, she never fell into the weakness of sin;<sup>162</sup> she was not dependent upon a man for the decision to become the Mother of God.<sup>163</sup> Thomas quotes approvingly a sermon which he falsely attributes to St. Augustine<sup>164</sup> in which Mary is definitely excluded from man's domination:

As Augustine says in a sermon on the Assumption (*de Assump. B.V.M.*) a true estimation of the Blessed Virgin excludes her from certain general rules. For neither did she "multiply her conceptions" nor was she "under man's, i.e. her husband's," power (*Gen.*, iii. 16), who in her spotless womb conceived Christ of the Holy Ghost. Therefore it was fitting that she should be informed of the mystery of the Incarnation *by means not of a man, but of an angel*. For this reason it was made known to her before Joseph: since the message was brought to her before she conceived, but to Joseph after she had conceived.

Even the prejudice which would place women with youth and imbeciles as far as their ability to give witness is concerned is counter-acted by the account of the Incarnation<sup>165</sup> and the testimony of certain people, including the woman Anna,

"whose testimony is rendered the more credible by reason of their righteousness."<sup>166</sup> Finally, even the ritual uncleanness of women finds no place in Mary.<sup>167</sup>

Obviously the argument can be made that when Mary, a woman, is exalted then the nature of woman is shown to be capable of great things; woman is not *deficient* by nature because one woman has shown what the female sex is capable of. And yet, it can be objected that for Thomas, Mary was a distinct exception. For his own mysterious reasons (for example, to show the reality of Christ's human body, conceived and born of a woman, as the rest of His brothers are), God chose a woman and gave her a part that no other creature had in redemption. For Thomas, if one can judge by all that we have adduced in the first part and even by the depreciation of women in the distinctively Marian sections, Mary's glory did not redound to woman's exaltation; neither did Mary's freedom from domination by her husband Joseph exercise a liberating influence on her sisters. It is useless to argue here that it should have, and that Thomas should have been able to exercise self-correction in his estimation of womankind. The fact is he did not.

Can Thomas, then, be corrected by Thomas? I would like to suggest that there are principles contained in His Marian writings which can *lead us to correct Thomas by Thomas*. And in that sense, Mary need not simply be the great contrast, the exception, the antipode, so to say, to the essentially weak female sex, but an example of what woman as a human being can be.

The first point in this correction is the frank admission by Thomas that Mary "was of the same nature as other woman."<sup>168</sup> Gifted as she was, she was not another kind of being; like her fellow men of the male and female sex, she is *human* and Thomas does not exempt her from temptation and trials, as He did not exempt Christ.<sup>169</sup> We might say, paraphrasing St. Paul, that she was like to her sisters in all things except sin.

The second point (and I believe this one is crucial) is the notion Thomas has of *vocation*. If Mary's calling is extraordinary, yet Thomas must admit that God is not restricted in the persons He calls by any condition of nature (a clear allusion to the two sexes, among other conditions), and that He is absolutely free in the distribution of perfection of His gifts. There are many references to this in Thomas, and I would like to cite a number since this issue is vital:

I answer that, God so prepares and endows those, whom He chooses for some particular office, that they are rendered capable of fulfilling it, according to 2 Cor., iii. 6: (Who) hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament. Now the Blessed Virgin was chosen by God to be His Mother. Therefore there can be no doubt that God, by His grace made her worthy of that office, according to the words spoken to her by the angel (Luke, i. 30, 31): Thou hast found grace with God: behold thou shalt conceive, etc.

*God gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen*

him. And since Christ as man was predestinated and chosen to be predestinated the Son of God in power . . . of sanctification (*Rom.*, i. 4), it was proper to Him to have such a fulness of grace that it overflowed from Him into all, according to *Jo.*, i. 16: Of His fulness we have all received. Whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary received such a fulness of grace that she was nearest of all to the Author of grace; so that she received within her Him who is full of all grace; and by bringing Him forth, she, in a manner, dispensed grace to all.<sup>170</sup>

These selections can serve merely as an illustration of the Thomas' conviction expressed throughout the *Summa*: that as mysterious as God's way are, that "even though it is not possible to assign a reason for God's judgments, for instance, why he bestows such an such a grace on one and not on another,"<sup>171</sup> yet one can and must say that God acts fittingly, even if He acts freely! He bestows whatever is necessary for the vocation that He calls man to follow. The Angelic Doctor is quite categorical about it: one receives more "accordingly as one is divinely pre-ordained to a higher or lower state."<sup>172</sup>

