

The Fraudulent Prerogation of Male Primacy

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on July 15, 2008 - 9:56pm. --- **Human Sexuality**

History testifies that theological based discrimination against women by institutional religion is advanced politically in patriarchal societies, and, with destructive and dysfunctional effects on the individual person and on society.

Fraudulently evolved prerogation of male primacy underlies traditions of cultural discrimination against women. Misinformed and misguided theologies have poisoned women and men in their relationships and have contributed to familial/social dysfunction.

Anti-social violence against women comes in forms of unhealthy male obsession in sexual power, obsession to control, and, physical and psychological tendency to abuse. In the face of life's complexity, making decisions of mutual sensitivity can be agonizing and fraught with uncertainty.

There is, with bi-polar sexuality, a certain alienation of consciousness which identifies with moral loneliness. Male and female have to make distinctive choices in life which have effects of equal authentication though qualified by sexual difference. The subject matter of the procreation of the species is a deeply personal matter that affects both sexes, but with distinctly different consequences.

When all is said and done, the working of Eucharist is quintessentially sexual and interpersonal, for quantum-electric bi-polarity is the cosmic motor of transformational energy/ matter.

The personal experience of making life decisions with Eucharistic consequences of altruistic sacrifice is ultimately a lonely decision. Eucharistic consciousness is radical in the personal sense of evolutionary necessity, which involves unavoidable transformation whether we want to focus on the fact or not. We do age and die, which is for the betterment of future life.

In the end, it is important that we have something to show for having been born and lived. It is well that we make personal choices now, in our lives, that harmonize personal and social wellbeing.

We cannot in right mind want to bring violence and ruin to others [to nature]. Religion, personal and group, is rightly purposeful and exemplary when its word and work motivates others to altruistic living. The test of human authenticity is love's motive and its consequence, for love alone endures. [From, Sylvester L. Steffen, **RELIGION & CIVILITY**, pp 207, 208, www.authorhouse.com]

Lessons of history testify to the need for a global change of consciousness and conscience, NOW. Political decisions have moral consequences for the longterm future. Change begins with honest communication, and, religious/ political integrity rests on honest communication.

◀ **How Celibate are Celibates? Bishop DiMarzio on sexual orientation** ▶

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Mercedes Hello. As a

Submitted by [Mercedes](#) on December 17, 2008 - 12:41pm.

Mercedes

Hello. As a catechist, I am participating in the indoctrination of 11 new cradle Catholics, 5 boys and 6 girls, all of them twelve, and I am enjoying them very much! Each one of them is very smart, and I told them they make me think of our Lord when he was twelve,(who had lingered longer in Jerusalem than his parents had liked!)

Last night, our topic was Jesus' Message and Mission. I think the relevance of reading about this topic for us, was that Jesus reaches out to shunned people - which is all of us. . . (if you think about it.) Upon summation of our discussion, I assigned them homework: Look up Fr. Roy Bourgeois in your text, The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, St. Mary's Press, research what is going on with him now, and write a paper telling what you think of the whole thing. I wonder what they will say if they do the assignment.

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Lamentably, it happens all

Submitted by [SantaChingada](#) on October 31, 2008 - 5:10am.

Lamentably, it happens all the time. I was expelled recently from a [Catholic] chat for asking such questions. My Catholic relatives and friends don't even like to see me coming with such questions. One of my friends - a recent convert to Catholicism - could only suggest I should change to a different religion, if I don't like this one. Sometimes I have thought of it, but I am too Catholic to become something other. It is true that the practices are sick and tormenting for a woman, but... the food is good, and I have too much history in this to leave it behind. The idea of gynophobia and men hidden inside the monasteries telling to each other that women are inferior and too stupid to take us seriously is frankly disgusting. It actually should have been contested long ago. But, the more Catholics followed the male theologians in our religion and believed their extravaganzas, the more difficult it became for women to even exist.

A contradicting part of Catholicism is the conception of women found in Catholicism - and only here - as we are explained things this way: A woman should look up to Mary, and be like Mary, to be a good Catholic woman.

Well, although the Bible does not tell any of that, the Catholic dogma has been passed on to the world as of Mary being the perfect combination of perpetual virgin with no sexual identity, never touched a man and though she became a mother of the most popular of all men in history, who by the way never either touches a woman in a sexual or amorous way. This whole psychotic horror from sex is transferred to the ideal of Mary as we see that in addition to being "immaculate" (never had sex), she never said a word, never protested, never even spoke in public - except during the annunciation, and only because she was answering to an angel. She became co-redemptrix and heroine of the guys in the monasteries who created the whole allegorical fiction of her life and death. A Jesuit in the past even invented the story of Mary never died and was taken straight up to heaven... All over the Catholic sites of the world, we see her standing in sculptures of stone or cement, ornamented with gold leaf and star of the ceremony she happens to have had one child only, not by having had sex with a man but, with God the Father who doesn't have a body therefore she was impregnated by the Holy Spirit, which is not a man but a dove and so on... Mary doesn't look like any of the women and mothers that we see around, she is depicted as a puberty girl who had a baby and

nobody seems to care about the suggestive imagination of a fourteen year old girl having a baby while living with an old man to then tell the world that he is not having any sexual relations with her. If such was a real story, they would possibly be in the media and the old man would be sent to jail. But not in Catholicity, where anything coming from the tedious imagination of a bundle of solitary men who do not even want to deal with women on an equal level, will be accepted as dogma.

The problem with that ideal of Mary invented by the gynophobes is, they produced an unreachable and unreasonable vision of a woman, that no matter how clever and valuable any of us would become, no woman will ever seem as attractive as that idol they have produced to masturbate their minds in their solitary for-men-only Catholic elite where the dogmas are produced under the unquestionable label of the ex-Cathedra copyrights exclusiveness. The idea of men hating women for who we truly are has generated vicious circles of rejection of women and of hate and love of the women, all at the same time, thus truly producing a world that justifies the suffering and oppression of women, because the mind of the viewer has turned so accustomed to the artificial invention of women as opposed to the true women who go around carrying the real cross and being the true lambs of the world, which then goes out to the market as of pornography with women being hurt a lot and men paying money to rape the virgins.

And from the pulpit of their stubborn infallibility, the men who copyrighted the dogmas have spent hundreds of years creating and improving the dogmas that then the world accepts as imposed conditions to the demonstration of a perfect faith. Those men create the rhetoric of Catholic symbolism that they expect the world to follow blindly and up to the letter and punctuation of their elaborated Latin scripts, not allowing for any questions to be raised. By the time they take such dogmas to countries of the world where education has remained unreachable for the poor women and their even poorer children, their word of our delightful gynophobes will be interpreted as spoken by God himself, the masses will follow blindly, adding people to the Catholic demographics and adding to the numbers of people being misled by their own religious leaders into sex without condoms, no rights for women, the oppression of the weak, manipulation of political options, allowing the church to interpret politics and ethics, and that all under the ultimate glorification of suffering as a rule of law that will grant the believers all the rights of entry to the Kingdom of Heavens not right after they die but sometime in a far future, after they will have been rescued from the fires and agonies of the -almost eternal - purgatory...

Why isn't anyone contesting these things and Catholics do it to themselves in accepting such dogmas of darkness and deception instead of opening the windows and ventilating the dungeons, for fresh light and common sense to enter; and perhaps also some police investigation to figure out why those men are hurting themselves and the world by imposing these things on the rest of us? Why are we all pointing fingers at Xenu, the Intergalactic Overlord of the Scientologists, and nobody is questioning our Catholic eunuchs who have gone way beyond off the wall with so many strange stories for at least two thousand years now?

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Hi SantaChingada, perhaps

*Submitted by **TTM** on November 1, 2008 - 12:09am.*

Hi SantaChingada,

perhaps you have come across some gross abuse of some form within the Church, but it seems to me that the problems you express seem not to be in conformity with the reality of what the Church is by virtue of its establishment by Christ and protection by the Holy Spirit.

This is a crucial point which seems to be lacking in your fundamental assumption, that the Church is merely a man-made institution. As the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* states in its opening paragraph, the Church is a kind of a sacrament - it is both human and divine. With such a fundamental reality being denied from the outset, it is difficult to see how one could dialogue with the rest of the arguments that derive from this assumed presupposition, which contradicts what it means to be Catholic (ie. sharing the faith that is universal in time, space, and teaching; historically, geographically, and doctrinally).

I would like to comment briefly, but allow me to point out that until the fundamental issue - namely, faith - is dealt with, it would be impossible to make progress in any other point.

> "A contradicting part of Catholicism is the conception of women found in Catholicism - and only here - as we are explained things this way: A woman should look up to Mary, and be like Mary, to be a good Catholic woman.

Perhaps, but Our Lady is an example not just to women but to the whole Church, for whom she is the figure as the virgin bride - the New Eve, to the New Adam of Christ.

> "Well, although the Bible does not tell any of that"

The 'New Eve' imagery is quite clearly in the Bible, in the form of type-antitype relationship. This was recognized very early by the early Church fathers including Justin Martyr.

See, 'Ave Maria, the New Eve' for the biblical parallels:
<http://home.inreach.com/bstanley/eve.htm>

> "the Catholic dogma has been passed on to the world as of Mary being the perfect combination of perpetual virgin with no sexual identity, never touched a man and though she became a mother of the most popular of all men in history, who by the way never either touches a woman in a sexual or amorous way."

Consecrated virginity is good, yes, but it is not opposed to sexual relations, which is also good. Consecrated virginity is good precisely because the precious gift of sexuality is consecrated to God for the sake of the Kingdom.

> "This whole psychotic horror from sex is transferred to the ideal of Mary as we see that in addition to being "immaculate" (never had sex), she never said a word, never protested, never even spoke in public - except during the annunciation, and only because she was answering to an angel."

Some members of the Catholic Church may have expressed horror of sex, but this is not in accord with the mind of the Church, which regards marital relations to be holy, sacred and very good. In fact, it is a means by which the human family may image most perfectly on Earth the divine fecundity - even the Angels cannot do this.

Virgin Mary was immaculate not because she never had sexual relations, but because of the manner in which she was saved; she was spared from the stain of original sin right from the moment she was conceived. This is what 'immaculate conception' refers to; to her own conception. This is not to be confused with the manner in which she conceived Jesus, which is called the 'virgin birth'.

The manner of her obedience is in relation to God - the 'fiat' which saved you, I and the whole world. This is why she is the model for the whole Church - members both male and female.

Constitution of the Church is fundamentally holy - even if her members were not - by virtue of being Christ's Body, where all necessary means of salvation is to be found, and whose doctrines are guided by the Holy Spirit.

I would suggest that the obsession with perverse sexuality comes not from the constitutive elements of the Church - which include Apostolic Tradition, as well as the three-fold authority as outlined by Dei Verbum above. Historically, we can look for hints in the various humanistic disciplines, such as humanistic psychology, which have crept into the Church:

See 'Carl Rogers and the IHM Nuns: Sensitivity Training, Psychological Warfare and the "Catholic Problem":

<http://www.culturewars.com/CultureWars/1999/rogers.html>

> "The problem with that ideal of Mary invented by the gynophobes is..."

