

# Mary in the feminist movement theology religion



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## Contents

- 8. 0 Decision

The Catholic faithful have ever held a instead traditional maternal image of Mary. Feminist theologians nevertheless experience that this traditional maternal image is uninspiring, out-of-date and violative to adult females. They raise a important inquiry: “ Can Catholic adult females today relate to Mary? ”[ 1 ]

We read about adult females from all over the universe in the day-to-day newspapers. Some states require adult females to have on head coverings in public, while others are more broad in their frock codification. There besides exists the jobs of forced matrimonies, female infanticide, widow combustion etc. All these jobs have compelled adult females to raise their voice against unfair constructions in society. Today, many adult females in different churches have troubles accepting certain dogmatic political orientations

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about Mary. The Bibles were written in a patriarchal society and do not mostly portray adult females significantly. This stands as the chief point of feminist unfavorable judgment. Feminists feel that possibly the texts are not interpreted decently and that a feminist reading is necessary to do it relevant to adult females in society today.

This Guided assignment will look into how feminism today regard Mary as an emancipating individual in redemption history. I have based on my paper on the book ' Truly Our Sister ' by Elizabeth Johnson.

## **2. 0 IS GENDER SIGNIFICANT FOR SALVATION?**

The salvaging act of God is linked to the savior Jesus Christ. While in the Old Testament God sent couriers and Prophets to salvage His people, He besides chose these important personalities from among the people. In the Old Testament, we see how God chose Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc. and each were given an undertaking to be fulfilled. Significant in these choices were the fact that all of these were ' men ' . The inquiry therefore that women's rightists have been inquiring is ; " does masculinity of an individual have significance in human redemption? "

### **2. 1 Maleness of Christ**

Wolfgang Beinert, in his article ' Mary and feminism ' argues well about the gender of Jesus. He says, " Jesus is besides an adult male. Is not, hence, his masculinity important? " Harmonizing to him, God had merely two options in taking the human sexes. They can be either male or female. The fact that He chose a male is not an statement for the high quality of one sex over the

other. The fact that God became human is the of import facet of the Christian religion. It is immaterial, whether God became male or female.[ 2 ]

I agree with the writer to the extent that he says male and female are equal before the eyes of God and they complement each other. However, we can non cut down the fact that Jesus was male, to mere happenstance and non a portion of the program for redemption. The Old Testament speaks of Christ or Messiah as the first-born male.

## 2. 2 Femaleness of Mary

If Christ was chosen being male, God chose Mary, a adult female, to be the female parent of God. He honored her as a favorite homo being before God. “ Tradition calls Mary the bride of the Holy Spirit. ” This shows that the church besides believes in the important function of adult female in conveying redemption to the universe. Mary ‘ s ‘ yes ‘ in the embodiment was non a private determination but spoken on behalf of all humanity.[ 3 ]

Therefore one can reason that Jesus ‘ masculinity and Mary ‘ s feminineness does non do them superior. Both of them played an of import function by obeying God ‘ s will. If Jesus is redemption, so Mary becomes the manner taking to redemption. The function they both play in redemption history makes them what they are. Patriarchal or matriarchal society or minds do non find the program of God. God decides.

## **3. 0 TRULY OUR SISTER**

### 3. 1 Title of the book

The rubric ' truly our female parent ' in no manner denigrates the character of Mary the female parent of Jesus, but alternatively seeks to portray all of the virtuousness of Mary that adult females in peculiar would impute to her in being a function theoretical account. The rubric " Our Sister " is non intended as some claim to deny the fact that Mary was the female parent of God and a function theoretical account for pregnancy. This refers to the fact that as Mary is besides God ' s girl, and through that facet she is besides our sister through faith. This was the rubric used by Pope Paul VI. Therefore it can non be considered " irregular. "

### 3. 2 Content of the book

This book has received twosome of awards. For illustration ; the Jerome Award from the Catholic Library association, the John Courtney Murray Award from the Catholic Theological Association, and the 2004 Book Award from the College Theology Society in 2004. She is presently Distinguished Professor of divinity at Fordham University, and a sister of Saint Joseph. It appears that the book is theologically sound, though it may dispute some preconceived impressions.