In fact, from a human perspective it is an awareness of these gifts that leads one to a perception of the vocation he or she should follow. Now Thomas must admit if he follows this principle that the inequality, based upon a greater or lesser share of God's gifts, is not based upon sex. Thus, Mary's extraordinary vocation and the gifts which prepared, accompanied and followed it, would not just be something set apart but an illustration, albeit extraordinary, of how human creatures surpass one another, depending upon God's gifts, which are not given by sex. In other words, many women (perhaps most, but we cannot make rules either way about something which depends in the first place on God's vocation) may surpass many men in holiness. In other words, a thorough examination of Thomas' doctrine on vocation should lead us to the conclusion that in the supernatural order, no distinction of inequality, based on sex, can be sustained. If this is so, basing ourselves on the fact that "grace does not destroy, but elevates human nature" and that purely natural gifts also are given to a person to prepare for the task God assigns him or her, there is no compelling reason to maintain that natural gifts are differentiated by anything else than the free will of God. This theory would be the death-knell of a theory of inherent weakness, frailty, greater sinfulness, etc., in woman as woman.

Thomistic doctrine, in the third place, would lead us to judge men and women by their response to God, by which one merits greater closeness to Him. This is the true basis for one creature exceeding another, not the criterion of sex, for cooperation with the Lord depends not on maleness or femaleness, but the depth of love and commitment in the soul. Thus Thomas would hold along with Catholic tradition that Mary's response to God exceeded in love the response of any of her sisters and brothers in Christ. Again as we have said in speaking about God's gifts, Mary's response is an illustration, a model, an example of what human correspondence and cooperation with God's grace can be. Mary, of course, as a woman has special im-



portance because she shows in her person what her sisters can do, each in her own way, in her vocation, and helps break down the *stereotype* of woman, which Thomas himself would have discarded if he had the wisdom to apply his Marian doctrine to woman. Let us attempt this.

The pastoral of the Bishops of the United States (1973) gives us this portrayal of Mary:

The *dignity* which Christ's redemption won for all women was *fulfilled uniquely in Mary as the model of all real feminine freedom*. The Mother of Jesus is portrayed in the gospels as: intelligent (the Annunciation, "How can this be?"); apostolic (the visit to Elizabeth); inquiring and contemplative (the Child lost in the temple); responsive and creative (at Cana); compassionate and courageous (at Calvary); a woman of great faith. These implications in the lives of Jesus and Mary need to be elaborated into a sound theology on the role of Christian women in contemporary Church and society.<sup>173</sup>

It certainly sums up also what modern woman thinks belongs to the individual woman if she is to fulfill the vocation God gives her. Compare it with a modern woman's demands.

Women experience themselves as intelligent and free, as mature human persons needing, and capable of, creative self-fulfillment on every human level. Standing in awe before the vastness of the universe, they yet recognize it as their home, to whose destiny they can contribute in proportion to their total personal gifts, not just by the exercise of one biological function. They experience themselves as loved by God, as fully redeemed by Christ, as communicating personally with the Deity in prayer and in graced action.<sup>174</sup>

Thomas' picture of Mary can readily match these demands if I interpret him correctly. He sees Mary's great claim to glory not in her being the Mother of God, but in being the true servant of the Lord; not in conceiving Christ physically, but in conceiving him spiritually. It was her closeness to Christ, her Lord and God, and not merely her physical proximity to Christ which counted.<sup>175</sup> Thomas surely agrees with the modern Sister's analysis of the criterion for judging Mary; and his doctrine would sanction, I believe, the application made to all women—her glory is not from the womb (motherhood) but from her personhood (whether physically mother or not):

A woman, won by his preaching, raises her voice in praise: "Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you sucked." The response of Jesus is one that no woman should permit herself or anyone else to forget. It is the doctrine of woman's true liberation. "Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:27-28) Woman as bearer and nurturer

of life is to be valued and revered. But this is not the whole of her worth. A woman is more than a womb. She is a fully human person with intelligence to understand and strength to fulfill the word of God.<sup>176</sup>

So what really counts is that a woman—a person—freely, with her whole being, embraces the will of God and while it is true that in doing this she is the model of all her fellow Christians—male and female—yet she is particularly a model of woman, not only because she always remains very much a woman but also because she exhibits precisely those qualities of adulthood, of personhood, of human freedom, of responsibility of the complete utilization of one's talents that women are so rightly insisting upon. I cannot, therefore, agree with Father George Tavard<sup>177</sup> or the woman theologian Mary Daly<sup>178</sup> who reject as *unreal* models such as the Virgin Mother because they demand an impossible role for today's women and because they set up a dichotomy: women imitate Mary; men imitate Christ. No one wishes to deny that Christ remains the supreme model for all; neither does anyone wish to propose Mary in the material details of her extraordinary (and even miraculous) privileges, but a reasonable argument can be sustained that imitation of Mary (as well as of Christ), does not mean slavish imitation of their characteristics (yes, that is impossible!), but an embracing of their spirit in the circumstances of one's life.<sup>179</sup>