To come back to the main point, this is an unproven assumption actually that contradicts the very constitutive foundation of our faith. The dogma of immaculate conception and assumption were in fact proclaimed infallible upon unanimous consent from the faithful - these are prime examples of *sensus fidei*. Thus, the dogmatic truths in relation to Mary are divinely revealed, not humanly invented.

If one is to believe that these dogmas were invented, then the very foundation of Catholic faith collapses. Even the Scriptures cannot be appealed to, because it was the Church which wrote and compiled half of it, and canonised all the books in it, by the same dogmatic authority. Apostolic Tradition, too, falls, since the authority of the teaching office throughout the ages has discerned the valid elements in them.

As Dei Verbum 10 states:

"It is clear, therefore, that sacred tradition, Sacred Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls."

To reject one of the three is to collapse divine revelation as a whole, and so to deny the workings of the Holy Spirit, not to mention our hope for salvation.

Until one understands that the Church is fundamentally derived from Christ, rather than created, and that her authority depends on the Holy Spirit, it would be impossible not to commit categorical fallacies in looking at the Church (which is why I suggest that any dialogue would be impossible until this basic point has been addressed). One has to

have, as foundations, the theological - that is, God-derived, God-given and God-directed - virtues of faith, hope and charity.

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TTM, you say "Until one

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 1, 2008 - 6:32pm.*

TTM, you say "Until one understands that the Church is fundamentally derived from Christ, rather than created, and that her authority depends on the Holy Spirit, it would be impossible not to commit categorical fallacies in looking at the Church (which is why I suggest that any dialogue would be impossible until this basic point has been addressed). One has to have, as foundations, the theological - that is, God-derived, God-given and God-directed - virtues of faith, hope and charity."

I would suggest that as Church, we have hardly begun to discover let alone understand the "Cosmic Christ" who is by reason of Divine Instance expressed ("created") in/ through "natural" transformation. "Grace (work of the Holy Spirit) supposes nature as faith supposes reason." God is, NOW, as in the beginning — revelation continues.

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Note also that the passage

*Submitted by **TTM** on November 17, 2008 - 8:44pm.*

Note also that the passage in question is about understanding that "the Church is fundamentally derived from Christ" - here, the subject is the Church in the context of history tracing itself back to Christ's historical presence in the world.

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Church is transformational

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 18, 2008 - 2:50pm.*

Church is transformational as The People are transformational; the fact of transformational (theological) continuity does not prove the authenticity of theological understanding, nor does the continuity of historical fixation in mistaken consciousness prove ecclesial authenticity. Like The People, Church is organic, evolving, subject to trial and error in the contingencies of time and place. Like The People, Church also needs correction from misdirection.

See "THEOLOGY for the TIMES"

<http://www.secondenlightenment.org/THEOLOGY%20for%20the%20TIMES.pdf>

Because you and I ground our consciousness in different frames of reference it is unlikely that we can come to a convergence of understanding;" stet res." I operate from the human/ divine perspective, you (it seems to me) from the divine/ human. You

assume divine revelation (independent of human consciousness) and extrapolate on to human consciousness on the bases of theological presumptions/ assumptions of "revelations"; I presume human consciousness with its sense limitations, and I extrapolate from there on to divine consciousness.

Conflicted assumptions of subject/ object are at issue here between us; I see divine/ human reciprocity at work in which both are subject and object in means/ ends. My sense is that you do not assume the same reciprocity of mutuality, of subjectivity.

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What a stunningly beautiful

*Submitted by **Rev Dr Elaine McCoy** on November 24, 2008 - 10:40pm.*

What a stunningly beautiful statement! Thank you Sylvester. I feel myself very close to your reasoning; my difference is slight and perhaps merely semantic. Where you express the reciprocity and mutuality of our relationship with God as divine/human, I would express it as Divine::human... [Both the double colon and the elipses are deliberate because I reject the slash-dichotomy which I see as having less to do with a subject/object distinction than an ontologically distinctive sharing of consciousness between the Lover of Souls and the soul.]

Thanks so much for all of your interesting and thought-provoking commentary.

The Rev. Dr. E. McCoy

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you... (Jn13:34)

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Thank you, Elaine. Your

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 25, 2008 - 5:14pm.*

Thank you, Elaine. Your observation is well taken.

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The Church certainly

*Submitted by **TTM** on November 24, 2008 - 6:37pm.*

The Church certainly evolves, but not through rapture but continuity ('micro' evolution, not 'macro', if you like), not because of its initiative, but because of the initiative of Christ who entered history and uses the temporal reality as the channel of revelation, for grace builds on nature. "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Matthew 13:52). One holds to Apostolic Tradition even while being open to development of doctrine (cf Newman's **Essay on the Development of Doctrine**).

You mention theology for the times. While it can be valid to take an approach that is contemporary (John Paul II's personalist theology, for example), it must never be isolated from its pre-requisite, which is faith. Theology, remember, is 'faith seeking understanding'.

A balanced approach to this is outlined by Aidan Nichols, OP in '**What Theology Is**'. He rejects, as did the present Pope as Cardinal, the notion that the task of the theologian is merely to clarify magisterial pronouncements. Yet, he also recognizes that the guiding charism bestowed through the sacrament of Order to the magisterial office are to be respected, since they come not from the Bishops themselves, but from the Lord.

It is the Spirit who guides the Church to all truth (John 16:13), through the successor of Peter (John 21:15-17; Luke 22:31-32) and through Catholic unity in being of 'one mind' (Philippians 2:2). This is, after all, how the body works - it is no different in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), where God himself has appointed the apostles first in the Church (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Now, you mention the role of human consciousness. It would seem to be an oversimplification to say that divine revelation is independent from human consciousness, and I never stated this. However, it would equally be questionable to start from the human consciousness and extrapolate to the divine, since it would assume that the divinity can be grasped by human effort. That would seem to eliminate any need for Christ's *kenosis*. Indeed, it is a hallmark of the Modernist heresy to begin from 'Vital Immanence', which simply reduce revelation to subjective experience and opinion.

A more balanced perspective is found in Vatican II's **Dei Verbum**, which considers faith to be the correlative of revelation. Revelation comes first, since only God can traverse the infinite gap between the creator and creature. Thus, Dei Verbum 5 states:

"The obedience of faith" (Rom. 13:26; see 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6) "is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals," (4) and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him. To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it." (5) To bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by His gifts.

Thus, even the act of faith is brought about through divine initiative and grace. One can never presume to have the capacity to grasp God by our own initiative, even though natural reason can clear the way for supernatural faith.

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Sylvester, this is succinct

Submitted by [colkoch](#) on November 19, 2008 - 12:23pm.

Sylvester, this is succinct and from what I read, totally on target:

"You assume divine revelation (independent of human consciousness) and extrapolate on to human consciousness on the bases of theological presumptions/ assumptions of "revelations"; I presume human consciousness with its sense limitations, and I extrapolate from there on to divine consciousness."

Coming from your same perspective the only thing I would add is that you don't seem to take your extrapolations to the point of universal truth for everyone else.

<http://enlightenedcatholicism-colkoch.blogspot.com>

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Quite right. Ultimately

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 25, 2008 - 4:23am.*

Quite right. Ultimately there is but One Absolute, Love. The title posting "Love.Period." <http://ncrcafe.org/node/1816> states it succinctly. Love is the overarching virtue and source of all other grace.

Love is authentic regard for and commitment to the wellbeing of other. Love expressed engenders trust. Trust enables authentic communication (faith), authentic consciousness (hope), and authentic conscience (altruism). Because Love is the universal fervor of certitude, purposefulness and self/ other concern, it is the underlying absolute that joins evolution, intelligence and conflict resolution.

Love knows no enthrallment of ideology, dogma or politics. Love alone transcends all ideologies, all dogmas, all politics and all differences.

GODisWORD.GODisLIGHT.GODisLOVE. Holy.Holy.Holy.

Revelation is by way of the resonant inspiration of Word-Light-Love, which occurs in ORGANIC EVOLUTION. The fulfillment of consciousness comes with knowledge and experience of Organic Theology, from the bottom up. Revelation is turned on by trustful relationships, by **Trimorphic Resonance**, the Word-made flesh means of reconciliation. Humankind comes to the Godhead sense of Holy Spirit in experiencing Word-Light-Love Revelation

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Sylvester, I agree that

*Submitted by **TTM** on November 24, 2008 - 7:17pm.*

Sylvester,

I agree that love is indeed the overarching virtue. However, I am somewhat reluctant to agree with the use of the words faith, hope and love, since it seems to me that you do not use terminologies in the commonly agreed sense. You previously defined them as 'civic' virtues (natural) rather than 'theological' virtues (supernatural), and I wonder if this has to do with the uses here. Perhaps you can elucidate for us what is meant by "authentic communication", "authentic consciousness", and "universal fervor of certitude"?

Also, we must also be aware of the manifold ways of misunderstanding what exactly 'love' is in the Christian sense. Peter Kreeft on **Love** lists seven common misunderstandings, including this one which may or may not be relevant:

"A fourth misunderstanding about love is the confusion between "God is love" and "love is God." The worship of love instead of the worship of God involves two deadly mistakes.

First it uses the word God only as another word for love. God is thought of as a force or energy rather than as a person. Second, it divinizes the love we already know instead of showing us a love we don't know... So "God is love" means "Let me tell you something new about the God you know: he is essential love, made of love, through and through." But "Love is God" means "Let me tell you something about the love you already know, your own human love: that is God. That is the ultimate reality..."

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You say, "However, I am

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 25, 2008 - 5:10pm.*

You say, "However, I am somewhat reluctant to agree with the use of the words faith, hope and love, since it seems to me that you do not use terminologies in the commonly agreed sense." Have faith, hope and love become so corralled by convention that they cannot increase beyond the worn-out limitations of cultural fixation in the past?

You say, "Perhaps you can elucidate for us what is meant by "authentic communication", "authentic consciousness", and "universal fervor of certitude"?"

The word authentic is from the Latin verb augere meaning to increase. Authentic communication increases the knowledge (consciousness) of those communicating. Truthful, purposeful and sensitive increase happens between (amongst) persons when their communication is truthful, purposeful and other-sensitive.

The increase that comes from communication is enlargement of consciousness (evolution of consciousness) to fuller sense, insight, understanding. In their own ways all senses communicate by energy attenuation (emission/ reception): seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. Thought-exchange by means of word-exchange is a whole different category of communication. "In the beginning was the Word..." and the Word goes on...

The communication of thought is personal and special. In personal experience we know how some people radiate energy and excite us by their very presence. That is "fervor" (energy, warmth, light) that is coming from others and can be palpably attenuated. Fervor is something we can and should aspire to. The certitude of uplift from the positive energy of others (what is love, fervor) is a universal potential, a universal need. But if we don't know how to give (radiate energy) we also don't know how to receive energy (attenuate the affirmative vibes) of others.

Love is energetic, creative, imaginative, always questing in the interest of wellbeing. Love communicates; God communicates in the love purposefully expressed between and among people in myriads of ways. Love is boundless. But we know from experience also that some people are so negative and bereft of spiritual radiation (positive) energy that one feels drained in their presence because all they do is take energy away.

