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Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave and give;
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson

Women in the Early Church

By F. Mackenzie Shattock

Throughout the ages the question of the participation of woman in the service of the Church has aroused sporadic interest and discussion. A renewed interest is evident in recent references to the subject in books and articles which deal with the participation of the laity in worship and other liturgical matters. It would be fair to say that in these recently published works there is general agreement that the position of woman, her participation in the Church's worship and activities has altered with the passing of the centuries and on the whole has deteriorated, rather than changed for the better. Of these recent publications, some of them previously reviewed in *The Catholic Citizen*, the latest, emanating from French and German sources, is also the most sympathetic in its treatment of this question. Fr. Daniélou, S.J., has compressed into less than thirty pages of a French liturgical publication* a vast amount of information on what he has called Ministry of Woman in the Early Church and has used the evidence of many quotations from official documents to show that the participation of women and their contribution was considerable, and greater than it is today. Some of the evidence quoted is familiar, other is less so, and it is evident that it has not always been given its due weight by less objective commentators.

It will indeed come as a surprise to the uninitiated reader to learn from these texts how great was the contribution of women to the activities of the Church in the early centuries and in apostolic times. Another circumstance not usually appreciated is the more prominent position of woman in the Eastern Church, in strange contrast to her greater social emancipation in the West. Fr. Daniélou believes this strange dissociation to be the aftermath of the more general acceptance of Tertullian's reactionary mode of thought in the occident and another explanation is difficult to find.

* *La Maison-Dieu* (Paris)

The difficulties which face the unprejudiced historian are outlined by the author. One of the main ones is the lack of any definition of what the position of woman is and what she is expected to contribute; her position has varied with contemporary opinion of her dignity and worth, her contribution with her ready and generous assistance in support of the temporal needs of the church, in whatever capacity she has been asked to serve. Fr. Daniélou believes that the comparatively lesser role she is at present playing, particularly in the western church, is due to her incomplete recovery from the setback she suffered in the middle ages.

In the early church the "widows" were a true order, comparable to other orders, as shown by their names being registered and their functions defined in many documents. Their vocation was the dedication to intercession (they were known as the altar) and the instruction of women. The deaconesses were quite distinct from the widows and from apostolic times their functions were diverse and numerous. They were at the service of the bishop, they tended the poor and the sick, they brought them both spiritual and temporal aid, as also their Easter Communion. Wherever it was difficult for the clergy to penetrate, in view of the customs and prejudice of the times, the deaconesses were deputed to assist in bringing the help and consolation to the Christian women from which they would otherwise have been deprived. The duties of these deaconesses were humble in the earliest times but grew in importance as need dictated and, one would conclude, as their assistance was recognised in the Church's service.

As the order of widows declined, mainly so Fr. Daniélou believes, because of some ambiguity in their position and the increasing recognition of the ideal of virginity, the standing of the deaconesses gained and, in a humorous aside, Fr. Daniélou suggests that the passing of the widows was speeded by clerical recognition of the deaconesses, who were under closer ecclesiastic

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AND

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Status of Woman Commission

The Fourteenth Session of the Status of Women Commission opened at Buenos Aires on March 28th, 1960. It was the first time the Commission had met in South America and at the inaugural ceremony in the Great Hall of the University of Buenos Aires, the people of the Argentine gave the eighteen members a great welcome in the person of Dr. Miguel Angel Centeno, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

The chairman of the Commission was Mrs. Blanca Stabile (Argentine); vice-chairmen, Mrs. Dembinska (Poland) and Mrs. Quart (Canada); Rapporteur, Mrs. Mantzoulinos (Greece); Mrs. Grinberg-Vinaveur representing the Secretary-General, gave the Commission her valuable assistance, Miss Aline Fenwick acted as secretary to the Commission.

Twenty-nine non-governmental organisations, including St. Joan's International Alliance had representatives at the Commission. The Secretary-General deserved the congratulations of the Commission for the excellent information prepared.

Political Rights

The delegates were informed about the political condition of women in their respective countries. Women have the vote in seventy-one countries, ten still remain where women are unenfranchised. The general conclusion was that the promulgation of legislation granting women political rights was only the first step in this matter; the proof will be the way women make use of their rights.

Delegates regretted that in some countries a woman still loses her right to employment if she marries. This discrimination gave rise to the adoption of a resolution based on Articles 21 and 22 of the Declaration of Human Rights.

Advisory Services in the Field of Human Rights

All the members agreed on the usefulness of seminars as a means of educating women in using their civil and political rights. Most of the delegates felt that at the present time, regional and national seminars were preferable to international ones,

There will be three regional seminars in 1960—at Tokio, Vienna and Addis Abbaba. A resolution proposed by Argentine, Japan, Mexico and U.S.A. supporting regional seminars was adopted.

