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RECONCILIATION

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THE WAY TO PEACE

• DIVISION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE •
UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

The Holy Father's choice of the theme—"Reconciliation: the Way to Peace"—was motivated by its relation to the Holy Year's theme of Christian renewal and reconciliation and its relation to peace—peace with God, with self, and with other human beings.

The real, lasting and human peace for which we strive demands mutual forgiveness—at least difficult, perhaps impossible without the grace of enlightenment, humility and love. The object of the Holy Year is to inspire this form of repentance which can then flow outward in a commitment to serve the interests of world peace.

Peace is made up of reconciliations, on the individual and collective level. (Mt. 18:22; Mt. 5:23-24) Conflict exists. It is a matter of fact and therefore cannot be ignored in a true quest for peace. It is only through surmounting ever recurring confrontations that peace can exist. At the same time, this also means peace requires continual effort. Reconciliation, therefore, is also a permanent fact and duty.

The first task of reconciliation is to try to solve the problems posed by these confrontations, by dealing less with their effects than *their causes*. In doing so, it is necessary to recognize the intrinsic limits of reconciliation. The first is injustice. Reconciliation cannot be achieved by a betrayal of human dignity, a denial of human rights. Secondly, reconciliation cannot be achieved without truth or against truth. True reconciliation cannot prevent one from remaining one's self nor can it require the diminishing of one's personality in the social group.

Reconciliation based on justice and truth is, then, not only a fundamental duty but also a fundamental solution, the way to peace. For Saint Paul, the word "reconciliation" is synonymous with redemption, liberation and sanctification. It therefore evokes an idea of change, rather than a justification of the status quo. It seeks to open new options which alter the data of the problem, mobilizing not only humility but also creative imagination in striving for peace.

When Paul VI insists so strongly on the combined concept of renewal/reconciliation, he is stating not only the aims of the Holy Year but the very axes on which peace turns. Both bring into play a fundamental reality: society is not only bound up with conflict, it is also primarily a communion. Mutual aid, solidarity, friendship and love make up one society, the human family. This love is born of the Holy Spirit. To be reconciled, in the name of this love, which cannot come to terms with injustice or falsehood, is to make human love the cause of history and of history's progress.

Reconciliation requires that injustice be abolished as a way to peace. Therefore, the protection and fostering of human rights nationally and internationally, although a progressively difficult task, is also an increasingly urgent one to those who accept the duty of reconciliation.

The urgency and the difficulty stem from the same fact of contemporary life: the growing material interdependence of our world. Material interdependence is not difficult to perceive or to understand; it is created by the bonds of modern technology and communication which level barriers of time and space; by the bonds of economic relationships which transcend national and regional groupings; and by the common bond of environmental dependence upon air, water and resources. These external dimensions of interdependence, however, fail to highlight the real problem we face. Human rights and interdependence are related in the moral order.

Catholic doctrine on human rights is the product of a long tradition, cultivated with new urgency in the last 30 years in the teaching of Popes Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI and Vatican Council II.

It is necessary to probe both the *substance* and the *scope* of respect for rights in Catholic thought. The *substance* is that respect for the rights of others is a principle means of fulfilling the Great Commandment of love. To respect the rights of others (not simply the passive indifference of doing no harm but also an active concern for the welfare of others) is to fulfill the minimal demands of justice. Without justice there can be no love. Respect for rights is the beginning of love in a social setting.

The *scope* of respect for rights extends to all whom the Scriptures describe as our neighbor. It extends to every human person and especially, as the Good Samaritan story indicates, to the neighbor in need. The extensive character of respect for rights, calling us to responsibility for our needy neighbor beyond the boundaries of family, neighborhood and nation and encompassing the international community, is the distinctive mark of recent papal teaching on Christian social responsibility.

Reconciliation also must be based on truth, particularly on the true perception of the worth and dignity of each human person. No class of persons can be deprived of the opportunity for full development of its members and the realization of their human dignity. This has been the Church's traditional concern and the rationale for her relationship with those who suffer discrimination.

The Church has received from God, and entrusts to each of her members, the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, a spirituality of reconciliation, education for reconciliation and a pastoral program of reconciliation must find a place in the life of the Church on the local, national and international level.