It is in his treatment of the Annunciation of Mary's response to God's invitation to become the Mother of His Son that we see Thomas presenting a real woman who can be proposed for the imitation of all her sisters. It is here that the Angelic Doctor, in Mary, admits the adult status of woman, i.e., frees them from a crippling dependence on the male of the species, and shows them acting with full rationality, devoting their gifts and talents to the task God has assigned them.

Even the first consideration of Thomas about the Annunciation, may sound foolish to anyone who has divorced himself from notions of woman's inferiority. He inquires about the necessity of a dialogue to obtain Mary's consent to God's plan. We today, of course, are sure that God should have acted that way. For Thomas and men of his time the issue was not quite so clear. Did not men of his era simply tell their wives what was to be done and expect automatic obedience? Now wouldn't this be all the more true in the relation of God to any man? The very fact that Thomas considers the question so seriously is due not only to the fact that Divine Revelation recounts a dialogue of God with creatures through an angel,<sup>180</sup> but also to the fact that Thomas senses that Mary is an extraordinary person and pays tribute to that truth. Let us look at the reasons Thomas gives for the divine dialogue with Mary. I would put Thomas' third reason first since all depends on it:<sup>181</sup>

Thirdly, that she might offer to God the free gift of her obedience: which she proved herself right ready to do so, saying: Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

This famous *Fiat*, the free cooperation of a free creature, whose consent has not

been forced, or extorted, which proceeds from rational thought (even after divine instruction and dialogue) is the model for the *free* woman, as she embraces the will of God in her task.

Because of this *free* consent, which accents the mind, the spirit, she could and did conceive Christ spiritually by faith before she conceived Him bodily as the Fathers of the Church insisted. How wonderful a corrective this is to Thomas' insistence that woman is man's helper only for generation and that man can be helped better by another man in any other affair. Here we see a woman cooperating spiritually in a great work which, if it is concerned with generation, still is directed first towards union in spirit and then towards the spiritual redemption of the entire human race. These are the first and fourth reasons given by Thomas:

First, in order to maintain a becoming order in the union of the Son of God with the Virgin—namely, that she should be informed in mind concerning Him, before conceiving Him in the flesh. Thus Augustine says (*De Sancta Virgin*, iii): Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ, than in conceiving the flesh of Christ; and further on he adds: Her nearness as a Mother would have been of no profit to Mary, had she not borne Christ in her heart after a more blessed manner than in her flesh.

Fourthly, in order to show that there is a certain spiritual wedlock between the Son of God and human nature. Wherefore in the Annunciation the Virgin's consent was besought in lieu of that of the entire human nature.<sup>182</sup>

Was there ever a vocation so noble as the one assigned by God to Mary, as Thomas explains it? Human nature and divine nature, God and man are being wedded in the person of Jesus Christ, and Mary's consent was sought on behalf of all human nature. Here we see woman, in Mary, devoting herself, her entire person, with complete liberty, to the greatest task—a total embracing of God's will. This is open to any woman. Mary, as Thomas portrays her, shows the way. Finally, this woman Mary, dialoguing with God, was not to remain silent. She was instructed so that she might communicate this mystery to others in God's good time:

Secondly, that she might be a more certain witness of this mystery, being instructed therein by God.<sup>183</sup>

Father Farrell, the popular commentator of St. Thomas, insists that Mary is the model of women, for three reasons: Two, while true, sound like clichés: she is "the holiest of all women" and the "most womanly of all women" (whatever that means!), but the third I believe is really the most applicable to our times and really the most Thomistic: "she is the most free."<sup>184</sup> This, I believe, is equivalent to saying—she was a real person in her own right. She was not defined, as her sisters were by Thomas, in relation to man—inferior and subordinate to him—but in relation to God, as all creatures are, male or female. And this relationship implied the freedom that God respected even to the point of allowing his coming among us to depend on the free



consent of a woman. The God of the universe—whose way of acting had to be a criterion for the action of all His creatures, according to Thomas—does not treat his creature as men of Thomas' times treated women. No, the Almighty almost deals with Mary as an equal; He respects His image in her (intellect and will and consequent freedom), dialogues with her and awaits her free consent. What a corrective to the male's domination of the female portion of the human race. Father Farrell puts it somewhat poetically, but he illustrates graphically what every free woman can aspire to as she follows her God given vocation, as indicated by her own gifts:

Mary, it must be understood, was not an ignorant peasant girl pushed into divine things unwittingly . . . Her offer of herself to God was a willing surrender of youth and beauty made with eyes wide open and heart unwavering; her gesture was regal, majestic, marking one of the heights achieved by human nature, for her acceptance was an "I will" of human nature to a spiritual matrimony with God. The Annunciation was a hushed moment in the history of the universe when the fate of the world hung on the response of the Virgin Mary.<sup>185</sup>

We have a woman, whom modern exegetes identify as the true "Daughter of Sion," "the personification of Israel," even the representative of all human nature. She does what only men did formerly but surpasses them. Whereas Moses and Abraham accepted an original covenant for Israel, she accepts the New Covenant for the entire people of God.<sup>186</sup>

Sidney Callahan properly characterizes the importance of Mary's use of her freedom by seeing it as an example of "creative receptivity, and aggressive initiative and responsibility."<sup>187</sup> She affirms that "the free 'yes' of Mary affirms her role as the daughter of Israel, the innovator and trusted creature initiating justice."<sup>188</sup> Mary must be interpreted, she feels "as a fully human, complex person."<sup>189</sup> Acting in full freedom, taking decision after mature thought, she destroys forever the stereotype of the passive, sweet, timid woman, as portrayed in the theology and literature of Thomas' time. Indeed, we are asked by Callahan to consider Mary's prophetic song, the Magnificat, as a "proud, searing song" of an innovator for justice. Finally, drawing out all the implications of freedom, we could agree with her that:

Luke indicates at several points that Mary was a profound, intelligent and assertive person. He relates her questioning her conception, her deep faith-response to that situation, and at least twice refers to her taking things to heart or pondering particular events. While we are told relatively little about Mary, that which we do know can hardly be interpreted as a woman who found her entire identity in the fact of her motherhood or in the person of her Son. Indeed, she must be seen as a strong yet compassionate individual who was able to transcend her era's concept of woman as mother and homemaker.<sup>190</sup>

We cannot help agreeing with Sidney Callahan's well-documented conclusion that

even before the present time with its new theological and scriptural studies exonerated Eve, "the concept of Mary as the new Eve did much to restore woman's dignity."<sup>191</sup> We must say honestly that if Thomas did not himself "restore this dignity," still if the proper inferences are drawn from Thomas' consideration of Mary, then this very doctrine can properly serve as a corrective of Thomas' only too explicit degradation of woman's dignity.<sup>192</sup>

In conclusion, I can only suggest the framework of this corrective, trying to unite the doctrine scattered throughout this paper.<sup>193</sup> As woman Mary is the pre-eminent member of the Church, privileged because of her great faith. In her maternity, Mary is uniquely blessed, but even more, "Blessed is she who believed" (Luke 1:45). All women must echo her "Fiat," as they hope to follow her Assumption. She not only heralds the future of the Church, but is the link with the Old Testament. Abraham through faith went out from his people and offered his son to God; Mary is the physical descendant and the spiritual daughter of Abraham's faith. God's promise to all who believed is kept with her, but she is the fulfillment of the holy women of the Old Testament as well. Did not Mary also conceive by the Lord's will in an even more miraculous and unique way than Anna? And like Deborah and Judith, Mary leads her people in vanquishing the enemy.

Indeed, Mary's fiat was the beginning of the great battle, and it is right to describe her as "terrible as any army dressed in battle array." The daughter of the prophets in her "Magnificat" exults in God's justice: "He has shown might with his arm;" He has "scattered the proud," "put down the mighty," and "the rich He has sent empty away" (Luke 1:51-53). Mary's faith results in a consuming zeal to follow God's will, and like John the Baptist her humility includes prophetic fire. *Submissiveness to God does not imply retiring timidity*: Mary may well have been a spirited and demanding woman, capable of the righteous anger and irony Christ displayed.