The representative of U.S.S.R. presented a resolution on the participation of women in the problem of disarmament. Most of the delegates considered that this subject was outside the terms of reference of the Commission. The resolution was rejected by fourteen votes to three, with one abstention.

France, Greece, Israel, U.K. and U.S.A. proposed a resolution expressing the hope that one or more African States would seek membership on the Commission. This was unanimously approved.

Status of Women in Private Law

On this subject St. Joan's Alliance was particularly interested. The Commission had before it for consideration the report of the Secretary-General and also a Draft Convention and a Draft Recommendation on the Age of Marriage, Free Consent to Marriage and Registration of Marriages. Representatives of non-governmental organisations were given the opportunity of expressing their views. Most of them were in favour of both a Convention and a Recommendation and a minimum age of marriage of not less than sixteen years.

Miss Catalina Maxwell on behalf of St. Joan's International Alliance, in advocating a minimum age of not less than sixteen, emphasised that the Alliance urges most strongly that "in no case should a dispensation be granted for a marriage where either party is under the age of fourteen."

After a long and technical debate the Commission decided on a minimum age of marriage of fifteen years by a vote of six, while five votes were cast for sixteen and three for fourteen. The draft Convention was adopted by nine votes to none with nine abstentions and the Draft Recommendation by five votes to none with thirteen abstentions.

The Convention and Recommendation embodied the following three substantive Articles:

Article 1. No marriage of any person under the age of fifteen shall be valid, except where a competent authority has granted a dispensation as to age for serious causes, in the interest of the intending spouses.

Article 2. No marriage shall be valid without the full and free consent of both parties, such consent to be expressed by them in person, orally, publicly, and in the presence of the authority competent to solemnize the marriage.

Article 3. All marriages shall be registered in an appropriate official register by the competent authority.

Ritual Operations

Madame Lefauchaux (France), who has great knowledge of the subject, was the first speaker. She deplored the attitude of the World Health Organisation, which had refused to concern itself with the problem. Miss Lozier (World Health Organisation) explained that W.H.O. considered that the matter was of a social and cultural nature and therefore outside its competence. Madame Lefauchaux did not consider that ritual operations were by any means a cultural matter. Miss Tomlinson recalled the statement of the Director that W.H.O. should concern itself with matters that might have a bearing on social conditions. Other delegates who supported the plea for exact medical information included Canada, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Israel and U.S.A. A resolution, sponsored by France and U.K. was adopted, inviting W.H.O. to make available to the Secretary-General, such medical information as it has at its disposal for submission to the Commission at its Sixteenth Session. The full text of the resolution which was adopted by fourteen votes with four abstentions will be found on page 42. The only non-governmental organisation which took part in the debate was St. Joan's International Alliance, whose representative recalled to the Commission the deep concern the Alliance had always shown regarding this subject.

Equal Pay

The representative of the International Labour Organisation, Mrs. Johnstone, reported on the progress made in some countries. The Convention had been ratified by thirty-two countries. She said "it is not easy to breach the barrier of the tradition which gives inferior conditions of working to women."

Age of Retirement

As ECOSOC did not accept the Recommendation of the Commission on equal age of retirement, which was supported by many N.G.O.s it was apparent that more information was required.

A resolution was adopted requesting ECOSOC to ask the ILO for a complete study of the age of retirement and right to pension and report to the Sixteenth Session of the Commission.

Access to Education

Many non-governmental organisations spoke on the subject of out-of-school education. The needs of women who assumed responsibilities without the

opportunity of formal schooling were discussed and appropriate measures recommended.

Future Work

Miss Tomlinson (U.K.) recommended, and it was agreed, that a survey of work done and results achieved on the initiative of the Commission, should be presented at the fifteenth session. For the fifteenth session non-governmental organisations were asked to submit information on access to occupations relating to architecture, law and engineering. Proposals for the sixteenth session include: Report by UNESCO on the education of women in rural areas and access of girls to primary education and a report by the International Labour Organisation on vocational guidance and training of girls and women; age of retirement and right to pension; report by the Secretary-General on inheritance laws as they affect the status of women, and on ritual operations.

Catalina Maxwell

May 21st, 1960.

Buenos Aires

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The Catholic Citizen," 15th June, 1935,

Dom Gilbert Higgins, C.R.L., spoke to the toast of the Woman's Movement. He said that in tackling human problems that part of the world's life known as the woman's movement was not sufficiently taken into account. All should renew their intention of supporting St. Joan's Alliance and all should offer the Alliance their encouragement on that anniversary of a great wrong done and a great glory won—the anniversary of the burning of the virgin martyr St. Joan. St. Joan had led where men hesitated, she had won a victory and delivered a King. In reading a study of St. Joan he had been struck by the fact that whenever Joan was hampered she was hampered by men whose counsels and commands she had obeyed instead of obeying the counsels and commands of her "voices"—the voices of angels and of saints. He would say a word of warning which might help—women must remember when they band themselves together, that they are not obliged to fall down and obey the suggestions of men. They should use their native common-sense and genius, which history shows has rarely led them astray. St. Augustine had said of certain women: "Behold, these rise up and carry the Kingdom of Heaven by storm—if we cannot march abreast let us not be ashamed to follow."—Christine Spender in "A Red Letter Day."