LITURGY

The following biblical texts were suggested by the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace as the core of a liturgical celebration on reconciliation:

Gospel: St. Matthew, Chapter 5, esp. vv. 9 and 24.
Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 7: 23-29.
St. Paul: 2 Cor 5: 17-21.
Rom 5: 6-11.
Col 1: 15-22.
Eph 2: 12-19.

Prayers of intercession:

- We pray that we may dare to say “Our Father.” Hear us, O Lord.
- We pray that we may have the courage to take the risks that the dare implies. Hear us, O Lord.
- We pray that we may understand the implications of our ministry of reconciliation. Hear us, O Lord.
- We pray that we may see that reconciliation requires that we seek and overcome the root causes of conflict. Hear us, O Lord.
- We pray that when we ask for our daily bread, others will not go hungry. Hear us, O Lord.
- We pray that reconciliation does not come to mean mere pacification, submission or appeasement of those discriminated against. Hear us, O Lord.
- We pray that when we ask your forgiveness, our degree of forgiveness of others matches your’s in generosity. Hear us, O Lord.

The following material lends itself to use in a paraliturgical celebration based on the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven (all repeat)
READING: Matthew 23: 8-9.
Period of silence for meditation
Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, hallowed be thy name (all repeat)
READING: John 17: 6, 11b, 25b-26.
Period of silence for meditation
Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, thy kingdom come (all repeat)

READING: Matthew 6: 31-33.

Period of silence for meditation

Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven (all repeat)

READING: Matthew 7: 21; John 6: 38.

Period of silence for meditation

Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, give us this day our daily bread (all repeat)

READING: Matthew 7: 7-9, 11.

Period of silence for meditation

Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us (all repeat)

READING: Mark 11: 25; Matthew 6: 14-15.

Period of silence for meditation

Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, lead us not into temptation (all repeat)

READING: Mark 14: 38.

Period of silence for meditation

Prayer by the celebrant

Our Father, deliver us from evil (all repeat)

READING: John 17: 14-17.

Period of silence for meditation

Prayer by the celebrant

The singing of the Lord's Prayer by all concludes the celebration.

(Excerpted from "Order for the Celebration of the Holy Year—Suggested Week of Reconciliation." Full text available from USCC Publications Office.)

Writing recently in his syndicated column, Msgr. George Higgins reflected on the possibility that Americans, after experiencing the tumultuous times of the 1960's, would want to settle now for a period of "peace and quiet." Higgins observed, however, that the fact remains: there are deep, divisive forces within society which must be reconciled as a prelude to peace. He also observed that the word "reconciliation" has had the life and meaning almost squeezed out of it. Paraphrasing theologian, Jurgen Moltmann: The word has become cheap and unreal, and has even been betrayed by historical Christendom itself.

Appeasement is substituted for reconciliation, and religion, along with patriotism, Higgins adds, is misused for the purpose of keeping the poor and other victims of discrimination quiet so that they will be satisfied with unrighteousness and not protest it too strongly. Such a reconciliation Higgins brands as "ersatz"; not only does it not achieve reconciliation, it produces the very opposite effect of generating bitterness and frustration.

The purpose of this section, FOCUS, is to surface for study two current issues in the context of the theme of reconciliation: world hunger and women's rights. Both questions will persist as challenges to the American people in the months and years to come. Included in the outline for both topics is a general overall statement of the conflictual issues, observations about the role of Christians and the Christian community, and some suggestions for Christian response. The model for investigation used in these examples is: 1) recognition of a situation of conflict; 2) examination of the root causes of the conflict through study of the various factors which make up the conflict; 3) a search for resolutions of the conflict in light of these causes.

In this way, hopefully, the factors which separate the polarized groups can be minimized, so that they ultimately may be reconciled.

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The fact of interdependence points toward its moral meaning. We must learn how to live locked together on a limited globe. Mutual vulnerability characterizes our lives today.

There are degrees of vulnerability, usually correlated to levels of economic, political and military power; yet, as the "gas crisis" illustrated, even the world's most powerful nation is no longer insulated from the decisions of others.