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> "I would suggest that as

Submitted by **TTM** on November 15, 2008 - 7:54pm.

> "I would suggest that as Church, we have hardly begun to discover let alone understand the "Cosmic Christ" who is by reason of Divine Instance expressed ("created") in/ through "natural" transformation."

If by this you mean that Christ is the Word made flesh, certainly, there is more we do not know about him than what do know.

However, this in no way implies that what we do know about Christ is negated by any new knowledge we have of him. What we have been handed down is consistent with the truth, since it was Christ's own initiative to undergo the kenosis of entering history and our humanity for the sake of revealing/communicating himself in ways we can appreciate. As Dei Verbum 13 states, "...the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the word of the eternal Father, when He took to Himself the flesh of human weakness, was in every way made like men." Revelation is therefore the work of Christ - in the Spirit, entrusted to him from the Father.

It is a poor teacher whose students cannot learn from his teaching, but Christ is the very best of teachers. That is why we can depend on him to have communicated and preserved the saving Truth of himself to and through the Ecclesial consciousness through the formal cause of the Holy Spirit; hence, the importance of Tradition, Scripture and Magisterium, which are guided by the Spirit who continues the work of Christ (see Dei Verbum, no. 10 in the context of the first two chapters). This is integral to the notion of the Church as a sacramental reality - it is not a merely sociological organization; without the Holy Spirit, there can be no Church, and so his guidance is constitutive of the Ecclesial reality, inclusive of all the diverse ministries (of which the magisterial office numbers first: 1 Cor 12: 28-30) working in harmony with Christ the head (1 Cor 12:4-6).

> "Grace (work of the Holy Spirit) supposes nature as faith supposes reason."

Indeed, and this is why we have been given by Christ a historic revelation, which comes to us in human language through the Tradition ('handing on') of the Church. It's integral to the Incarnational reality of God entering time and space.

> "God is, NOW, as in the beginning — revelation continues."

Continues, certainly, but without rapture. Revelation must be seen in the light of the historical nature of revelation, since it is God's chosen means of communication (as, again, his kenosis in the Incarnation implies).

Therefore, as Benedict XVI said in relation to Vatican II, we must employ the hermeneutics of continuity and reform, as opposed to that of discontinuity and rapture, in interpreting what the Church receives and teaches:

"On the one hand, there is an interpretation that I would call "a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture"; it has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media, and also one trend of modern theology. On the other, there is the "hermeneutic of reform", of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God."

[from a blog, 'The Hermeneutic of Continuity', titled after this very concept. See: <http://the-hermeneutic-of-continuity.blogspot.com/2006/04/pope-benedict-xvi-on-hermeneutic-of.html>]

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TMM writes~ "However, this

*Submitted by **Dennis** on November 25, 2008 - 8:30am.*

TMM writes~ "However, this in no way implies that what we do know about Christ is negated by any new knowledge we have of him." Don't be so sure of yourself. "What we know of Christ" is so embroiled in what the human institution imputes for domination and other political and historical reasons that a real exercise in discernment of fundamental proportions is needed to discern the real Christ. I would also suggest that a new catechesis is equally needed to begin to facilitate Self-revelation by the Christ of cosmic dimension (even of global) as Sylvester suggests. It might also be worth considering that your affirmation that "...Christ a historic revelation...comes to us in human language through the Tradition ('handing on') of the Church." is suspect. Coming from an apologist of the encrusted institution, it rings hollow. The so-called "human language" appears to be the reserve of the elitist who retain the absolute right to interpret, i.e., dumb down, for us "ordinary folk".

I believe that it is worth considering that for too long we have tolerated the confusion of historical control as truth.

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TTM, from my point of view,

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 18, 2008 - 2:08pm.*

TTM, from my point of view, the thinking behind your comment is fuzzy, not to suggest that my thinking isn't also fuzzy. What I see you doing in the present is what Catholic culture has persistently done in the past — hand down the cultural enthrallment of Constantinean (imperial) theology/ politics.

You say, "What we've been handed down is consistent with the truth." Fixation in dominion culture has brought the human condition to its present dire straits. Fixation in Christian culture (dominion theology/ politics) is incapable of resolving the crises it has caused. That's the truth.

Over cultural history, conflicted faith and reason have fractured consciousness into tectonic fixations that are loaded with tensions, and now quake civilizations, and radically shift consciousness.

You say, "Revelation is therefore the work of Christ- in the Spirit, entrusted to him in the Father."

Human community is in the likeness of Divine Community, of humanly conceived divine community. Humans deceive themselves when they construe Godhead Community in anthropomorphic fixations which distort understanding of *God in truth*. Your observation

“entrusted in him from the Father” can be too narrowly, too literally, too humanly construed on presumptions of deceived male prerogation.

Constantinean culture, which enshrines state dominion (the sword) along with Church dominion (the cross) is inconsistent with the example and teaching of Jesus and with “the work of Christ - in the Spirit.”

“...revelation...continues, certainly but without rapture.” The continuity of handing down the theology/ ecclesiology of dominion is bankrupt and irreligious. The trance (rapture, enthrallment) of bankrupt dominion rationale needs to be healed for it is in truth a “rupture” from the Verbum Verum of Divine Presence revealed in the Spirit. “Grace (work of the Holy Spirit) supposes nature as faith supposes reason”, as culture has supposed dominion, but with less happy outcomes.

Indeed, “the hermeneutics of continuity and reform” need to apply as opposed to discontinuity (rupture) and the cultured enthrallment of rapture. “...the one subject (- Church) of the journeying People of God (Pope Benedict XVI) increases in time and develops – the hermeneutics of reform, of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church, always remaining the same one subject - Church.

The times call for “exit” from cultural arrogance and ignorance (handed-down enthrallment) and “entrance” into the enlightening spirituality of liberation. [See postings, e.g., <http://ncrcafe.org/node/2278>].

The Christ of the Cosmos is more Godly than the God of dominion theology/ ecclesiology. Resonance is more needed and purposeful than dominance. The Pope calls the People of God to the “maximum reverence (that) is owed to a child” [<http://www.ncrcafe.org/node/2284>] even as Jesus admonished his disciples that heaven was out of their reach unless they became as children — innocence (doing no harm), not arrogance, identifies the Christian.

In Godhead understanding Faith is Personalized; Hope is Personalized; Love is Personalized. God, the Communicator is Faithful; God, the Enlightener is Hopeful; God, the Other is Loving. Religion is faithful, hopeful and loving when it is personalized and when the equality of persons is held sacred.

Religion needs to be more innocent, less arrogant; more illuminating, less fixed in past darkness; more other, less self-occupied. Politicized dominion, theological and ecclesiological, is un-Godly, un-Christ-like, and inconsistent with truth and “what we know about Jesus.”

The culture of guilt and fear is a culture of division and dominion, of conflict, confusion and waste. The fraudulent prerogation of male primacy is idolatrous, socially and religiously incompetent.

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As perspective and

Submitted by **TTM** on October 7, 2008 - 4:42am.

As perspective and perception play large roles in determining one's response and sentiments regarding an issue, it may be fruitful to turn to the Ecclesiological understanding of the matter.

We must keep in mind that the mission of the Church is fundamentally derived, rather than created. It is the Father who sends the Son, who, in turn and through the Holy Spirit, delegates His own mission to the Apostles, and through them to the entire Church.

Thus, the activity of the Church must be first of all seen to be Pneumatological - that is, of the Holy Spirit - and directed toward its Eschatological end - that is, toward the consummation of the world and the coming of Christ.

There is a risk of speciously perceiving the Church as a humanistic, sociological institution. It is, as *Lumen Gentium* states in the opening chapter, in fact a sacrament reflecting Christ's two natures. The Church is human as well as divine, as the Holy Spirit works with human members in her. It therefore exists not for temporal purposes (although these are legitimate means and intermediate ends), but for the purpose of consecrating the world to Christ, thus bringing them to salvation, and contemplation of God in the beatific vision.

Now, because of the analogical nature of creation, which reflect that of God, all things in creation have some signification. The Holy Spirit respects this, being united with the Word through which all things have their being, and so the Pneumatic mission of the Church, which has its origin in Christ Himself, has a divinely destined structure (for a body without a form cannot exist, and the Church is that of Christ).

This cannot be grasped purely at the natural level, since it is, as *Lumen Gentium* affirms, a divine and sacramental mystery. It requires the faithful's thirst for the divine gifts - the theological virtues - of faith, hope and charity. As these virtues are inextricably linked to salvation - that is, one cannot be saved without them - the Church is rightfully called the Ark of Salvation.

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Dear TTM~ Jesus became man

*Submitted by **Dennis** on November 2, 2008 - 11:54am.*

Dear TTM~ Jesus became man not only to do what he did (?) but to do it in a manner which is within the intellectual and perceptual scope of the ordinary human. By "ordinary human" I mean the countless millions of men, women and children who are either not or little educated, tactile, perception and holistically oriented (towards oneness in self, health and community). I do not disparage the intellectualization of faith in theology nor a community of same but Church IS (contrary to your contention) specifically and essentially humanistic and sociological, more, it is 'communitarian', a living breathing organism of which Christ is member as He is its divination. Only within that acknowledgement of and towards that direction does the 'science' of theology have any merit or utility.

Theologians and hierarchy and other clerics who have abandoned that realization have in reality abandoned "church".

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Grace supposes nature,

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 7, 2008 - 5:27pm.*

Grace supposes nature, ontologically and functionally. Church mission, personal mission, supposes nature, ontologically and functionally.

Ecclesiology supposes theology. Speculation, based on misinformed suppositions, is misinformed. Theology, derived from misinformed understandings of nature, misinforms Ecclesiology. Spirit is operative in the individual Person; Church derives from the operative Community of Persons.

Human speculation that presumes knowledge derived outside ontological/ functional suppositions is seriously subject to misdirection. Nature is trustworthy because of Divine Instance in the transformational purposes of intentional symbiosis.

Faith and reason mutually suppose each other; hope supposes faith/ reason; love supposes faith/ reason; Church supposes faith/ reason; salvation supposes faith/ reason.

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> "Speculation, based on

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 9, 2008 - 6:16am.*

> "Speculation, based on misinformed suppositions, is misinformed. Theology, derived from misinformed understandings of nature, misinforms Ecclesiology."

Yes. It would seem here's a reason to examine the basic ontological difference between the sexes. From the point of view of a naturalist, there is essentially none - and so from this foundation where the differences are merely accidental, it would become a point of contention for an accidental and quantitative equality, and therefore a struggle of power. From a more theistic point of view, however, the basic difference becomes not a matter of accidental superficiality but an ontological and qualitative one.

Now, reason in the classical sense supposes something much greater and more dignified than simple logical process of reasoning. It supposes also a deep insight into the nature of things, and of the good toward which every nature is directed. One of these is the complementary ontology of the sexes, where the superficial quantitative differences are transcended by the greater and more qualitative complementarity which can transform the quantitative differences unto fruitfulness through a spiritual marriage.

This is a secret known to us at the natural level. It seems, however, that certain ideological tendencies in the modern West prevents it from being obvious to us. At such times, revelation can assist us in rediscovering this wonder and mystery.