Scripture says nothing whatever about Mary's "sweetness," nor does it show her as particularly retiring. She courageously pronounces her "Fiat" and then goes "in haste" to help her cousin Elizabeth. When her time comes, she must bear her child among strangers far from home. It requires strength to be alone with mystery and prepare for "the sword which will pierce your heart." When Christ grows to be a man, she initiates his miraculous ministry at Cana. Finally, only the most courageous woman could go out to Golgotha and witness the execution of her Son. How appropriate that Mary should be present to receive the Pentecostal fire. "The lowliness of his handmaid" does not preclude aggressive strength and efficiency (such as that of the Valiant Woman in *Proverbs*) or a public ministry: "His handmaids shall prophesy." This unique handmaid, identified with wisdom, and "clothed with the sun," cannot at the same time lead other women to a "hidden inconspicuous life," "behind the veil," or "in the shadows." All talk of Mary as the passive and "hidden heart" of the Church, as of the little home in Nazareth, seems inappropriate.

The point, of course, is that neither Mary's actual daily activities, nor speculative

constructs of her as humble housewife and nurturing mother, can be held up to modern women as models of behavior. After all, no one insists that Christian men become carpenters, but that they imitate Christ's perfect obedience and love of God.

Mary, too, "believed" and obeyed, and her example applies to men and women. Her virtues prove that the essentials of Christian behavior are above sexual distinctions, sexual roles and family relationships. Christ, "looking around on those who were sitting about Him," said most pointedly, "For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother" (*Mark* 3:35). Mothers and sisters do not imitate Mary while brothers and fathers follow Christ. Women do not "choose to be either Eve or Mary." Women cannot be identified as Old Eves or New Eves; they are neither better nor worse than men. As far as the Christian life and salvation is concerned, men and women are simply human beings.

May we end on this point—men and women *as such are equal* and express the hope that through *St. Thomas Revisited*, we may make some contribution to the revision of his doctrine on woman, which has had such a terrible negative effect on both men and women, and prepare for the day when the Church herself will be true in fact as she now is in theory to the declaration of Paul VI, in an address at the close of Vatican Council:

As you know, the Church is proud to have glorified and liberated women and in the course of the centuries, in diversity of characters, to have brought into relief her basic equality with man. But the time is coming, in fact, has come, when the vocation of woman is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, and effect and a power never hitherto achieved.<sup>194</sup>

University of Dayton

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, obj. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ad. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Second Sex* (Knopf, New York, 1963), xi.

<sup>5</sup> *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 81, a. 3, obj. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 81, a. 3, ad. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 52, a. 1, ad. 2.

<sup>9</sup> *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 81, a. 3, ad. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, *corp.*



- 11 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, *corp.*
- 12 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 52, a. 1, ad. 2.
- 13 "Beyond Eve and Mary," *New Theology*, No. 9 (edited by Martin E. Marty and Dean C. Peerman, MacMillan, New York, 1972), p. 216.
- 14 F. X. Arnold, *Woman and Man* (Herder, New York, 1963), p. 148.
- 15 Cf. Walter Farrell, *Companion to the Summa*, Vol. 1 (Sheed, New York, 1941), p. 271.
- 16 *S.T.*, I, q. 96, art. 3, *corp.*
- 17 *Ibid.*, ad. 3.
- 18 *S.T.*, I, q. 99, art. 2.
- 19 We shall see his doctrine on this a little later.
- 20 Cf. Sidney Callahan, *The Illusion of Eve* (Sheed, New York, 1965), p. 57.
- 21 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 44, a. 3, ad. 2.
- 22 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 2, *corp.*
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *S.T.*, q. 102, a. 4, obj. 3.
- 25 *Ibid.*, ad. 3
- 26 *The Second Sex* (Knopf, New York, 1963), p. 202.
- 27 Newman, Westminster, 1926, Vol. 1, p. 121.
- 28 *S.T.*, q. 93, a. 4, ad. 1; Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Harper, New York, 1968), p. 51f. rightly speaks of this idea as "degrading" and even contradictory.
- 29 University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1973, p. 125.
- 30 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 62, a. 4, ad. 1.
- 31 *S.T.*, I-II, q. 14, a. 6, *on the contrary*.
- 32 *S.T.*, I-II, q. 102, a. 5, ad. 5.
- 33 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 156, art. 1, ad. 1.
- 34 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 82, a. 3, obj. 3.
- 35 *Ibid.*, ad. 3.
- 36 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 70, a. 3, *corp.*
- 37 Essay 2 in *The Double Cross* (Mimeographed Articles) p. 3.
- 38 F. Arnold, *op. cit.*, 21.
- 39 Cf. Sidney Callahan, *op. cit.*, 59.
- 40 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 163, a. 4, *on the contrary*.
- 41 *Ibid.*, obj. 1.
- 42 Obj. 2.
- 43 Which Sidney Callahan, along with others, have not taken into account. Cf. *op. cit.*, 59.
- 44 *Ibid.*, *corp.*
- 45 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 165, a. 2.
- 46 *S.T.*, I-II, q. 81, a. 5.
- 47 *S.T.*, I-II, q. 102, a. 5, ad. 4.
- 48 *S.T.*, I-II, q. 35, a. 7, *on the contrary*.
- 49 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 177, a. 2.