Vulnerability implies responsibility. Knowing that others are affected by policies we support or practices we encourage means that we cannot be indifferent to the fact that in our world today fundamental human needs go unmet and basic human rights go unfulfilled. Determining our responsibility and deciding how to fulfill it are not simple tasks, but complexity is not an excuse for compliance or complicity. The world contains unjust structures and systems of social organization. Respect for life means, in part, being committed to changing these. This is the first step in facing the moral meaning of interdependence.

The second dimension of moral interdependence is the understanding that we live in a limited world—a world of finite resources which all need but only some get. As we confront the questions of justice, human rights, and respect for life, we face a newly perceived problem: the total answer to fulfilling the demands of justice cannot be simply producing more. Awareness of our limited environment and resources means that distributive justice is now the other dimension of the moral meaning of interdependence. Shall we accept responsibility for our mutual vulnerability? Our respect for life depends greatly upon our answer to this question. A critical illustration of the implications of this question is the issue of food production, distribution and consumption in the world today. What does this mean for us as Catholics in America today?

The moral problem arises from the fact that food, an absolutely essential resource, is now in short supply. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim described the situation in his address to the Special Session of the United Nations last April: "Never in recent decades have world reserves been so frighteningly low. The production of enough food to feed even reasonably well, people all over the world...most certainly represents the largest single pressure on our natural resources."

There are two fundamental pressures on the food supply; these are complemented by other factors of a more transitory nature. The "transitory factors" are climatic conditions and the consequences of the drastic rise in petroleum prices with its impact on food and fertilizer costs. The two fundamental (i.e., continuing) pressures are the rate of population growth and patterns of resource consumption.

Before examining these two factors, it is important to note that considering both in relation to food supply in itself represents a new and important insight. Only

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a decade ago the basic problem was defined simply as a race between food and population growth. Today, while the relationship of food and population growth is recognized as a problem, it is understood to be only part of the problem. The pattern of resource consumption in wealthy or developed nations is regarded as equally important.

How are food, population and consumption related? In very general terms, the food-population picture rests on the fact that the rate of population growth globally is at present 2 per cent per year. At this rate, merely maintaining current per capita consumption levels requires a doubling of food production over the next 20 years. The rate of population growth varies drastically in different sections of the globe, reaching 3 per cent per year in some places and approaching "zero population growth" in others.

Less often noted—at least in the United States—is that consumption rates vary much more drastically around the globe. The fundamental statistic is that, as 6 per cent of the world's population, we in the United States consume close to 40 per cent of its resources. To understand how food fits into this statistic, it is necessary to look not only at amounts but patterns of consumption—not only how much people eat, but what they eat.

The easiest approach is to examine consumption of grain in the world. Grain is the basic staple in the human diet, and its production accounts for over 70 percent of the world's crop area. The average per capita consumption of grain in the developing countries is approximately 400 pounds per year. In the United States and Canada it is approximately 1850 pounds per year. But in terms of the relationship of food and consumption, the amount is not the principal factor.

More important is the pattern of consumption. It is this which has placed new pressure on food supplies. Grain is consumed either directly (as in bread, cereals) or indirectly (as in meat, eggs). In the poor countries the intake of 400 pounds is almost exhausted in direct consumption. In the United States and Canada only 150 pounds are consumed directly, while the rest is indirect consumption. Indirect consumption (e.g., using grain to fatten beef cattle) rises proportionately with rising affluence. After per capita income passes \$500 per year the indirect consumption of grain through consumption of meat rises. The problem is that in a world of limited supplies indirect consumption is remarkably costly: it takes about 8 pounds of grain to produce a pound of beef. In the United States per capita consumption of beef rose from 55 pounds in 1940 to 117 pounds in 1972.

The pressure on food supplies in the world, therefore, is not simply a question of how many people live in the world (population) but also how some people live (life-style). The population-resources picture is often depicted in terms of a world which cannot tolerate the reproductive patterns of Asians and Latin Americans. The equally important—perhaps more important—question is whether a limited world can afford the consumption habits of North Americans and Europeans.

Given a food shortage of drastic proportions, the precise question we need to face as Catholics in the United States is, What does it mean for us? How do we understand our relationship to the food problem?