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Understand EVOLVE. There are

*Submitted by **sevenup** on October 3, 2008 - 9:23pm.*

Understand EVOLVE. There are women alive today who have the capabilities of being priests, bishops and even Pope, but is society ready for such a progressive thought? We all know the answer to that question. Civil government is way ahead of the church and the mothering essence of womanhood is important enough to be protected not to the exclusion of progress. It is not even a 'sin' in the church to discriminate in matters of civil equality. In nature there are no examples of immediate and radical change like this would be. It will happen eventually but the envelope must be pushed every day and the church society is mammoth, stubborn, and needs all the understanding possible and then some..

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Hi sevenup, I think we

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 7, 2008 - 7:52pm.*

Hi sevenup,

I think we ought to be careful in overlooking a few presuppositions. From a naturalistic point of view (which I think you're implying by mentioning evolution), there is no fundamental difference between male and female - they are merely material and accidental differences. From another point of view which is more Aristotelian, there is in fact a difference which is more substantial. This difference which is apparent to all of us would be that of power from a naturalistic worldview, but from the more Aristotelian and theistic point of view it is a difference that is complimentary and full of analogical meaning.

This analogical meaning of creation (see the post above for more on this) is not merely a chance occurrence, but is the result of divine wisdom and love out of which all things came into being. Thus, it is a part of God's ongoing creation, in which the Church participates through the mediated grace of Christ.

Take St. Paul's analogy of the Body, for example. It shows that difference in kind implies not a difference of superiority but a difference in complementarity:

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord.... For the body does not consist of one member but of many... The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

Thus, God invites us to participate in His creation in a manner that is mysterious to us but is nonetheless perceivable analogically. In this, then, is found the mystery of love and the peace which the world cannot give (John 14:27).

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TTM, you say, "Thus, it is

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 9, 2008 - 3:37am.*

TTM, you say, "Thus, it is a part of God's ongoing creation, in which the Church participates through the mediated grace of Christ."

How Ecclesiology/ Theology are understood radically affects, for better or for worse, man's "part" with respect to God's "part" in the order of nature.

The Ecclesiology/ Theology of "The People Church" (Vatican II) vis-a-vis the hierarchical Church (Trent, Vatican I) are radically different; faith and reason are radically conflicted by the conflicts of Tridentine/ Vatican II, Ecclesiologies/ Theologies, and so are "The People".

At the heart of the conflict are the alienation of and discrimination against women in Church, on premises of old ecclesiology/ theology. Modern understanding of human nature enlightens the radical conflict and the harm that results from theological fixations in mistaken understandings of human psychology/ physiology. Patriarchal ignorance, arrogance, and dominion are antithetical to the natural order of female/ male mutuality, complementarity, subsidiarity.

As John Courtney Murray says: "Faith supposes reason as grace supposes nature"

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> "How Ecclesiology/

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 18, 2008 - 12:47am.*

> "How Ecclesiology/ Theology are understood radically affects, for better or for worse, man's "part" with respect to God's "part" in the order of nature."

Agreed wholeheartedly.

> "The Ecclesiology/ Theology of "The People Church" (Vatican II) vis-a-vis the hierarchical Church (Trent, Vatican I) are radically different; faith and reason are radically conflicted by the conflicts of Tridentine/ Vatican II, Ecclesiologies/ Theologies, and so are "The People"."

The hermeneutics of Vatican II should be carried out in the spirit intended by the Council Fathers, which is also the Apostolic and Catholic spirit of continuation and reform of tradition, rather than rapture, as Holy Father has pointed out (also as Cardinal). Hence, it can never be so 'radically different' as to negate what has been handed down from the past.

We see that in Lumen Gentium, which is the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the identity of the Church is examined by the Fathers as they explicitly state in their opening paragraph, "This [the Sacred Synod] intends to do following faithfully the teaching of previous councils". There is not a conflict here at all, but (as with all authentic Catholic doctrine) an organic development. This becomes clear upon objective reading of the document itself.

Now, the term "people of God" is a view of the Church as seen in its second chapter. This was the term used in order to capture the "bird's eye view", as it were, of the Church. Although, arguably the most comprehensive term for the Church is 'sacrament', used in the opening paragraph, since this is the mystery of the Church as outlined in the first chapter.

As such, it is one aspect of the Church, although it does encompass the other aspects which follow it in the proceeding chapters. Hence, one must not emphasise one aspect over and above the others. As a term which encompasses the others, it is necessarily a general term that needs to be seen in the light of all of the others (and vice versa, of course). Thus, it necessarily needs to respect the other seven chapters in the document. One cannot emphasise the second chapter without considering the third, and vice versa:

1. The Mystery Of The Church
2. On The People Of God
3. On The Hierarchical Structure Of The Church And In Particular On The Episcopate
4. The Laity
5. The Universal Call To Holiness In The Church
6. Religious
7. The Eschatological Nature Of The Pilgrim Church And Its Union With The Church In Heaven
8. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother Of God In The Mystery Of Christ And The Church

> "At the heart of the conflict are the alienation of and discrimination against women in Church, on premises of old ecclesiology/ theology. Modern understanding of human nature enlightens the radical conflict and the harm that results from theological fixations in mistaken understandings of human psychology/ physiology. Patriarchal ignorance, arrogance, dominion, are antithetical to the natural order of female/ male mutuality, complementarity, subsidiarity."

This seems to be a presupposition of some in the Church. However, it is unlikely to be the intention of Christ, since discrimination in nature (as opposed to unjust discrimination) is divinely ordained. The Church has said, in the document *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, not that it will not ordain women, but that it does not have the authority to do so. In which case, it is not a matter of justice - that is, denial of a right - but of ontology - that is, Christ has not intended it from all eternity. Since priesthood of both kinds - the royal priesthood of the laity and the ministerial priesthood of the Holy Orders - are gifts given by Christ to the Church, the Church cannot claim to have a 'right' over it, since it is a gratuitous and unmerited gift.

> "As John Courtney Murray says: "Faith supposes reason as grace supposes nature"

Rightly said. The subjects of the grace of the Sacrament of Orders (the one who is its origin, and the woman who is its end) can perhaps show why there is an ontological basis to this.

Priests mediate the love of God through Christ's mediatorship. There is a reason why the object of mediation is always feminine - be it Israel, the Church, or Mary. Mary is the ultimate object and intention of divine love, and the ultimate reason for creation. Looking to Mary, we can see that she became the perfect recipient of God's grace, which is His perfect love. She was the finality of creation, reflected by Eve's (who foreshadows Mary) arrival at the end of the 6 days of Genesis.

The priests stand in place of Christ as the one who channels God's divine love to Mary, who is the perfect figure of the Church. Women participate in this as the ultimate reason for creation, and as those who best reflect Mary and the Church as the beloved of God.

From the eternal point of view, it is rather puzzling for women to want to be in any other position.

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TTM, you say "Now, the term

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 22, 2008 - 11:01am.*

TTM, you say "Now, the term "people of God" is a view of the Church as seen in its second chapter. This was the term used in order to capture the "bird's eye view", as it were, of the Church."

It seems to me that the characterization of "the people of God" as a "bird's eye" Church-view is dismissive of the significance of the Council's "ecclesiological" intention. I was impressed with how Pope Paul VI followed up on ecclesiological intention and convened laity input in committee to help formulate the family planning encyclical.

It is my sense that the term "people of God Church" intended(s) to affirm the "collegial/ conciliar" nature of the Church, the whole people of God, with respect to Church authority and authenticity.

The "sensus fidelium" (insight of the people) is about lay authenticity/ authority in conjunction with the hierarchy. When hierarchy, bishops, cardinals and popes disregard the "sensus fidelium" they do so at the price of diminishing their own authority as well as the credibility of the Church.

"Humanae Vitae" is a case in point; the public's enduring dismissiveness toward it is telling, and devastating to hierarchy/ laity relations. People consciousness senses that there is a grave moral proportional relationship to the abortion of individual life and the radical aborting of Earth's ecozoic network. Overwhelming human populations and fraudulent corporate consumerism are terminally aborting the sustainable potentials of Earth's ecozoic system.

The hierarchy's narrow "single-issue" (human abortion) focus and self-interest in consumerist corporatism come off to the public as singularly inauthentic and patently incredible. The wasting of Earth's ecozoic system (from mindless exploitation, feudal, colonial, and speculative corporate) is perhaps the most pressing and perplexing of all moral issues today. Global warming is a by-product of it.

Until now, the hierarchy just does not get it! The wake up of Church to the evolutionary connections of human ignorance, arrogance and greed to Earth-life wasting is long overdue. Church complicity in corporate wasting must end if Church would have moral credibility. Listen to the laity.

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> "It is my sense that the

Submitted by TTM on October 23, 2008 - 2:00am.

> "It is my sense that the term "people of God Church" intended(s) to affirm the "collegial/conciliar" nature of the Church, the whole people of God, with respect to Church authority and authenticity."

Yes, certainly, this is indeed the case. It is the flip-side of Vatican I, as it were, which was unable to deal with this due to the interruption of war.

Papal primacy and collegiality are inextricably connected, as Vatican I and Vatican II are, and so it is quite apt to address them with a phrase that encompasses them. It does not seem to me to be a 'dismissive' term. It rather seems to be the way to view it in a balanced fashion, retaining both aspects of a single reality.

> "The "sensus fidelium" (insight of the people) is about lay authenticity/ authority in conjunction with the hierarchy. When hierarchy, bishops, cardinals and popes disregard the "sensus fidelium" they do so at the price of diminishing their own authority as well as the credibility of the Church."

It is a matter of the people of God, yes, but this is not strictly speaking about lay authority, but rather of the universal indefectibility of the whole Church - the hierarchy as well as the laity. This is why, *sensus fidelium*, as *Lumen Gentium* 12 states, is made apparent universal consensus when, "from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful' they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals." LG goes on to state, "[i]t is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people of God accepts that which is not just the word of men but truly the word of God." Thus, if consensus is lacking and the teaching office is not respected, *sensus fidei* is not evidenced (for the faithful must first be faithful to the constitutive elements of the Church, which includes the Apostolic authority).

This seems also to imply a respect for what Chesterton termed the 'democracy of the dead' - sense of the faithful as applied to the universal and Apostolic Church. Since the Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself, the teaching authority, who enjoys His guidance, must also respect Apostolic Tradition, which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

An example of *sensus fidelium* in operation is the two Marian dogmas, which were confirmed with an overwhelming universal consensus upon consultation, prior to being defined as dogma.

You mention *Humanae Vitae*. I do think this is also demonstrative of this, in that in 1900 years of Christendom there was unanimous condemnation of contraception as a moral evil which thwarts the fruitfulness of union, that is, a means of imaging the Triune God. In 1930, an innovation was introduced with the Anglican decision to allow for it in extreme cases - of course, the floodgates opened with the so-called 'sexual revolution'. The consensus of the Spirit was disturbed through a cultural revolt, founded upon a lie - the faulty and ideology-driven pseudo-science of Alfred Kinsey.