## **4. 0 MARY IN THE SCRIPTURES**

In order to see Mary in Catholicism, we must see what Catholicism is.

Catholicism consists of the Bibles, the traditions and the instructions of the Church. Let us see Mary ' s place in each of these countries. Elizabeth Johnson references 13 Bible transitions in which Mary appears. These transitions are the bases of feminist Mariology. The writer employs two

countries of scholarship as primary tools, viz. , modern scriptural surveies and feminist hermeneutics.

#### 4. 1. Narrative of Mary harmonizing to Mark

Mark is the earliest Gospel. Mary first appears in chapter three in the Gospel of Mark.

Hearing Jesus ' ministry his household member set out seize him and convey him place to Nazareth because they thought he has lost his head. Then there a difference between Jesus and some of the Scribes, who accuse him of being in conference with Satan. Then once more we have the female parent and brothers of Jesus in hunt of Jesus[ 4 ].

“ Who are my female parent and my brothers? ” and looking about those who sat about him, he said, “ Here are my female parent and brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and female parent. ”

Mark 3: 33-35 ( NRSV )

The nazarene does non recognize them, instead, he disowns them. His words give a new vision that blood ties do non count, but religion in God affairs.

The women's rightists interpret that the approvals of Jesus are unfastened to anyone who wants it, without differentiation of sex or gender. The scene draws a strong contrast between Jesus ' biological household and new sort of inclusive community. The standards are to make the will of God. Any individual so, who does the will of God belongs to this eschatological household. Harmonizing to some of the women's rightist minds, the eschatological household does non picture a patriarchal society. Even Jesus

himself does not presume patriarchal authorization but interprets himself as a brother and a boy to all in the group. Women are redefined as his sisters and female parents. Second the writer strongly suggests that in the topographic point of obedience to husband and male parent, an adult female owes her fidelity chiefly to God.[ 5 ]

### Contemplation

I appreciate the women's rightist optimistic reading from such pessimistic texts. The reading may delight most of the adult females. The text is not merely addressed to adult females but besides to work forces. I feel this reading is excessively utmost. The eschatological household is not headed by an adult female or an adult male. The message here is to make the will of God and to be obedient to God. While Jesus lived at a clip where the patriarchal society was prevailing, He is hence turning to male members of the community. The text is in context of His household ; the eschatological household and not the crude human household.

### 4. 2 Story of Mary harmonizing to Luke

" The narrative of Mary of Nazareth is one such narrative. Even though Luke presents her in a positive mode in his babyhood narration, she later sinks into silence along with the remainder of the adult females in the Gospel and Acts. " The Gospel of Luke is the lone Gospel that gives us a instead positive image of Mary. Yet the women's rightist theologians are not satisfied with it. They feel Mary is not given sufficient significance in the Gospel of Luke. Luke remains soundless in many facets.

## Contemplation

I appreciate the women's rightist optimistic reading from such pessimistic texts. The reading may delight most of the adult females. The text is non merely addressed to adult females but besides to work forces. I feel this reading is excessively utmost. Eschatological household will non be headed by adult female or a adult male. The message here is to make the will of God and to be obedient to God. Jesus certainly lived in the patriarchal community, hence he is turn toing male members of the community. Women and kids were non even counted in the miracle of generation of the staff of life. The text is in the context of His household ; the eschatological household and non the crude human household. The Gospel harmonizing to Mark gives us two transitions, where Mary appears to be simple and incognizant of Jesus ' ministry and will of God yet faithful to God ' s program.