The answer depends upon a grasp of how the United States relates to both the production of food in the world and its consumption. Since World War II, the United States and Canada have played a unique role as a "breadbasket" for the world, animated by humanitarian considerations that also coincided with our economic interests. Exporting food under the "Food for Peace" program, which made food available at reduced costs to poor countries, also helped provide an outlet for our surplus agricultural products. Now, because of the food crisis in the globe, we no longer have surpluses. The question now before us is not whether we will *share our*

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surplus resources at reduced costs but whether we will *share our scarce resources* with nations, many of whom are unable at present to pay the going market price for food.

The first way, therefore, we relate as Americans to the food crisis involves our role as the world's primary source of food. What will be our policy, knowing that we control a resource which everyone needs but not everyone can afford and which is now in short supply? Will it be simply selling to the highest bidder? Is food simply another commodity to be subjected to the marketplace law of supply and demand? Or is there a special significance of food in a limited world where we are vulnerable to one another and responsible for one another?

The Christian vision of the world is that, despite all differences of color, language, nationality and ideology, we are still called to be a community, not simply a competing crowd. Indeed, we are called to be a community which lives as a family. This basic Christian teaching that God is our Father is made known to us through Jesus, whom we recognize as our brother who has shared his life with us. To accept Jesus as brother means accepting all those to whom he is bound.

The Gospels demonstrate that Jesus came to identify himself with the poor and the oppressed; he came to serve all and save all, but part of the saving message is that justice should come to the oppressed (Luke 4). Jesus promised that we would find him in a unique way in the claims, needs and demands the poor make upon us. One of the main purposes of the Church in the world is to be a voice, an agent and an advocate of the needs and claims of the oppressed.

The teaching of the Church today stresses that the claims of the oppressed are not requests for charity, but demands of justice. To share in charity is to give to another something I rightfully own and to which he has no claim; to respond to a demand of justice is to help another gain something to which he has a right. If he has a right to something, Catholic teaching stresses that I have a duty to help him obtain it. It is not enough simply to say that as Christians we believe the world is a family. That belief has a corollary: that the goods of the earth are destined by God for the use of the whole human family. This in turn means that each person has a right to enough material goods to allow him or her to live in human dignity. If this right is not being fulfilled, other members of the human community have a duty, not as a work of mercy or charity, but as a demand of justice, to reorganize the structures and systems of society which prevent the rights of the poor from being fulfilled.

What does this mean as far as food is concerned? It means that as Americans, the principal suppliers of food for the world in a time of shortage, we need to understand clearly the requirements of justice. To allow people to die, for example, as they are in danger of dying in Sahelian countries of Africa or in Bangladesh today, because they cannot afford the market price for food is to fail in justice. People have a right to eat. This right places a duty on other members of the human family to see that it is at least minimally fulfilled.

The "structures and systems" which stand in the way of that right at the moment include the fact that people must be able to buy food or they cannot obtain it. An alternative structure would be to supplement the market system with a food reserve, built up by donations from exporting countries and continually sustained so that nations could draw upon it in emergencies like the one we are now experiencing. This is not a "giveaway" program, but a means of achieving justice in a limited globe.

The second way in which we relate as Americans to the food crisis is our life-style. We too have rights, among them the right to eat. But living locked together in a limited globe means learning how to fulfill my rights in a way which allows others to fulfill their rights. If Americans cut back their intake of meat 10 per cent, they would be making a substantial contribution to solving the food crisis in the globe.

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Self-sacrifice for the sake of others in order to enhance their welfare is a basic principle of Christianity. It finds its highest expression in Christ, who sacrificed himself to enhance our welfare with the gift of divine life. Living in an age of interdependence means that we need to see self-sacrifice in social terms. Examining my consumption habits so that others may also be able to consume is a good example of the meaning of self-sacrifice today.

It is important for us as Catholics in America to think about how we relate to the food crisis. It is important that our leaders know we believe that we have a duty in justice to do more about hungry people in the world than simply selling the food we have at the best price we can get. Buying and selling will continue to be one way of feeding the world; but in a limited globe there have to be other means.

A View Of The Conflict

The United States and the poor nations are in conflict, and we cannot be reconciled until we know the source of our conflict. We are also in conflict within ourselves about our Christian moral sensitivities about charity and justice, and our American style of living. We are getting fat, while people are starving in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Americans on the average eat about 117 pounds of beef yearly. It requires each year about 1850 pounds of grain per person to feed the cattle needed to provide the 117 pounds of beef.