For further details on this, see: The ALEC report on the 'junk science' of Kinsey which launched the sexual revolution:

www.drjudithreisman.com/archives/alecreport.doc

Now, the truth of the universal 'consensus fidei' which existed in Christendom, until the age of social engineering, seem to be evidenced by the fact that all four of the prophetic words of Paul VI in section 17 of the encyclical have come to be. That is, that contraception would:

1. "open wide the way for marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards."
2. "a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection."
3. "the danger of this power passing into the hands of those public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law. Who will blame a government which in its attempt to resolve the problems affecting an entire country resorts to the same measures as are regarded as lawful by married people in the solution of a particular family difficulty?"
4. "unless we are willing that the responsibility of procreating life should be left to the arbitrary decision of men, we must accept that there are certain limits, beyond which it is wrong to go, to the power of man over his own body and its natural functions—limits, let it be said, which no one, whether as a private individual or as a public authority, can lawfully exceed. "

We have seen exactly this: the institution of marriage has declined, as have the moral standards; many men no longer revere women but treat them as objects of pleasure in pornography that is so widespread; governments have resorted to mass condom distribution, to the degradation of marriage (with mounting evidence also that it increases the overall STD rate), and; various bio-ethical limits have been breached. All this is a natural consequence of separating the pleasure from responsibility, "[f]or no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit" (Lk 6:43).

See also: *Humanae Vitae: A Prophetic Document?* By Dr. Janet E. Smith:

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/r/p/HVProphetic88.pdf>

> "The hierarchy's narrow "single-issue" (human abortion) focus and self-interest in consumerist corporatism come off to the public as singularly inauthentic and patently incredible."

I don't agree that this is the case. Vatican has been quite outspoken as of late with regard to environmental concerns, as I am sure readers are aware.

The focus is based on natural law and, in particular, the degree of being. Vegetative life, as important as it is, does not have an ontologically equivalent status with human life. This is not an ecclesial teaching so much as one of common sense. It is the same reason why we can buy pork at a local butchershop but we do not treat one's child to the same fate as the pig. It is unfortunate that such a basic reality has to be stated by the Church, and not by some other authority at the natural level, but it seems this is part of the unfortunate consequences predicted in *Humanae Vitae*.

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You say, "I don't agree that

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 24, 2008 - 5:04pm.*

You say, "I don't agree that this is the case. Vatican has been quite outspoken **AS OF LATE** (emphasis added) with regard to environmental concerns, as I am sure readers are aware." Thank you for making my point for me. Crises have a way of bringing truth even to late comers.

I respect your advocacy for Thomism but I think it is misinformed in important aspects. Time will tell. It is my sense that we are going in circles. Peace.

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It's been my experience that

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 27, 2008 - 7:34pm.*

It's been my experience that criticisms of classical theism (which regards God as being eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and so on) - by process theologians, liberation theologians, and panentheists alike - are often founded on misunderstandings of metaphysical concepts. The omnipresence of God not oppose dynamism, for example, since dynamism is merely imperfect sharing in His omnipresence. We imagine God's omnipresence and perfection as being somehow static, but this is because we are thinking at the level of created genus - one has to go 'outside the box', beyond the limited diminutional imagination to grasp this, and to realise that God possesses 'illimitable life' and perfections of all possibilities (potentialities).

This is why criticisms against Catholic positions often place dichotomies against each other (the Protestant notion that the veneration of Saints take away from worship due to God, for example); they do not seem to realise the absolute dependence that the creation has on God for its very being and the entirety of its positive attributes - they are sharing in the being-itself that is God, and so are worthy of veneration and honor.

My feeling is that Thomism is a more adequate foundation than most. It can act as the skeletal structure, if you like, which can then be supplemented by others. A foundation requires a system capable of dealing with eternity as well as time, nature as well as grace, and so this suggests metaphysics. For more information, see Aidan Nichols, 'The Shape of Catholic Theology', p.346ff.

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The benign slant you give to

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 28, 2008 - 6:01pm.*

The benign slant you give to cultured dichotomies isn't born out in the evidence, I believe. Religious articulation of "supernatural" priority, for example, hasn't well served "natural" priorities, nor humankind.

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I'm not sure if I understand

Submitted by **TTM** on October 30, 2008 - 4:56am.

I'm not sure if I understand you here.

You don't mean that Catholic theology has emphasized the supernatural at the expense of the natural, do you? That would be quite contrary to the evidence available to us in history. As G. K. Chesterton put it in 'Why I am a Catholic':

"Nine out of ten of what we call new ideas are simply old mistakes. The Catholic Church has for one of her chief duties that of preventing people from making those old mistakes, from making them over and over again forever, as people always do if they are left to themselves. The truth about the Catholic attitude toward heresy—or, as some would say, toward liberty—can best be expressed perhaps by the metaphor of a map. The Catholic Church carries a sort of map of the mind that looks like the map of a maze but is in fact a guide to the maze. It has been compiled from knowledge that, even considered as human knowledge, is quite without any human parallel.

There is no other case of one continuous, intelligent institution that has been thinking about thinking for two thousand years. Its experience naturally covers nearly all experiences and especially nearly all errors. The result is a map in which all the blind alleys and bad roads are clearly marked, all the ways that have been shown to be worthless by the best of all evidence: the evidence of those who have gone down them.

On this map of the mind the errors are marked as exceptions. The greater part of it consists of playgrounds and happy hunting-fields where the mind may have as much liberty as it likes, not to mention any number of intellectual battlefields in which the battle is indefinitely open and undecided. But it does definitely take the responsibility of marking certain roads as leading nowhere or leading to destruction, to a blank wall, or to a sheer precipice. By this means it does prevent men from wasting their time or losing their lives upon paths that have been found futile or disastrous again and again in the past but might otherwise entrap travelers again and again in the future. The Church does make itself responsible for warning its people against these, and upon these the real issue of the case depends. It does dogmatically defend humanity from its worst foes: those hoary and horrible and devouring monsters of the old mistakes.

Now, all these false issues have a way of looking quite fresh, especially to a fresh generation. Their first statement always sounds harmless and plausible.

...it sounds quite pious to say, "Our moral conflict should end with a victory of the spiritual over the material." Follow it out, and you may end in the madness of the Manicheans, saying that a suicide is good because it is a sacrifice, that a sexual perversion is good because it produces no life, that the devil made the sun and moon because they are material. Then you may begin to guess why Catholicism insists that there are evil spirits as well as good and that materials also may be sacred, as in the Incarnation or the Mass, in the sacrament of marriage or the resurrection of the body."

[www.catholic.com/thisrock/2004/0410clas.asp]

Of course the supernatural has a primacy in the order of being, and so Christ has promised for us: "...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

We know, though, that grace perfects nature; this is the traditional Catholic theological principle - the sacramental and Incarnational principle, as Chesterton suggests above. You seem to hold this - as did Aquinas - so I'm not sure that there is a point of disagreement here, unless I'm misunderstanding what you said.

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Nice quote from Chesterton.

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 30, 2008 - 3:38pm.*

Nice quote from Chesterton. Thank you. "Nine out of ten of what we call new ideas are simply old mistakes. The Catholic Church has for one of her chief duties that of preventing people from making those old mistakes, from making them over and over again forever, as people always do if they are left to themselves." Vatican II recognized the old mistake of failing to see everything as "of a piece" and evolving, for which reason, it calls for new analyses and syntheses — Church's responsibility "of preventing people from making old mistakes". Seems Church is still making its old mistake of holding on to Tridentine theology/ ecclesiology against what Vatican II calls for.

The problem is that Church even now tends to give a sense of real dichotomy (disconnection) between the natural and supernatural, between materiality and spirituality. You say, "We know, though, that grace perfects nature; this is the traditional Catholic theological principle - the sacramental and Incarnational principle, as Chesterton suggests above. You seem to hold this - as did Aquinas - so I'm not sure that there is a point of disagreement here, unless I'm misunderstanding what you said."

The reciprocal relationship of the supernatural and natural is as the reciprocal relationship of grace and nature; each is nominator and denominator of the other. Reality is relationship by which all is characterized. I understand the transcendent as supernatural/ natural. Supernatural makes sense in context of natural, i.e., in context of iterations and complexity diversification, nature upon nature, upon nature, upon nature....etc.

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In relation to the issue of

*Submitted by **TTM** on September 27, 2008 - 6:25am.*

In relation to the issue of reserving ordination to men, which others have mentioned, I think it would do well for us to contemplate the respective roles of ordained and lay priesthoods.

As I wrote in the page about young adults in ministry (<http://ncrcafe.org/node/1702>), lay priesthood is directed outward, while the ordained priesthood is directed inward to enable the work of lay ministry.

Lumen Gentium, chapter IV (The Laity) states:

"What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature. ...the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God."

So the ordained priesthood acts 'in persona Christi' to offer the Sacrifice of Calvary made present on the altar, while the laity offer the same to the Father in union with him, as Mary did at the foot of the cross.

This seems to reflect the mysterious nature of the muscular-feminine relationship in creation, where the archetypical and valiant lover sacrifices himself for the sake of the beloved. Women - and specifically, Mary - turn out to have the primacy in love as the end or purpose of Creation.

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"What specifically

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 9, 2008 - 3:58am.*

"What specifically characterizes the laity is their secular nature. ...the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God."

Understanding "secular nature" and "spiritual nature" in relation to the human person is critical to authentic theology/ ecclesiology. The distinction between spiritual/ secular is an "ens rationis", a mental distinction, not an "ontological" one, i.e., not one that changes the "being" of the person.

Clerics are no less secular than laity, and no more spiritual than laity. By nature, humankind, soul and body, female and male, spiritual and secular, is (are) in reality co-essential and codependent, not separable.

Artifices of mental divisions are dangerous and damaging when they acquire meanings bigger than what they really are. Spiritual/ secular obligations, relations, apply equally to lay and cleric.

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> "The distinction between

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 21, 2008 - 5:26am.*

> "The distinction between spiritual/ secular is an "ens rationis", a mental distinction, not an "ontological" one, i.e., not one that changes the "being" of the person."

Yes, but since the Vatican II document here (Lumen Gentium, chapter IV) seems to speak of an ontological difference, let us see what the true intended meaning is in this case.

I do not think the Council fathers were referring to the difference of the religious and the secular vocations, if that is what you mean. A priest can be either a religious or a secular priest, as a laity also can have a religious or secular vocation.

The difference that is ontological is the sacramental difference, between the two modes of priesthood. As *Lumen Gentium* 10 states:

"Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ."

So the ordained priesthood and the royal priesthood differ "in essence and not only in degree". This is because by virtue of the sacrament of Orders, the ordained priesthood acts 'in persona Christi Capitis', or in the person of Christ the Head. Thus, the mode in which they participate in the 'triplex munus' or the three-fold ministry of Christ are ordered toward the proclamation of the Word and celebration of the Eucharist, as well as governance of the Church.

You are right in speaking of interdependency, but it seems this, in the light of the above, is best seen in the light of the mystical body, which St. Paul speaks of:

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose... which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a still more excellent way."
(I Corinthians 12:14–18,24–31 RSV)

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The self-justification of

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 2, 2008 - 8:57am.*

The self-justification of exclusivist, patriarchal culture through history seems incestuous on its face, and for that reason is unconvincing and untrustworthy, as the evidence of history documents.