### 4. 3 Story of Mary harmonizing to Matthew

Matthew and Luke edit the text by excluding the scene where Jesus ' household has come to apprehend him. Matthew describes the strong contrast between natural household and discipleship of Jesus. Luke shifts the full scene in the positive manner. Luke omits the inquiry, " who is my female parent and who are my brothers? " . He says, " Here are my female parent and brothers. " but the standard to belong to the community is the same, viz. , hearing the word of God and moving upon it.

## Contemplation



It seems the revivalists are holding a turning apprehension of Mary. They gave her more and more importance.

## **5. 0 THE CRITICS OF FEMINIST INTERPRETATION**

I besides like to add some points of unfavorable judgment I read in some of the articles.

### **5. 1 The get downing point of the feminist divinity is the Bibles**

In one of the articles of Catharina Halkes called " Mary and Women " I found a instead critical rating of feminist divinity. The writer argues and attacks the foundation of feminist divinity. The get downing point of feminist divinity is the Bibles. It is necessary to analyze critically the beginnings of history, linguistic communication, and imagination. We can non merely literally interpret the texts assuming that everything was historical. We excessively can non contradict the other genre of the Bibles. There the critical survey of the text is every bit of import.[ 6 ]

### **Contemplation**

This unfavorable judgment can besides oppugn the historicity of other events in the Bibles. We can oppugn everything as symbolic. The women's rightist may inquire, " Which is the fact that can be historically proved to be right? If Bibles can non be the starting point, so what else can be the get downing point? "

### **5. 2 Mary as a historical and symbolic figure**

What we know of Mary is from the Gospels. Though we read about her in the Bible, yet the Bible does not give us a clear image of Mary. Luke counts Mary as one of those who hears the word of God and carries it out. The two babyhood narrations in the Gospel of Luke and Matthew were the latter additions to the Gospel. The ground behind Mary's history is to reflect over the embodiment of Christ.

### 3. 3. 0 Conclusion ( subdivision 3 )

Taking into consideration the full Bible transitions and their context it seems that the women's rightist minds have done singular advancement in the field of theological contemplations. Yet the Bible can not be the starting and stopping point of any statement. The contemplation and the penetration that has been drawn from the Bible is singular but other readings and contemplation and penetration can not be merely forgotten for the interest of feminist position point. Above all the text itself was written in the Patriarchal society. The writer of Bible does not hold any feminist context when he is composing the text. Mary is exalted in order to laud Jesus as the Savior of the universe. Therefore I feel the Bible are impersonal. They are not written for work forces and to stamp down adult females. They are merely faith looks.

## **6. 0 MARY IN THE CHURCH TRADITION AND TEACHINGS**

The church magisterium has solemnly declared that Mary is Theotokos ( Ephesus 431 A. D. ) . Early Christianity strongly believed in virginity of Mary. Once once more in 1854 she was declared exempted from original

wickedness and in 1950 she was declared to be taken to heaven. Theological point of position three of these tenets have a Christological content and point to the enigma of Christ and the 4th expresses adult male 's fulfilled salvation. The women's rightists believe that adult female was non given equal function in the church tradition. Mary was given importance to foreground the importance of Jesus.[ 7 ]

Mary was ever exalted by the church tenet. It shows that Mary had a alone topographic point in the church. All the male parents of the church had great fear to Mary as our female parent.

## **7. 0 POPE JOHN PAUL II**

Pope John Paul II had great devotedness to Mary. He besides upheld the rule of equality. Harmonizing to Elizabeth Johnson, he departed from centuries ' long tradition, when he taught that adult females and work forces are equal as individuals before God: " both adult male and adult female are human existences to an equal grade, both are created in God ' s image. "

### **7. 1 Some expostulation of women's rightists**

On the other manus the writer feels that the avowal of equality of adult male and adult female is theoretical. This avowal speaks of the religious and metaphysical equality, nevertheless, is compromised in pattern. The Catholic Pope besides affirms gender dualism. His work systematically draws upon the traditional position that work forces and adult females embody human nature in two radically contrasting ways. This means they must play distinguishable societal functions. The feminist theologians find Pope John Paul II ' s learning contradictory.