A person from the less developed world consumes about 400 pounds of grain yearly.

THAT MEANS Large areas of the earth are devoted to grazing beef cattle, while the same acreage, if planted for human consumption, would feed 10 times as many people as land devoted to cattle grazing.

THAT MEANS Americans' beef-eating habits place a severe demand on the world grain supplies and the price of grain for human consumption in the Third World is beyond their reach.

THAT MEANS We feed as much grain to animals as the rest of the world eats.

THAT MEANS If we gave up meat in our diet there would be ample food for the world's hungry and malnourished.

MEANWHILE About 50 per cent of the deaths of American adult males are caused by consumption of animal fats.

1. Sponsor a "hunger banquet" to vividly demonstrate (in proportion to actual conditions) the nutritional inequities in the world. Serve most of the guests something like rice and tea, and the remainder of the guests a full course meal. Details for this and other programs available from American Freedom from Hunger Foundation, 1100 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/254-3487).
2. Sponsor a program to educate the community/parish members about deficiencies of present diets available for those on various forms of public assistance. Suggest a group try the "welfare diet," prepared by the National Welfare Rights Organization, 1420 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005 (202/483-1531).
3. Set up a comparison shoppers' service. Have group representatives "shop" in several local food markets. Draw up a list of comparative prices, and print results in parish bulletin each week. This could be expanded in especially low-income areas to see that those on low and fixed incomes are able to get the most for their food dollars.
4. Get as many people as you can to voluntarily levy a "self-tax" on their incomes. These tax monies are then collected on a systematic schedule, and sent to groups investing in economic development in less developed areas.
5. An existing parish organization could compile a recipe book of low-cost, high-nutrition meals, making good use of the more abundant foods. Group could meet weekly and each participant would bring to each meeting a recipe (and sample). These recipes are collected and compiled into an inexpensively printed (mimeo would do) book. The book can be made available at cost to parishioners on Sunday after Masses, at county and state fairs, and other local gatherings. If sold for more than cost, the proceeds could be donated to a specific food project.
6. Start a local Friday Fish-Eaters Club. Enlist people who will voluntarily reinstate the Friday abstinence from meat in their lives as a spiritual exercise and as an effort to cut down on the consumption of meat. Economists have estimated that a reduction in meat eating by Americans could increase grain reserves throughout the world since much grain is now used to feed cattle. The reserves could then be allocated to nations threatened by widespread starvation. For more information: Bread for the World, 602 E. 9th St., New York, N.Y. 10009. (212/228-5230).

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FOCUS-2

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

“God created man in his own image and likeness, in the divine image he created them, male and female he created them.” (Gen. 1:27) A common humanity and spiritual equality is inferred. Woman, like man, is a distinctive creation, equal but different.

In the divine design, men and women are meant to complement each other, to enhance and affirm each other as persons, knowing perfect trust and mutuality. Their relationship foreshadows all human relationships and mirrors the inter-relatedness of the persons of the Blessed Trinity. They are the expression of divine harmony in diversity.

Together, male and female are given stewardship over the earth and its creatures (Gen. 1:28). But with the fall from grace, humankind set their hearts against God (Gen. 6:5) and the urge to attain and exert superiority over one another, to dominate and subjugate, came to possess all beings.

Genesis provides a commentary on the effect of sin upon the human and universal condition. Prevarication, disunity, self-interest and projection of guilt enter history with Adam's assertion, “The woman gave me the fruit,” and Eve's response, “The serpent tempted me.”

Woman is affected specifically in the exercise of her biological functions and in her sexuality. Sexuality as the expression of divine creative harmony and human personality became submerged in the idea of sex as a commodity to be used and experienced.

Through the centuries, various and often contradictory projections and images of women were posited. Philosophically attributed with elevated ideals, virtue and wisdom (Pr. 8:22-31), woman was reduced—on the practical level—to the situation of a legal and social minor, discriminated against as a basic threat to man.