What matters is "the power of example, not the example of power", as President Clinton recently said. That is a totally Christian insight, what Jesus exemplified, and sadly, what institutional Church fails to exemplify.

The word "incestuous" here may trouble some. Let me clarify: the deep history of exclusivist patriarchal culture, also in Church ideology/ theology, roots in assumptions and presumptions of male prerogation; females are dismissively treated as subordinates to males, not equals.

In the Church culture of exclusivity, its theology follows and builds on ancient patriarchy, exclusive of the balance that comes only from female "emotional intelligence".

This "incestuous" defect is advanced in the contemporary clerical culture. Patriarchal theology functioned(s) as a filter that determined(s) the selection of scriptures in the New Testament Canon, and perpetuates the subordination of women and Curial control of Church orthodoxy.

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The book "Women in the age

Submitted by **TTM** on October 10, 2008 - 4:23pm.

The book "Women in the age of Cathedrals" may interest you:

www.amazon.com/Women-Days-Cathedrals-Regine-Pernoud/dp/0898706424

Here is what one reviewer has to say:

"I think all women, particularly Catholic women, should read this. Studying primary sources, Ms. Pernoud shows that during the feudal era in the Middle Ages, around 1100-1300 AD, women were intelligent, capable, and highly influential citizens, involved in all areas of life, including medical, professional, education, political and administration. Never again have women had such influential roles in their society. As the Renaissance began to grip Europe, and the University of Paris barring women and the resurgence of classical Roman law, the role of women completely diminished.

This book was an eye-opener--I've always enjoyed studying the middle ages, but I thought the women saints from that era (like St. Clotilda) were only exceptions to the rule, not the norm. This book proves the opposite. And as a woman, I deeply appreciate the influential roles these women played during that time. I also can see that I have the gifts to influence my husband, family and society in a truly unique feminine way, something that is forgotten in this day, where equality in a feminist's eyes merely means becoming like a man."

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I think that the word

Submitted by **AnnieO** on October 2, 2008 - 12:46pm.

I think that the word "incestuous" doesn't so much trouble me, Sylvester, but that it does not feel like the best choice of words. I think of the patriarchal religious culture as I do all others that have historically devalued the place of women as equals. It is homosocial. The idea that men should deal with other men as equals, but of women as the lesser "other," who should be advised of the course of society and culture rather than as an

equal contributor or creator of society. I don't think that many men begin to understand what they're doing until their behavior and assumptions are pointed out as that -- homosocial.

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Speaking of history, it

Submitted by **TTM** on October 2, 2008 - 1:45am.

Speaking of history, it seems that in fact, objectively, it is not a matter of self-justification, but of 'traditio' and 'recipio' - what is handed down, and received. The Church, in her magisterial capacity, is the 'traditio subiectiva', the messengers who hand on the 'traditio obiectiva', the divine mail in the content of revelation. Their job is not to tamper with the message, but to hand them on as they received it. Objective historical analysis would show that this has been the case (as the famous convert Cardinal Newman said, "to be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant").

Afterall, the Church is part of the divine mechanism of revelation, without which authentic Tradition (inclusive of Sacred Scripture, and the Eucharist) would have been corrupted in limitations of mere humanity, and along with it the salvific self-impartment of Christ.

Given this, may I suggest the possibility that it is not the 'self-justification' that merits distrust, as you claim, but it is the distrust that projects 'self-justification' where it cannot be seen to be present historically and objectively?

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TTM, you say "Given this,

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 18, 2008 - 7:05pm.

TTM, you say "Given this, may I suggest the possibility that it is not the 'self-justification' that merits distrust, as you claim, but it is the distrust that projects 'self-justification' where it cannot be seen to be present historically and objectively?"

Please refresh me where I claim that "self-justification merits distrust"? The test of evolution (conscience) makes self-justification the personal task of a lifetime.

Self-justification can have a pejorative meaning in the sense of putting self before others. Obviously, that kind of "self-justification" does not merit trust. Original sin is the presumed reason (Judeo-Christian) why human nature must be distrusted; but God pronounced creation, "good", the basis of "original grace" that offsets original sin and enables self-justification in fidelity to covenant. www.justifiedliving.gather.com/nature

The Ecclesiology of Vatican I (hierarchical church) is different from the Ecclesiology of Vatican II (People Church), and so, I would suggest is the understanding of revelation; further, it seems to me that divine revelation in evolutionary consciousness is by theological analysis and synthesis irreconcilable with the presumptions of static-centrist (Tridentine) analysis/ synthesis.

"The People" are the subject/ object of history and of Church. The People are the agent and agendum of Church and history, and, of both, "traditio subjectiva" and "traditio objectiva". The divine mail of revelation is still being sent and still being received. Humankind hasn't yet received the final mailing.

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Sylvester, > "Please

Submitted by TTM on October 21, 2008 - 5:29am.

Sylvester,

> "Please refresh me where I claim that "self-justification merits distrust"?"

Yes; the first paragraph in the October 3 post seems to imply this:

"The self-justification... seems incestuous on its face, and for that reason is... untrustworthy"

> "The test of evolution (conscience) makes self-justification the personal task of a lifetime."

Would you be able to clarify what you mean by 'evolution' in this context? I sense that there is possibly a fundamental difference in our ontology that makes it difficult to get the concepts across.

> "Original sin is the presumed reason (Judeo-Christian) why human nature must be distrusted; but God pronounced creaton, "good", the basis of "original grace" that offsets original sin and enables self-justification in fidelity to covenant."

I believe the tradition accepts both original sin and the goodness of creation, but holds that infused grace was lost as a result of the fall. This is why Pelagianism is a condemned heresy; it is impossible for humanity to save itself. As such, there can be no "self-justification" in this sense, but perhaps you can clarify what you mean here.

> "The Ecclesiology of Vatican I (hierarchical church) is different from the Ecclesiology of Vatican II (People Church), and so, I would suggest is the understanding of revelation; further, it seems to me that divine revelation in evolutionary consciousness is by theological analysis and synthesis irreconcilable with the presumptions of static-centrist (Tridentine) analysis/ synthesis."

Do you mean the "people Church" of Vatican II, and hierarchical Church of Vatican I? If I could refer you to my October 18th post above, I think it's clear in it that this is somewhat of a simplification, since the 'people Church' includes the hierarchy (LG, chapter 3) as well as the laity (LG, chapter 4). The term "people of God" was used to recall the Old Testament, in order to stress the Scriptural continuity of the Church, as well as to provide a term for the Church which could embrace all the various elements (such as the hierarchy, the laity, and the religious) which follow chapter 2. It is not meant as an isolated term to negate all the elements which are implicitly found in it. There is a doctrinal development, for sure, but it is an organic development, not one of rapture from Apostolic Tradition (found in sacred scripture and articulated in the early Church by Ignatius of Antioch, among others). This is crucial, since Apostolic Tradition is constitutive of the Church (2Thess 3:6) - without this divine means of guidance, there

can be no Church, for the Church is not a merely human social institution, but one that is divinely established (Mt 16:18).

> ""The People" are the subject/ object of history and of Church. The People are the agent and agendum of Church and history, and, of both, "traditio subjectiva" and "traditio objectiva". The divine mail of revelation is still being sent and still being received. Humankind hasn't yet received the final mailing."

If by 'the people', you include the persons of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Apostles, indeed this would be the case.

As Lumen Gentium 12 states, the people of God, under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, "adheres unwaveringly to the faith given once and for all to the saints (113), penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life." The footnote #113 refers of course to Jude 3, which is part of the Apostolic Tradition stating that all public revelation ceased after the death of the last apostle. We are called to hand on this tradition, since 'tradere' means precisely this: 'to hand on'.

This being the case, development of doctrine can grow organically from the deposit of faith, but can never contradict the Apostolic Tradition which has been safeguarded by the Spirit of Truth. Again, it comes back to the principle of continuity and reform, rather than rapture.

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The "self-justification" I

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 21, 2008 - 10:59am.*

The "self-justification" I refer to is the "fraudulent prerogative of male primacy". I thought, in context, this would be self-evident. Sorry if I caused confusion.

Organic growth is quintessentially "natural". Refer to my other posting of this date.

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What leads me to contemplate

*Submitted by **TTM** on September 27, 2008 - 6:08am.*

What leads me to contemplate whenever issues of related to difference in gender is what is signified by the male-female dynamic in creation, which is not confined to the level of human beings. How - or, rather, why - is it that there is a male-female relationship in the animal kingdom, and at the level of inanimate matter in magnetism and subatomic particles where +'s and -'s attract?

Through a sacramental worldview, where the creation signifies elements in the nature of God, it seems we can come to see them as reflecting the Trinitarian relationship - the inner life of God. The Father from all eternity loves and generates the Word who returns all to the Father, whereupon the Holy Spirit is proceeded in this exchange.

John Paul II in the now famous Theology of the Body indicated that the family images this Trinitarian relationship. The man, then, reflects the initiative of the Father, while the woman reflects the reception and reciprocation of the Son, while the child is proceeded from this exchange of love, reflecting the Holy Spirit.

As such, a difference in the very nature and hence role of man and woman is to be expected, but there is a risk of such a difference being interpreted as ontological inequality, which it is not - as we know, the Father is equal to the Son, while being different persons with different roles.

John Paul II, as was usual with him, had a very balanced, insightful and esteemed view of women in the Church, as his 'Letter to Women' testifies:

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2WOM.htm>

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TTM, it is my sense that you

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 21, 2008 - 1:47am.*

TTM, it is my sense that you advocate the long in-place traditions and rationale of dominion theology. The old truisms structured on presumptions of the static-centrist universe no longer illumine common urgencies in the Postmodern world. As Vatican II tells us, new analyses and syntheses have to be put in place that correspond to modern insights of the evolutionary universe — the “Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis”. [See Constitution IV, “Gaudium et spes” Introduction, #5]

To the extent that theology fails to inspire and enlighten the conscionable task of every person in evolving reality, it becomes irrelevant to the times.

Creation, Nature, is an unfinished “agendum”. Who is the “agent” who completes Creation’s, Nature’s work? Faith tells us that ultimately God is Agent in all matters. Obviously, the Cosmos and the ultimate working of Creation is way above the pay grade of human beings, nevertheless, what happens in Nature, to diverse life on Earth, to the environment and to ecozoic relationships, is very much the doing of each of us.

In this regard, every individual person is “agent” of Nature’s “agendum”. As self-reflective agents at the top rung of the ladder of life, outcomes in evolving Nature are very much of human doing, of human agency.

Philosophically and practically, it seems to make more sense to use the terms “agent” and “agendum” rather than “subject” and “object”. As “agents” in the working of Nature, everything that falls within the sphere of human relationships is the personal agendum of each of us. In effect, this makes each of us “ecopriests”. [See **POETREE** Chapbook Nine, “Personal Conscience”, pg 1 “Ecopriesthood”, <http://www.evolution101.org/PRINTBK9a.pdf>]

From this perspective, practical sense is better served in understanding ourselves as “agents” rather than “subjects”, and of understanding “other” as “agendum” rather than “object”. Subject/ object is too impersonal, too “rational”, for everything about human

relationships is personal, and every person, male and female alike, is agent (ecopriest) in the matters of interpersonal (natural) relationships. Every person is ecopriest and the agendum of every person is foremost the conscionable cultivation of relationships that serve fulfillment and common wellbeing.