## 7. 2 Critical contemplation:

It seems the Catholic Pope ' s position is theoretical and less practical. In fact this position is the in-between way. It is non good to be radical. The feminist minds seem to throw the babe out alongwith the bath H2O. The church is seeking to safeguard the goodness of centuries old tradition of the church. The church sees human nature as God ' s alone creative activity. God has created us adult male and adult female for certain purpose. We need non vie with each other but complement in a alone manner. Therefore the Catholic Pope says, " this must non under any status lead to the ' masculinization ' of adult females, " The alone kernel of " Woman " lies in the impression that she is made for the " order of love " : " adult female can merely happen herself by giving love to others " .

Given her orientation to love, the proper career for every adult female is motherhood, or religious signifier of maternity that is exercised in virginity. As the Catholic Pope conceives the dynamic, " The bridegroom is the 1 who loves. The bride is loved. It is she who receives love in order to love in return. This is the instance non because of personality or economic conditions or any other societal circumstance, but because of nature: " this concerns each and every adult female, independently of the cultural context in which she lives and independently of her religious, psychological and physical features, as for illustration age, instruction, wellness, work and whether she is married or individual. " Consistent with the tradition of this duality, moreover, the Catholic Pope warns against adult females going from their ain rich kernel even when they muster " rightful resistance " to sinful domination by work forces. This " must non under any status lead to the ' masculinization ' of

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adult females, ” he warns. Although ne’er spelling out merely assertiveness, rational statement and independent action. “ In the name of release from male ‘ domination ’ , adult females must non allow to themselves male features contrary to their ain feminine ‘ originality ’ ” alternatively as adult female, each one must populate harmonizing to the “ particular qualities ” proper to the “ fact of her muliebrity. ”[ 8 ]

## 8. 0 Decision

God chose Mary to be the female parent of God. He honored her as a favorite homo being before God. “ Tradition calls Mary the bride of the Holy Spirit. ” This shows that the church besides believes in the important function of a adult female in conveying redemption to the universe. In the Gospels Mary appears in 13 Bible transitions. These transitions shows, how of import Mary was in redemption history. Some of these transitions do non portray Mary as a emancipating adult female. Jesus addresses her as ‘ woman ’ , but it is to supply a new vision that the blood ties do non count but faith in God affairs.

The women’s rightist theologians have interpreted these transitions in a positive and optimistic manner. The women’s rightist minds have done singular advancement in the field of theological contemplations. Yet the Bible can non be the starting and stoping point of any statement. The contemplation and the penetration that has been drawn from the Bible are singular but other readings and contemplation and penetration can non be merely forgotten for the interest of feminist position point. Above all, the text itself was written in the Patriarchal society. The writer of Bible does non hold any feminist context when he is composing the text. Mary is exalted in order to laud Jesus as the Savior of the universe. Therefore I feel the Bible are

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impersonal. They are non written for work forces and to stamp down adult females. They are merely a faith looks. The women's rightists believe that adult female was non given equal function in the church tradition. Mary was given importance to foreground the importance of Jesus. It is clear from the early Hagiographas of the church male parents that Mary was ever exalted by the church. It shows that Mary had a alone topographic point in the church. All the male parents of the church had great fear to Mary as our female parent. Pope John Paul II and all the other Catholic Popes have had great devotedness to Mary, our female parent. Pope John Paul II held both adult male and adult female as human existences of an equal grade, both are created in God ' s image. At the same clip Pope John Paul II entreaties to adult females that they should non allow to themselves male features contrary to their ain feminine ' originality ' but alternatively as adult female, each one must populate harmonizing to the " particular qualities " proper to the " fact of her muliebrity. " I feel Pope John Paul II has given a balanced position on female release. This position can be the conclusive reply to the feminism.