With the Incarnation, a new note is sounded by Christ—that of a high estimate of the dignity and worth of women in all spheres of life. Christ showed an enlightened attitude towards women. The Gospel incidents, interpreted in their cultural context, give—then as now—a basis for a genuine emancipation of women. Although uncircumcised and therefore uncovenanted in the Old Testament, from the outset of the church of Christ, women were baptized as well as men, thus being imbued with full rights to the royal priesthood of the people of God.

From its beginnings, the church of Christ has claimed for woman the restoration of her original dignity and her emancipation from cultural inequities and the stigma of inferiority imposed in the past. There was explicit equality of mission, responsibility and membership in the Church. There was equality in marriage (1 Cor. 7:40), and in culpability (John 8:1-12).

Those scriptural texts which affirm equality represent an expression of divine revelation which contradicts the established order of the time. “All are baptized in

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Christ. You have all clothed yourselves in Christ and there is no more distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Ga. 3:27-28).

The liberation achieved by the redemption established the recognition of the dignity and equality of woman before God, her right to full participation in the Church, and to reception of available sacramental graces.

Yet the prevailing culture of the times imposed its own restrictions and once again woman emerged as the subordinate of man. The Second Vatican Council stated:

...with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. For in truth, it must be regretted that fundamental personal rights are not yet being universally honored.

Such is the case of a woman who is denied the right and freedom...to embrace a state of life or to acquire an education or cultural benefits equal to those recognized for men. (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 29).

The council fathers also noted, in reference to the broader desires of humankind, that "where they have not already won it, women claim for themselves an equity with men before the law and in fact," (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 9), recognizing the profound motivation of the movement for women's rights and dignity.

As higher education and greater exposure through the communications media bring women into contact with contemporary theological, psychological and philosophical thought, their developing awareness of the unique personhood of human beings is provoking them to dissatisfaction with previously tolerated or accepted female roles and images.

Many women, it is true, are happy living in the traditional mold. Many others insist that their talents and individuality are frustrated and stifled. Women of individual accomplishment who may have no personal experience of discrimination or oppression, do not deny the consciousness of a stereotype of inferiority, imposed on women in the past.

There is a need for the kind of education that "conscientizes," that is, which leads to the awareness of political, social and economic contradiction in their lives, so that women may take effective action against their oppressions.

Women must discover for themselves those qualities and life-styles which allow them to work in harmony with their true spiritual being and towards their full human potential.

Primarily, they must come to see themselves as the unique persons they are, and not merely the fulfillment of the expectations of others. They must assure themselves of where they stand in their particular society, and how best they may serve God—both in the world and in the Church.

Only in the true serenity and strength emanating from an increased respect for their abilities and potential—in personal integrity—may women find the confidence, courage and perseverance to follow their full human and Christian vocation, and utilize their talents, experience and uniqueness for the benefit of humankind.

Historically, however, it is evident that prejudice is passed from generation to generation, becoming enshrined in time as tradition and social custom, seldom questioned and challenged.

Our attitudes towards ourselves and others are profoundly, and for the most

part unconsciously, shaped by these predetermined definitions of roles and responsibilities.

The effects of male dominance are embedded, not only in custom and law, but most intrinsically in the psychological make-up of both men and women. Psychologically too, men and women are affected by their biological differences.

If men and women are to realize the relationship of mutual acceptance and trust necessary for the development of their full potential to represent faithfully the image of God, they must come to understand the true implications of their sexuality.

From the early years of the Church, the Blessed Virgin Mary has been presented as the classic model of ideal womanhood. But she was witness to a state of civilization long since surpassed, and the modern aspects of the feminine condition were beyond her experience. Her inspiration lies in a different perspective.

She is for all humankind and for all time, the embodiment of a person who knew how to accept and respond to the election of God in her particular historical situation.

It is in her humanity, not merely her femininity, that Mary's *fiat* assumes the quality of co-redemption. She is the model of Christian response and discipleship for man as well as woman. By the same token, it is in his humanity rather than his masculinity that Christ realized the salvation of humankind. He is the supreme and universal model for woman as well as man.

A woman who has accepted the essential fact of her womanhood, discovers self-value, purpose and personal dignity. She emanates a maturity and integrity which not only demands respect and deference but renders exploitation impossible.