As agent, every person is equal on “ontological” terms with respect to the common agendum. Cosmic wisdom advances the golden rule “do unto others as you would have others do unto you”. The Christian mandate is “love one another”, and Jesus tells us explicitly, “Do as I have done.”

The personal cultivation of moral relationships binds us individually, socially, what makes us “religious”, what makes us “civil”. In the Sacrament of Natural Order, we cannot separate the geological from the geophysical, the material from the spiritual, or religion from civility.

Our common conscionable agendum is religion and civility, how we relate with “other” interpersonally inside the spectrum of Natural Order. Religion and civility advance the agenda of Natural Sacrament, Nature’s evolving work. We are self-determining agents who determine wellbeing and the quality of interpersonal relationships — what is Nature’s agendum.

Division, speculation, self-electionism (claims of inferiority and superiority), dominion, are all mindless exercises except they advance the sane sense of natural codependence. Religious culture, disconnected from the reality of the evolving Order of Nature is destructive except it accords the agendum of the “Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis”.

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> "TTM, it is my sense that

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 22, 2008 - 6:15am.*

> "TTM, it is my sense that you advocate the long in-place traditions and rationale of dominion theology."

If by 'Dominion theology', you mean, "grouping of theological systems with the common belief that society should be governed exclusively by the law of God as codified in the Bible, to the exclusion of secular law" (Wikipedia definition), I don't believe I do. My theological outlook is in conformity with St. Thomas Aquinas, and he is well-known for his advocacy of natural law.

> "As agent, every person is equal on “ontological” terms with respect to the common agendum. Cosmic wisdom advances the golden rule “do unto others as you would have others do unto you”. The Christian mandate is “love one another”, and Jesus tells us explicitly, “Do as I have done.”"

Yes, but ontological equality does not translate to identity in role. As St. Paul says, "For the body does not consist of one member but of many... If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be?" (I Corinthians 12:14,17–19 RSV)"

> "Division, speculation, self-electionism (claims of inferiority and superiority), dominion, are all mindless exercises except they advance the sane sense of natural codependence."

I think it is clear from the analogy of the Body of Christ that there is ontological equality within the body, but difference in role.

> "Religious culture, disconnected from the reality of the evolving Order of Nature is destructive except it accords the agendum of the "Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis".

If one is to speak of natural law, it is usual to find across cultures that men act in leadership roles so as to protect the women and children. In the body, there is ontological equivalence, but such roles are preserved in accordance with natural law, and raised up in accordance with grace.

Natural law, of course, is in keeping with what is ordained from all eternity in the mind of God. It is as eternal as the law of geometry in relation to a triangle having a sum of its internal angles adding up to 180°, or else it is no natural law. This is because the substance of it persists while the mode in which it comes to a particular place or time changes; much like the nature of triangle that persists when its shape is modified into another triangle.

In this sense, whatever evolves is at a superficial level, and one must therefore remember to operate at the level of continuity and reform, rather than rapture, as stated in above posts. Apostolic Tradition is of course the constitutive element - the substance without which the Church can no longer be called the Apostolic Church founded by Christ. This would be the 'long in-place traditions' I advocate, since it is the very Pneumatic life of the Church (catholically upheld through the ages by the Holy Spirit) through which Christ constitutes her as His Body. Without this, the Church is no more than a man-made social club. With it, the Church is a sacrament (Lumen Gentium, 1).

Now, in the document referenced in your post, you state that faith, hope and charity are "civil virtues". This seems rather puzzling, as clearly these are theological virtues that originate from, and are directed toward God. The theological virtues are salvific and, as I pointed out above, we can not save ourselves. Perhaps you can clarify what you mean here for us?

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You say, "If by 'Dominion

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 23, 2008 - 11:09am.*

You say, "If by 'Dominion theology', you mean, "grouping of theological systems with the common belief that society should be governed exclusively by the law of God as codified in the Bible, to the exclusion of secular law" (Wikipedia definition), I don't believe I do. My theological outlook is in conformity with St. Thomas Aquinas, and he is well-known for his advocacy of natural law."

By “dominion theology” I mean and include imperial political structures that have evolved from postulates of dominion (patriarchal) theology/ culture. The wreckage of politicized dominion culture persists into our times. St Thomas Aquinas and Scholasticism presume heavily on Aristotelian cosmology/ theology. Undeniable Scholastic blunders persist. [See <http://www.evolution101.org/Thinking%20Global.pdf> pp 24-27, #12, 13, 14]

You say, “men act in leadership roles so as to protect the women and children.”

Actions of men through evolutionary history and at the present time have gone and go way beyond this benign observation. I'll let others enlarge on this fact.

You say, “I think it is clear from the analogy of the Body of Christ that there is ontological equality within the body, but difference in role.”

Every individual has charisms that differ from every other; so “ontological” role differs in people of the same sex. So I don't see how your observation says anything about role differences of males and females and Church discrimination against women.

You say, "Now, in the document referenced in your post, you state that faith, hope and charity are "civil virtues". This seems rather puzzling, as clearly these are theological virtues that originates from, and are directed toward God. The theological virtues are salvific and, as I pointed out above, we can not save ourselves. Perhaps you can clarify what you mean here for us?"

While it seems to be a given, it is nevertheless an aberration of cultural evolution that the “virtues” of religion are presumed different from the “virtues” of civility. Nothing prevents theological virtues from also being “civil”; to the contrary, if civil community reflects divine (Trinity), the evidence is found in how the theological virtues are practiced in human community.

See book “RELIGION & CIVILITY, The Primacy of Conscience”, pp 53-64

<http://www.authorhouse.com/BookStore/BookStoreSearchResults.aspx?SearchType=smpl&SearchTerm=Religion+%26+Civility>

“Faith supposes reason as grace supposes nature.” Civility like religion supposes reason and faith. The continuity of evolving consciousness doesn't isolate truths in disconnected categories; to the contrary, authentically informed consciousness strives to live by truths where they apply. Society cannot be “civil” except for trustful relationships; trustful relationships suppose faith/ hope/ love.

We do play important roles in the salvation of each other. “Salvation” isn't passive; salvation has to do with “grace supposing nature”. Nature is the locus and means where salvation is worked out.

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> "The wreckage of

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 24, 2008 - 4:51am.*

> "The wreckage of politicized dominion culture persists into our times."

Ah yes, but this is not a residue of Christian Rome, but of pagan Rome. If I may, I would like to suggest examining the data, since there is a risk of forming a caricature based on cultural misinformation and misinterpretation.

I refer to the book "Women in the age of Cathedrals" (www.amazon.com/Women-Days-Cathedrals-Regine-Pernoud/dp/0898706424), as well as to John Paul II's 'Letter to Women', (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2WOM.htm>) both cited previously in this thread.

> "Actions of men through evolutionary history and at the present time have gone and go way beyond this benign observation."

I tend to think that it is as benign as seeing analogy of being in nature, pointing to some larger reality; that is, the created natures and their relationships reflect the Creator, as a supreme work of art and its composition reflects the master artist. This is especially the case when we consider that the male-female relationship is explicitly said to reflect the Godhead (Gen 1:27).

> "Nothing prevents theological virtues from also being 'civil'"

I've no doubt that there are resemblances of the supernatural virtues, certainly (as would be expected from analogy of being, as mentioned above), but they would be of another genus - as different as a living thing is from a statue of it. Being in the natural order, they would not allow persons to share in the knowledge and perspective of God - for this is what faith and hope do - and they would not be salvific, since God is supernatural love.

> "Every individual has charisms that differ from every other; so "ontological" role differs in people of the same sex."

Yes, John Paul II acknowledges the various charisms individuals have within the same sex, as his letter evidences.

However, the second half of your sentence does not follow from the first half. This becomes clear upon imaging the roles specific to the ontological difference of the sexes: A man can never become pregnant and, conversely, a woman can never cause him to become pregnant either.

> "So I don't see how your observation says anything about role differences of males and females and Church discrimination against women."

I hope this is now clear, given the above. As I suggested in my post above (<http://ncrcafe.org/node/1999#comment-26351>) it follows from what is at the natural level: "discrimination in nature (as opposed to unjust discrimination) is divinely ordained."

This is an incredible mystery, and one that should first of all lead to wonder and contemplation (before speech and, especially, prior to discussion) as to what the difference signifies. It certainly does not signify superiority or inferiority in any way, since male and female together image God, and the Trinity of persons [persons] are in no way unequal in dignity. This relationship somehow signifies God in the order of love.

We know from one of the treasures of John Paul II's legacy, the theology of the body, that the family together image God. The husband, like the Father, empties all for the sake of the beloved wife, who here images the Son, who reciprocate perfect love; the love between them are so complete in mutual self-giving that, nine months later, the fruitful love is manifested in the child who is the third person in the relationship, imaging the Holy Spirit.

The image of Christ and His bride, the Church, likewise follows this analogy of being (Eph 5:31-32). Here in the salvific relationship is a fulfillment of the analogical relationship by means of conformity to the very inner life of the Trinity itself.

There seems therefore to be an analogical design here, conceived from all eternity in the Divine Mind. In such a case, to see it as a justice issue is to pass a mistaken judgment on natural revelation (which is in this analogy of being) through an ideological conception.

This is why there seems to be a categorical fallacy here: "it is not a matter of justice - that is, denial of a right - but of ontology". In which case, women are actually in a better position to possess the "one thing needful" (Lk 10:42) with a primacy in love and contemplation over efficiency, as our greatest Saint and Mother Mary shows. Of course, it takes the supernatural, salvific and theological - God-derived and God-directed - virtues to see this. Once the better half is chosen, however, it shall not be taken away from them (Lk 10:42); that is the divine promise uttered by Christ.

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> "The wreckage of

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 30, 2008 - 3:52pm.*

> "The wreckage of politicized dominion culture persists into our times."

You say, "Ah yes, but this is not a residue of Christian Rome, but of pagan Rome."

Roman Catholicism defended the dominion culture of imperial "pagan" Rome, including its "classic" structuring, that is, of slavery, of despotic leadership, and of middle class enablers of classicism — even with a "vengeance", through Tridentine times.

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Sylvester, I think your use

*Submitted by **colkoch** on October 21, 2008 - 10:16am.*

Sylvester, I think your use of agent/agendum is far closer to the truth of how man's consciousness actually operates with in nature. Consciousness is not a static observer, but an active agent in continually creating the reality we perceive--and it's grounded in an agenda, and most of that agenda is unconscious, enculturated defense mechanisms designed to protect the survival of the individual.

One of the major defense mechanisms is to hang onto the notions developed in childhood that if I do 'this, that, or the other thing', I will survive, and so we statically hang onto the 'this, that, and the other thing'. We will do this even though inter active reality shows us 'this, that, and the other thing', are maladaptive actions and attitudes.

The teachings of Jesus are about process and not stasis. I have a tough time believing the He really meant His public revelation to cease with His original apostles, any more than His Father intended creative evolution to stop with the advent of homo sapiens.