SUMMER SALE

Please keep Saturday afternoon, July 9th free. There will be a Bring and Buy Sale, by kind permission of Miss Spender, at 64 North End Road, Golders Green, N.W.11. After tea, delegates to St. Joan's International Council Meeting in Treves will give their impressions of the conference. All are welcome.

WANTED—permanent accommodation or occasional hospitality for Catholic Overseas Students. Temporary accommodation for Women Students arriving in this country on a day-to-day basis also required.—Details to Catholic Committee for Overseas Students, 41, Holland Park, W.11.

THE MONTH IN PARLIAMENT

The case of Miss Stanton, the distinguished British Missionary, imprisoned in South Africa, and threatened with deportation against her will, though charged with no offence, came up on May 2nd. Mr. Marquand reminded the Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations that the Prime Minister had promised not to allow it to drag on. Mr. Alport replied: "There is no doubt that the Union government . . . are in full possession of our views," and later, "As far as I am aware the Union of South Africa, unlike the United Kingdom, has power to deport a British subject if it decides to do so." When the matter was raised again on May 12th, Mr. Butler declared that the Prime Minister had discussed the deportation order with Mr. Louw and that "he made as clear as he could, the strong feelings which are held in this country on this subject."

The Finance Bill was given its second reading on May 3rd. Mrs. McLoughlin welcomed the tax relief given by it to widows, widowers and guardians of young children. She asked the Chancellor to go further and extend these reliefs to elderly people who had not had the happiness of being married but had come to need a constant attendant. She raised the question of the practice of aggregating the incomes of married couples for surtax purposes, and reminded the House of the oft-quoted phrase that it is cheaper for two professional people to live in sin than to be respectably married. "It is time," she went on, "that this state of affairs was tidied up and given a 1960 look." Dame Irene Ward again referred to the anomaly whereby relief is given to widows and widowers while the unmarried are disregarded. She expressed amazement at the obtuseness of the Treasury in not seeing which were the appropriate cases for relief. Mr. Douglas Houghton stated that a new clause was to be introduced on the point she raised and that he would confer with her about it.

The Public Bodies Bill reached its final stages on May 13th, when its sponsor, Mrs. Thatcher, was warmly congratulated for the skill with which she had piloted it. The Bill was presented to the Lords on May 27th. Among other things the Bill gives the press and the public, for the first time, a general right to attend Council meetings.

On May 22nd, the Commonwealth Teachers Bill was given its second reading and was welcomed by Mrs. White who deplored the public ignorance of the great need for improved educational facilities in the Commonwealth. The Bill offers inducements to British teachers to take posts in Africa and other places and provides bursaries for Commonwealth student teachers to train here.

Mrs. White pleaded for greater encouragement for professional interchange of views on the problems of the techniques and content of teaching.

A new clause to the Finance Bill was discussed on May 19th. This is to provide additional tax relief to a man, whose wife is an invalid, and who employs a non-resident helper in the home. Dame Irene Ward asked why a woman with an invalid husband was not to be afforded the same relief. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Sir E. Boyle replied:—"Though the work of looking after an invalid husband can be a serious tie for the wife, it does not prevent her undertaking the normal responsibility of looking after the children." Mr. Houghton pointed out that if the wife had to become the breadwinner she would need a housekeeper to look after the children while she was at work, and that relief should be given in such cases just as a widow was given relief. Dr. Edith Summerskill supported this view and pointed out that it would cost the country £15 a week to maintain the sick husband in an institution, and that it would be cheaper to encourage the wife to look after him at home.

The Indecency with Children Bill passed its third reading without amendment on May 10th, and has received the Royal Assent.

On May 12th, Mrs. Joyce Butler asked about the difficulties regarding classification of women in prisons and when they would be eased by re-organization. Mr. R. A. Butler replied: "These difficulties result from the small number of women prisoners and cannot be removed by reorganization."

The British Government has never ratified the International Labour Convention No. 111, which concerns discrimination in employment, and on May 24th, Mr. Prentice asked the Minister of Labour for a statement on the reason for this. Mr. Heath said:—"I am glad to have this opportunity for reaffirming that the Government are opposed to discrimination on grounds of race or colour," but the Convention he pointed out "is not only concerned with race and colour but also with sex, religion, national extraction, and social origin." He added: "We adhere to the principle that the Government do not intervene by legislation in questions of terms and conditions of employment." Mr. Prentice said he was not concerned with details of terms and conditions of employment, but with the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of race and the other things mentioned. "Surely the government could reaffirm that principle by ratifying the Convention." Mr. Heath: "I disagree, because if the hon. Gentleman sees the implication of equality for the sexes he will realise the difficulties." **C. M. Cheke**

VISIT OF VICE-PRESIDENT

Representatives of women's national and international organisations had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Maria Schlüter-Hermkes at a party given by St. Joan's Alliance at the Minerva Club last month.