Aware of her feminineness as a gift of God of utmost importance to his design for humanity, a woman may and should rise above the cultural limitations of her position. In the freedom of personal actualization arising from the assurance of her value in his plan, she should come to a true expression of her individuality and the fulfillment of her God-given destiny.

There are many instances in history of women who have risen to prominence and even national leadership. In the Israel of the Old Testament, prophetesses were renowned for their wisdom and their counsel sought (Judges 4:4 + ; 2 Kings 22:14-21; 2 Chron. 34:22-28).

In the New Testament, women of sanctity and maturity were both accepted and valued as deacons (Romans 16:1) and prophets (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor. 11:5) and taught side by side with men in the early Christian community (Acts 18:2, 18, 26). St. Theresa of Avila and St. Catherine of Siena both achieved the stature of doctors of the Church, living in a time when higher education was still considered a male prerogative.

When considering the exploitation of women and their denigration to "sex objects" as projected by the various forms of media today, we cannot avoid the realization that this condition could not have come about without at least the tolerance of women themselves.

Even today when the forces of liberation are most active and vocal, some women—while apparently resisting—continue to contribute to their own exploitation by their attitudes before men and by their response to the suggestiveness, immature appeal and insidious pressures of the communications and entertainment media in their presentation of "feminine" models of behavior, thought and dress.

The consumer mentality of the twentieth century all too often leads to the idea of usefulness as the criterion of what is important or worthwhile. Men and women, working towards a better world, must always recognize the inviolable mystery of the other person, not crippled by utilitarianism.

They must respect the individuality of the other. They must realize that

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fundamentally, men and women have the same capacity for spirituality, and the same potential to grow as persons.

Psychologists tell us that all human persons innately possess what were traditionally considered masculine and feminine qualities and characteristics. Typically masculine or typically feminine behavior is to a major extent conditioned by education and social and parental expectations. The humanistic psychology focusing on the person, which evolved in the second half of this century, has revealed how centuries of emphasis on the "masculine" traits of aggressiveness, rational judgment, competitiveness and so on, and regarding the gentle, loving elements as weak or "feminine," has served to, polarize and de-humanize human beings.

Immeasurable potential may be lost to the Church and society by too rigidly exclusive male and female roles. The traditionally opposite yet complementary trends of protector (male) and nurturer (female) *must be reconciled* if humankind is to realize its identity as the image of God—God, who is both protector and nurturer, strong and gentle, forgiving and accepting, loving and giving, and who allows complete freedom of will.

Pope Paul, in *Marialis Cultis*, appeals to women not only to exercise these qualities within themselves, but to promote that climate of trust and acceptance wherein they may be realized in and elicited from men.

The focal point of Christian women's needs is the right to develop as a fully human and Christian being; to pursue their vocation to the limits of their capabilities in whatever direction it may lead them, in the support and recognition of their social community and the Church.

The Christian woman is a person whose confident womanhood does not recoil from leadership, does not deny the quality of her intellect, the extent of her ability or the depths of her thought, but with Christ as her model, silences prejudice and abuse with the quality of her life.

Aware that injustices and discrimination persist, she is neither intimidated nor diminished in the event.

If inequities are not to be exacerbated, but freely acknowledged and eradicated, the human possessiveness and pride which dominates so much of human relationships must be replaced with genuine religious charity.

In truly religious faith, women will find liberation from the social, legal and cultural absurdities which disrupt the harmony of human existence. In religious hope, they may transcend the pressures of moral and social decline.

Endowed with God-given faith, hope and love, in the assurance of their identity and purpose, women of the new world should indeed exert unprecedented power and influence to restore this universe to the state of peace and harmony cardinal to the divine plan for humankind.

(Digest of "Women in the New World," pastoral letter by Bp. Leo Maher of San Diego, written with the aid of the diocese's Committee for the Rights of Women. Full text appears in NC News "Origins," August 1, 1974.)

A View Of The Conflict

Efforts of women's rights groups are sometimes marked by anger and impatience, and they frequently jolt complacent sectors of our society by their outrage. To understand the depth of the feelings involved in the conflict, and as a prerequisite to reconciliation, the fact of discrimination against women in the social, religious, political, economic, legal and educational institutions of society must first be recognized.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Discrimination is most evident in the labor market, where more than fifteen million women are employed. The majority of working women do so out of pressing economic need. They are either single, widowed, divorced or separated, or have husbands whose incomes are less than \$3,000 a year.