Once self reflective consciousness with it's free choice entered creation, the whole game changes.

The question I ponder is "whither goest Homo Sapiens?" Jesus seemed to teach and demonstrate the evolutionary path of Homo Sapiens should be to Homo Transcendence. It's our choice though, and so far we seem to prefer Homo Stasis.

<http://enlightenedcatholicism-colkoch.blogspot.com>

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Hi colkoch, I spotted this

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 25, 2008 - 2:51pm.*

Hi colkoch,

I spotted this article today featured at Catholic Education Resource Centre (www.catholiceducation.org) that seemed relevant here, and which you may like.

It's called, 'Why We're Here':

www.catholiceducation.org/articles/politics/pg0213.htm

Here's a paragraph that seemed quite relevant:

"God is eternal and unchanging, but he is not static. Within the life of the Trinity, there are the Trinitarian missions of the Father loving the Son, the Son loving the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the love between Father and Son -- and all human beings have a mission in the world that reflects that divine love and takes part in that exchange."

The rest of the article is well worth a read too. Here's a description of the article from the weekly update:

"Archbishop Charles Chaput's Render unto Caesar, reveals His Grace to be an even more masterful teacher and incisive and bold thinker than we already know him to be. This week Doubleday granted me permission to reprint chapter three from Render Unto Caesar (see "Why We're Here" below).

I predict it will be one of the most engaging and inspiring things you've read in a good long time. And have your highlighter ready -- you'll need it."

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Hi colkoch, > "The

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 25, 2008 - 12:30am.*

Hi colkoch,

> "The teachings of Jesus are about process and not stasis. I have a tough time believing the He really meant His public revelation to cease with His original apostles,

any more than His Father intended creative evolution to stop with the advent of homo sapiens."

I wouldn't worry about this; closing of public revelation does not equate to stasis, any more than the Church's steadfast love of Christ does. What we do grow in is the understanding of the original fullness of revelation, who is in fact the person of Christ.

So, in actual fact, there will be a further public revelation at the second coming of Christ (but not in the meantime). As the Vatican II document Dei Verbum states under no.4:

"The Christian dispensation, therefore, as the new and definitive covenant, will never pass away and we now await no further new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (see 1 Tim. 6:14 and Tit. 2:13)."

In relation to the concept of process and stasis, one can resolve the seeming contradiction in the appearance of this case by realising that there are two kinds of activity: kinesis and energeia. These relate to efficiency and contemplation, respectively. The latter, energeia, is the kind of activity God possesses, and is what is meant by referring to Him as 'pure actuality'. Process theologians make a similar mistake in criticizing that the way traditional Christianity sees God is 'static', by not realising that pure actuality entails fullness of every possibility attained through imperfect dynamism that is kinesis.

Thus, it seems, revelation is primarily in the order of energeia rather than kinesis. So, as important as process is in legitimate development of doctrine (as conceived by Newman), we are called rather to conform to His energeia through living in supernatural faith, hope and, above all, charity.

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I agree completely with the

Submitted by [colkoch](#) on October 28, 2008 - 12:35pm.

I agree completely with the last part of your last sentence: "We are called rather to conform to His energeia through living in super natural faith, hope and above all, charity." To do this is to truly engage in process and not stasis. I make a case on my own blog, that when people engage with God on this deep and profoundly a personal level, that they begin to find the Institutional Church a barrier and not a help meet---excluding the sacramental system that is.

They find the Church teaching not to where they are, but to where they were. I find this especially true for cradle Catholics, rather than adult converts. There are all kinds of reasons for this, but I sometimes wonder if fully committed adult converts have an easier time with the institution because they are free of the debilitating childhood memories which come with indoctrination into a pre Vatican II church.

Along these lines, I consider myself an adult convert to the Vatican II church and because of this, have great difficulty with aspects of the current Church which seem to come straight from the 50's. Hence I might see stasis where you see process.

By the way, Archbishop Chaput's writing from the cite you linked, was very good.

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Thank you, Colkoch. I very

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 24, 2008 - 5:12pm.*

Thank you, Colkoch. I very much agree that stasis stymies transcendence.

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Is it not ironic that Jesus,

*Submitted by **Little Bear** on August 11, 2008 - 8:18am.*

Is it not ironic that Jesus, at the Last Supper, performed a 'feminine' role in washing the feet of the disciples? Usually the wife of the host (or daughters) of the host, washed the feet of visitors. If the host was rich, then his servants performed this task. But this task was usually performed by women. And here is Jesus, a Jewish man, performing this feminine task. And this would be another reason that the disciples (especially Peter) would be upset. They were expected to perform a lowly task, a feminine task---in their role of leadership of the people of the "New Covenant".

Then at the actual Supper, Jesus told the disciples, to "do this in memory of me." What? Take bread and wine, and bring it to life---give it life---his life. If a family is gathered---and a new life is brought forth, who brings it forth? It is the woman of the house. Bringing forth new life is a feminine attribute.

The official Church states that only men, the Apostles were given the 'power, the authority' to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. If (and it's a big IF), there were only men present at the Last Supper, was it because women are already able to bring forth life?

The official Church likes to state, that Jesus' mother, Mary, was not ordained a priest. And if even Jesus didn't ordain her, then no woman can be ordained a priest. The truth is that Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit, brought Jesus to birth. His body and blood came from her. Why would a woman, who had given birth to Jesus, "the Bread of Heaven", in Bethlehem (the House of Bread), need to be ordained again---she already was a priest.

But women who can bring forth life can't be ordained to bring forth the Lord of Life as Mary, Jesus' mother did? Amazing, isn't it?

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A priest is one who offers a

*Submitted by **here today** on August 12, 2008 - 5:06am.*

A priest is one who offers a sacrifice. This is what separates Mary's giving life to Jesus and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

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Life is so structured by the

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on August 13, 2008 - 1:05pm.*

Life is so structured by the Sacrament of Natural Order that everyone is at the same time, and for all time, altar and victim of Eucharist. I agree with the position of littlebear that in view of the "divine" prerogative of Mary (of all women in self-donation to life) what need have they of further "ordination"?

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The Pope cannot seem to find

*Submitted by **believingbetty** on July 28, 2008 - 2:58pm.*

The Pope cannot seem to find any reason to ordain women, even though he will build a great church that seats many worshippers because there is a priest shortage.

Here are some thoughts on ORDINATION --

The word of God to a patriarchal society is bound to reflect that society.

A society where the majority of the leaders are men is liable to be more willing to draw swords than to sheathe them.

Men are more comfortable working with men and will appoint and ordain other men to assist in trade and governance.

Women are called by the inner voice rather than by some proclamation to help the needy and the children.

Those ordained by the voice within are called for special service not for privilege and title.

Those ordained by men reflect the hands that send them.

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Perhaps you ask, what is

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on July 18, 2008 - 8:49pm.*

Perhaps you ask, what is "fraudulent" about the male prerogation (presumption) of primacy over female.

In the reproductive evolution of life, there was first the asexual maternal method of live continuity by way of single cell division, and only very much later was the complexity of the division of the sexes introduced.

The cultural myth that woman is from the rib of man reverses the biological facts of evolutionary history and falsely feeds the male presumption of primacy over female.

What does this say about "religious" culture as it prevails? About Eucharist? About Priesthood? Whither the future?

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> "In the reproductive

Submitted by **TTM** on October 21, 2008 - 6:04am.

> "In the reproductive evolution of life, there was first the asexual maternal method of live continuity by way of single cell division, and only very much later was the complexity of the division of the sexes introduced. The cultural myth that woman is from the rib of man reverses the biological facts of evolutionary history and falsely feeds the male presumption of primacy over female."

I believe the Genesis story of the creation of Eve from Adam is an analogical reference to the mode of creation, rather than a story detailing the empirical, which in any case is a limited picture of the entire reality. It tells of the divine transcendence involved in the sheer gratuity of creation, since creation was not one of necessity but of super-abundant grace. Relative to God, the creation is often referred in the feminine terms - including the mothers earth, Church, Mary, and so on - since they reflect the immanence of God, which is channelled through creation rather than attributed directly to God. Thus, it would be expected that the empirical and biological reality would show forth its maternal aspect, which is natural to it. Transcendence, however, is the more appropriate notion of God for us who are contingent and, strictly speaking, not necessary for God.

Real primacy, remember, is in the order of contemplation, and not efficiency. It would seem clear in Mary that women are naturally endowed with a greater capacity for it, and so are ordered toward the heavenly activity which is contemplation. The world values the mode of efficiency since it sees reality not through faith but in positivistic terms. Such an order, however, is transitory and in actual fact of very little value. This at least is what Christ seems to reveal to us. We must be prepared to view reality as Christ sees it, or else be prepared to hear His admonition: "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" (Lk 12:20).

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TTM, you observe, "women are

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 21, 2008 - 11:16am.

TTM, you observe, "women are naturally endowed with a greater capacity for it, and so are ordered toward the heavenly activity which is contemplation."

Contemplation is a profoundly "organic" act for thinking is profoundly quantum-electric. I trust you don't mean to derogate women's natural and "heavenly activity" of bearing and nourishing life for their lifetimes. I do not see feminine contemplation and efficiency as exclusive and separable, rather, I see them as co-essential to each other.

Peace and blessing.

"Faith supposes reason as grace supposes nature"

www.evolution101.org

> "Contemplation is a

*Submitted by **TTM** on October 22, 2008 - 11:13pm.*

> "Contemplation is a profoundly "organic" act for thinking is profoundly quantum-electric. I trust you don't mean to derogate women's natural and "heavenly activity" of bearing and nourishing life for their lifetime."

No, certainly not. My concern is rather that the society as a whole values efficiency and denigrates contemplation, forgetting that the qualitative is the finality of the quantitative.

As we see in Our Lady, who is the model of contemplation (Lk 2:19, 2:51), it is the heavenly activity in the literal sense, since beatific vision is the eternal contemplation of God.

> "I do not see feminine contemplation and efficiency as exclusive and separable, rather, I see them as co-essential to each other."

Yes, I would agree. Although, it is clear from the example of Mary and Martha (Lk 10:38-42) that contemplation has primacy over efficiency.

This is why Mary has primacy over Peter and the Apostles in the true order of being. The Petrine ministry exists for the sake of the Marian Church, which best reflects the recipient and focus of divine love.

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Interesting things to

*Submitted by **COL55** on July 16, 2008 - 7:33pm.*

Interesting things to ponder:

The countries where womens rights have been most effectively championed (admittedly still a long way to go) are in North America and Europe.

North American and Europe are the prime targets of countries that continue to demand a subservient role for women.

Coincidence?

Interesting point COL55.

*Submitted by **colkoch** on July 18, 2008 - 5:53am.*

Interesting point COL55. North America and Europe are also the prime targets of the current and seemingly endless campaign of the major Christian denominations and their authority structures with regards to homosexuality, women's reproductive rights, and women's pastoral authority.

These would also be the same Church authorities who see their future in evangelizing third world countries. Suppose that's a coincidence?

Please note this: <http://enlightenedcatholicism-colkoch.blogspot.com>