- 50 *S.T.*, I, q. 39, a. 2, *corp.*
- 51 *S.T.*, I, q. 25, a. 4, ad. 3.
- 52 *S.T.*, I-II, q. 102, a. 3, ad. 9.
- 53 *S.T.*, I, q. 105, a. 3, ad. 1.
- 54 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 45, a. 2, obj. 3.
- 55 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 149, a. 4, in *corp.*
- 56 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 54, a. 3, ad. 1., Dr. Mitterer, the Austrian doctor psychologist, chides Thomas on this gratuitous insult to womankind: "We do not doubt God's almighty power, but it is not easy to understand why through a non-sexually differentiated part of Adam the result of birth should be any less certain than if it concerned a sexually differentiated part as is the case, according to Thomas, for the sperm and the womb. Can God produce out of the womb a horse just as well as a man? We have before us a grotesque representation . . . Or could Adam just as well have been the father of a horse?" See *Albert Mitterer, Dogma und Biologie der Heiligen Familie* (Herder, Vienna, 1952), pp. 139-140).
- 57 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 81, a. 3.
- 58 *De Civ. Dei*, xxii.
- 59 *Ibid.*, objs. 2,3.
- 60 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, *corp.* Cf. also q. 98, a. 2, *on the contrary*.
- 61 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 26, a. 10, *corp.*
- 62 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 53, a. 4, ad. 1.
- 63 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, *corp.*
- 64 Cf., *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 66, a. 5.
- 65 Cf. *S. T.* II-II, q. 141, a. 5, where Thomas speaks about the principal thing (in temperance) "is the use itself of the necessary means of the woman . . ."
- 66 Cf. Arlene Swidler, *Woman in a Man's Church* (Paulist, New York, 1972), p. 12.
- 67 *S.T.*, I, q. 118, a. 1, ad. 4.
- 68 Cf. *op. cit.*, 13.
- 69 "Women in the Church," *Commonweal*, Dec. 20, 1963, p. 367; we have already alluded to this in discussing why women could be born in the first place. See point 1a.
- 70 *Op. cit.*, 131-2.
- 71 *Ibid.*, citing Aristotle.
- 72 *Ibid.*
- 73 Cf. *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 44, a. 2, ad. 1, where in a rather extended discussion, Thomas maintains man's superiority in generation even though he admits that matrimony (a name derived from the mother's role) is correctly named since the "mother has a closer relation to the nature of marriage than the father has."
- 74 Cf. Simone de Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, 98.
- 75 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, p. 123.
- 76 III, 2 in *S.T.* II-II, q. 47, a. 11, ad. 2.
- 77 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 154, a. 8, ad. 3.
- 78 *De Trinitate*, xii, 3, 7, 12 cited in *S.T.*, II-II, q. 182, a. 4, *corp.*
- 79 Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1948, p. 139.