Dr. Schlüter-Hermkes, a vice-president of St. Joan's Alliance was in London with the executive board of UNESCO.

In a talk on the work of UNESCO, Dr. Schlüter referred to the greatly improved position of women in UNESCO and said how much they owed to the survey made in 1951 by Miss Gwilliam of the Colonial Office. There were now five or six women administrators, and women experts were working in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but there was no woman in a very high post, though when vacancies were notified to Governments it was clearly indicated that women were eligible and welcome. This applied also to Fellowships.

She spoke of Primary Education which is being tackled in Asia, Africa and the Arab countries. A survey is being made and all the questions related to both sexes. The figures are most depressing but UNESCO has set aside a large sum of money to obtain teachers, and it is estimated that in twenty years time no child will be without primary education. UNESCO has continued its work for adult education and organised Seminars to make it more widely known and appreciated. UNESCO and the Status of Women Commission are considering the question of the access of women to education outside schools and a big programme is envisaged for 1961-62.

UNESCO has issued many publications on women's questions, particularly with regard to civic life; a basic text book on civic education is in course of preparation now. A whole series of books on the condition of women in modern society is available, and in Japan, Yugoslavia and Turkey, good women's libraries have been set up.

A survey made in three countries recently, showed that women in general are not interested in political life, and men do not want women to take part in national political and world affairs. It is a depressing situation. Women's approach to politics differs from that of men; their interests seem rather to be in social welfare.

Women are not actually barred from important posts but it is difficult for them to get such positions. For example, so far as higher posts in UNESCO and in the U.N. secretariat generally are concerned, there are very few women available who could take control of a great department. The trouble is that such appointments are made through Governments and that outstanding women are needed in their own countries. Dr. Schlüter said, in reply to a question, that

there was no possibility of a woman being appointed at present as Assistant Director General; there had been no woman candidate. The posts were not advertised, but National Committees should see that the vacancies were made known to women's organisations. All NGOs with consultative status ought to be represented on National Committees by their national affiliates.

In reply to another question, Dr. Schlüter said that the advance of industrialism in the developing countries can cause the loss of tradition, history and art, and she thought women could play a great part in preventing this disintegration.

UNESCO was an agent for the Special Fund—mainly in technical instruction. It should, however, be remembered that UNESCO's work was concerned chiefly with intellectual and not with industrial matters, and in this connection it was interesting that the debate at the following day's meeting of the Executive Board of UNESCO was on Technology and Humanism. Technology was a means—Humanism an end in itself—but both could work together.

Miss Challoner from the Chair thanked Dr. Schlüter for her illuminating address and expressed the appreciation of the audience. She assured Dr. Schlüter that we would pursue matters with our national Committee.

D.M.R.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

F.A.O. At the conference of Non-Governmental Organisations on the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, held in Rome, May 3rd—9th, St. Joan's International Alliance was represented by Signorina Rita Parodi.

Pope John expressed his interest in the campaign and graciously granted a special audience to the participants on the opening day of the conference. In bestowing His blessing, His Holiness urged delegates "never to forget that Our Lord left us a great example—to love one another with all our might" and that this should be an encouragement to continue this great work which was and is so helpful to humanity.

New South Wales. We send our congratulations and best wishes to Miss Betty Archdale, the first woman to be elected to the Senate of Sydney University. We recall a certain deputation of women's organisations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Equal Pay at which Miss Archdale made a brilliant and witty speech. We also remember the fine work done by her mother both in this country and in Geneva for "Equal Rights."

Norway. Norway is the thirty-fourth country to ratify the Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery. The Convention came into force on April 30th, 1957.

Liberia. Mrs. Myrtle Reeves Gorgla has been appointed Consul-General in London, where she will join Mrs. Julia Wesley, who has been Vice-Consul in London since 1957.

* * *

Portugal. In the National Assembly, Deputy Dr. Nunes Barata, on March 30th drew attention to the serious problem of prostitution in Portugal. He advocated the closing of all existing tolerated houses; strong action against those who carry on this traffic; and measures designed to protect and rehabilitate the victims of this "odious form of slavery."

* * *

U.S.S.R. Valentina Orlikova, skipper of a refrigerator ship, working with the Soviet fishing fleet, is Russia's only woman sea captain. She began work as a helper at a Vladivostok shipyard in 1931 and has recently received the decoration of the Star and Sickle.

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