- Women in full-time jobs are paid about one half as much as similarly employed males.
- Unemployment rates, across the board, are higher for women than for men.

Group	Unemployment Rates, 1973	
	Male	Female
White adults	2.9%	4.3%
Minority adults	5.7%	8.2%
White teenagers	12.3%	13.0%
Minority teenagers	26.9%	34.5%

- Fully employed women high school graduates receive less income than fully employed men who have not completed elementary school.
- Starting salaries for women graduating from college in 1970 were as much as 10% lower than for men in the same field.

Another area where discrimination is blatant is the field of education—often considered a women's field. However, as responsibility, status and income rise, women almost disappear from the field. While 67% of all public school elementary teachers are women, only

- 31% of the department heads are women.
- 15% of the elementary school principals are women.
- 3.5% of the junior high school principals are women.
- Less than 1% of the superintendents are women.

In colleges and universities,

- Women instructors earn \$500 per year less than male instructors.
- Women full-time professors earn \$1,700 per year less than their male counterparts.

Further, discrimination against females is evident in the early education of children. A recent survey of 144 school textbooks disclosed:

- Boys were the focus of 881 stories; girls of 344 stories.
- Adult males were featured in 282 stories; women in 127 stories.
- Biographies of 131 men were included; only 23 of women.
- Boys were portrayed as active, self-reliant and successful; girls as passive, dependent and incompetent. Samples from the texts:
 - Girl is depicted as getting lost in London with the caption: "Girls are always late."
 - "Look at her, Mother, just look at her. She is just like a girl. She gives up."
 - "You cannot write and spell well enough to write a book. You are just two little girls."

Extending the subject to the global dimension, the general tendency in most cultures is to value males more than females, and consequently to deny women an equal opportunity to develop their full potential as human beings:

- Of the world's some 700 million illiterates, the majority are women; in some areas figures run as high as 85%.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

- The percentage of females to males enrolled in higher education:
 - • in the Arab States, 23%
 - • in Latin America, 34%
 - • in Africa, 25%
 - • in the U.S., 44%
 - • in Asia, 28%
- In the majority of countries, only a small percentage of women hold policy-making posts in the legislative, judicial or executive branches of government.
 - • Despite China's claims about women's emancipation and equality, only one woman holds a ministerial position, as Minister of Public Health, a 1973 appointment.

In the Roman Catholic Church, as in most religious groups, certain positions are either expressly or implicitly denied women, for example, entrance into the ministry of the priesthood. Even in the administration of affairs directly affecting women, the women have little voice:

- The Congregation of Religious is responsible for about 1,250,000 men and women religious, of whom more than 80% are women.
 - • Of the Congregation's staff of 50, less than 25% are women.
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Program Suggestions

1. Heighten awareness levels about the discrimination against women and the toll it takes on our society:

a. through participation in the International Women's Year (1975) activities. Participation of men and women will be necessary to bring about reevaluation and change of traditional attitudes and roles that hinder full attainment by women of their human potential. Contact the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, United Nations, New York 10017, to be put on their mailing list to receive the Bulletin and other informational materials.

b. through examination of sex-stereotyping and sex discrimination, portraying girls and women as second-class citizens. The Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) has developed a K-12 Education Kit which provides an overview of some of these areas and suggests actions citizens can take to bring about change. The kit has application for both teachers and parents in either public or parochial schools. Contact WEAL, 538 National Press Building, Washington, D.C. 20004.

c. through a study of discrimination against women in the labor force. Contact the Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210.

2. Sponsor local or regional workshops on the issue of women in church and society. Sister Elizabeth Carroll (formerly Sr. Thomas Aquinas Carroll), past president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, has joined the Center of Concern to work with team members on these issues. The team's efforts will include conducting workshops, seminars and research in women's issue. Contact the Center of Concern, 3700 13th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017.

3. Organize with others and communicate with church and government leaders, expressing the group's concern that women be given equal opportunity for full human development in church and society.

a. Contact the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee for Women in Society and the Church, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Room 500, Washington, D.C. 20005.

b. Contact the state and national elected representatives from your district.

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