- 80 *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, 271.
- 81 *S.T.*, I, q. 96, last article.
- 82 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, ad. 2.
- 83 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 2, *corp.*
- 84 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 164, a. 2, obj. 1.
- 85 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 4, *corp.*
- 86 Sister Albertus McGrath, *What a Modern Catholic Believes About Women* (Thomas More Press, Chicago, 1972), p. 64.
- 87 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 81, a. 4, ad. 2.
- 88 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 1, ad. 2.
- 89 *Ibid.*, obj. 2.
- 90 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 164, a. 2, obj. 1 and ad. 1.
- 91 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 182, last article, *corp.*
- 92 Cf. also *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 64, a. 6, ad. 1, in which Thomas in defending the right of a husband to "take the cross" (go on the crusade) without his wife's consent, says explicitly that there is no parallel in rights between wife and husband: "*because since the husband has to rule the wife and not vice versa, the wife is bound to follow her husband rather than the husband his wife.*"
- 93 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 154, a. 1, *corp.*
- 94 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 28, a. 3.
- 95 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 32, a. 8, ad. 2.
- 96 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 88, a. 8, ad. 3.
- 97 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 59, a. 5, *corp.*
- 98 *S.T.*, III, q. 67, a. 4, *corp.*
- 99 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 177, a. 2, *on the contrary.*
- 100 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 39, a. 2, *corp.*
- 101 *Ibid.*, cf. also George Tavard, *op. cit.*, 213.
- 102 Cf. Sister Albertus McGrath, *op. cit.*, 65 sq.; Arlene Swidler, *op. cit.*, 93.
- 103 *Op. cit.*, 132.
- 104 Cf. Margaret N. Maxey, *art. cit.*, 218-219 and Raissa Maritain, *Histoire d'Abraham* (Nova et Vetera, No. 3, 1935); 2d edition entitled *La Conscience Morale et l'Etat de Nature* (New York: editions de la Maison Francaise, 1942).
- 105 Cf. Sidney Callahan, *op. cit.*, 59-60.
- 106 Address to the Montreal Medical Association reported in *Search*, II, (August 1963), p. 136.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 148.
- 108 Pastor André Dumas, *Biblical Anthropology and the Participation of Women in the Ministry of the Church* (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1963), p. 20.
- 109 Cf. Sidney Callahan, *op. cit.*, 61-62.
- 110 *The Eternal Woman* (Bruce, Milwaukee, 1961), p. 8.
- 111 Sidney Callahan, *op. cit.*, 62.
- 112 *The Two-Edged Sword* (Milwaukee, Bruce, 1956), p. 95.
- 113 *Theological Investigations* (Helicon, Baltimore, 1961), I, p. 267.
- 114 Cf. Sidney Callahan, *op. cit.*, 63; Ignatius Hunt, *The Book of Genesis* (Paulist, New York,



1960), p. 12 and *passim*; and Rosemary Lauer, *art. cit.*, p. 367.

115 *Loc. cit.*

116 *Op. cit.*, 64; cf. also John Stuart Mill's Essay on "The Subjection of Woman" in *Essays on Sex Equality* (U. of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 177; Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx claims that the idea of head and subjection, which was real in the relationship between Christ and The Church, was, in marriage, only a fact determined by social and historical conditions. *Marriage, Human Reality and Saving Mystery* (New York, 1966), p. 196; and Rosemary Lauer, *art. cit.*, p. 367.

117 *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No. 32.

118 The language is reminiscent of John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris*, esp. n. 41.

119 *AAS*, 37, (1945), p. 285.

120 Vol. 14:991f. cf. also Elizabeth Farians, "Women in the Church Now" (essay III), *op. cit.*; and Paul VI, "Address to Italian Women," Rome, 1965, *Ibid*, p. 6.

121 Cf. Rosemary Lauer, *art. cit.*, 110.

122 *Op. cit.*, 224.

123 *S.T.*, I, q. 92, a. 4, *corp.*

124 "Petition to Preparatory Commission of the Vatican Council" (Adapted by Rosemary Lauer), *The Catholic Messenger*, (Davenport, Iowa), July 2, 1964, p. 5.

125 Cf. Rosemary Lauer, *art. cit.*, p. 366.

126 *Ibid.*

127 *Ibid.*

128 *S.T.*, I, q. 93, a. 4, ad. 1.

129 Even though he incorrectly refers to Colossians—*S.T.*, I, q. 93, a. 6, ad. 2.

130 III, q. 183 and 184.

131 Q. 184, a. 3.

132 III, q. 7, a. 10, *corp.* and ad. 1.

133 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 39, a. 1, and ad. 1.

134 *S.T.*, III, q. 55, a. 1, ad. 3.

135 Cf. Sidney Callahan, *op. cit.*, 86-87, who discusses the great contribution made by women gifted by God above their fellow men, such as St. Catherine of Siena and St. Joan of Arc.

136 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 3, *corp.*

137 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 3, *corp.*

138 *S.T.*, II-II, q. 183, a. 2, ad. 3.

139 *S.T.*, III, q. 67, a. 4, *corp.*

140 *S.T.*, III, q. 72, a. 10, ad. 3.

141 *Constitution on the Church*, No. 32.

142 *Op. cit.*, 53.

143 Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia Farnham, *Modern Woman, The Lost Sex*, (Harper, New York, 1947), p. 134f.

144 For the most part Thomas' discussion of Mary is related to the Incarnation of Christ, her Son, and is found in *S.T.*, III, q. 27f.

145 Cf. *S.T.*, III, q. 27, a. 4.

- 146 Cf. esp. Commentary "on the Third Day He Rose from the Dead" in *The Three Greatest Prayers*, tr. by Laurence Shopcote (Newman, Westminster, 1956), p. 66.
- 147 Cf. *S.T.* III, q. 7, a. 10, ad. 1; Aquinas, *The Greatest Prayers* (here specifically the Hail Mary, where he has an extended treatment—edition cited above, p. 31 sq; cf. also III, q. 27, a. 5, *corp.* and ad. 1, where he even suggests that "by bringing forth Christ, she in a manner, dispensed grace to all."
- 148 Cf. I, q. 100, a. 2., *corp.*, where we see Thomas denying this privilege to our first parents, but conceding it to Mary.
- 149 *S.T.*, III, q. 27, a. 3, obj. 1 and ad. 1.
- 150 *Ibid.*, ad. 3.
- 151 Cf. *S.T.*, III, q. 26, a. 1, *corp.* and q. 27, a. 5, ad. 1.
- 152 *S.T.*, I, q. 25, a. 6.
- 153 *S.T.*, III, q. 27, a. 5, *corp.*
- 154 Cf. *Commentary on Angelic Salutation*, *op. cit.*, 31-33.
- 155 *S.T.*, III, q. 27, a. 5., ad. 3.
- 156 *Ibid.*
- 157 III, q. 28, a. 1, ad. 2.
- 158 III, q. 31, a. 5, ad. 1.
- 159 Cf. q. 31, a. 5, ad. 3.
- 160 Q. 31, a. 6., *corp.* and ad. 2.
- 161 III, q. 27, a. 3, obj. 1.
- 162 Q. 27, a. 4.
- 163 Q. 30, a. 3, ad. 2.
- 164 Found among St. Augustine's works, No. 34 in *Evangel.*
- 165 *Ibid.*
- 166 Q. 36, a. 4, ad. 5.
- 167 Q. 37, a. 4, *corp.*
- 168 Q. 31, a. 6, ad. 5.
- 169 *S.T.*, *Suppl.*, q. 96, a. 5, ad. 2.
- 170 III, q. 27, a. 5, ad. 1.
- 171 *S.T.*, III, q. 27, a. 6, *corp.*
- 172 *S.T.*, III, q. 7, a. 10, ad. 1.
- 173 No. 142, p. 50—USCC, Washington, D.C. 1973.
- 174 Sister McGrath, *op. cit.*, 101.
- 175 Cf., *S.T.*, III, q. 30, a. 1, *corp.*
- 176 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 177 *Op. cit.*, 187.
- 178 In her latest book, just published this year—*Toward A Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Beacon, Boston, 1974).
- 179 Cf. Betty Gray's review of Mary Daly's book—"Beyond God The Father," *New York Times Book Review*, Feb. 3, 1974.
- 180 *Luke*, 1 and 2.

181 III, q. 30, a. 1, *corp.*

182 *Ibid.*

183 *Ibid.*

184 *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, 139.

185 *Ibid.*, 147.

186 Sister McGrath, *op. cit.*, 25.

187 *Art. cit.*, 41.

188 *Ibid.*

189 S. Callahan, *op. cit.*, 20.

190 *Op. cit.*, 20-21; how different this is from Gertrud Le Fort's attempt to canonize the passivity of woman: For his redemption, man has nothing to contribute to God other than the readiness of unconditional surrender. The passive acceptance inherent in woman, which ancient philosophy regarded as purely negative, appears in the Christian order of grace as the *positively decisive factor*. *Op. cit.*, 4; Ignatius Lepp, the psychologist agrees with Mrs. Callahan in insisting on woman's consciousness of herself as a *person* and the consequent desire of "independence, freedom, right to happiness, right to individual development"—*Psychology of Loving* (Helicon, Baltimore, 1963), p. 138.

191 *Op. cit.*, Chap. 3, esp. 64f.

192 How far Thomas is from one of his contemporaries, Hubert de Romans, a Master General of the Dominican Order, has become clear: "It is not a mere man who is set above the angels and all the rest of the heavenly court, but a mere *woman* is; nor is anyone who is merely man as powerful there, as is a mere *woman*. Thus is woman's nature in our Lady raised above man's in *worth* and *dignity* and *power*." Hubert de Romans, *Sermon xciv, Ad omnes mulieres*, 503, quoted by Bede Jarret, *Social Theories of the Middle Ages* (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press 1942), pp. 71-72.

193 Here I am greatly indebted to Sidney Callahan, (*op. cit.*, 67f) who, to my mind, is one of the most balanced feminists. She does not reject Mary as a model for woman, a "restorer" of their God-given dignity, although she rightly insists that Mary is a model for all Christians.

194 Second Vatican Council, Closing Message, Paul VI, December 8, 1965—found in Abbott, W. Editor, *Documents of Vatican II*, 732-34.