



THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN: A CONTRIBUTION FROM DEEP PSYCHOLOGY WITH INSIGHTS FROM JUNGⁱ

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Abstract:

Anna-Thekla Künnis wrote the article “The Ordination of Women: A Contribution from Depth Psychology with Insights from Jung” for the Anglican Theological Review. The author elaborated in detail on the relationship between Theology and Psychology and highlighted the meaning, value, and distinctions of archetypes into three types: the central archetype, the archetype of the woman as a woman and as a mother, and the archetype of the priest and the comforter-healer. The study concludes with key questions for the reader and prompts reflection on the “Ordination of Women” from Jung’s psychological perspective.

Keywords: archetype, Jung, depth psychology, ordination of women

Περίληψη:

Η Άννα-Θέκλα Κιούνις έγραψε το άρθρο «Η Χειροτονία των Γυναικών: Μια συνεισφορά από την Ψυχολογία του Βάθους με απόψεις του Jung» από την Αγγλικανική Θεολογική Επιθεώρηση. Η συγγραφέας μάς ανέπτυξε λεπτομερώς τη σχέση μεταξύ Θεολογίας και Ψυχολογίας και μάς επεσήμανε την έννοια, την αξία και τις διακρίσεις των αρχετύπων σε τρία είδη: το κεντρικό αρχέτυπο, το αρχέτυπο της γυναίκας ως γυναίκα και ως μητέρα και το αρχέτυπο του ιερέα και του παρηγορητή – θεραπευτή. Η έρευνα τελειώνει με καίριες ερωτήσεις προς τον αναγνώστη και τον προβληματίζει για τη “Χειροτονία των Γυναικών” από την ψυχολογική άποψη του Jung.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: αρχέτυπο, Jung, ψυχολογία Βάθους, χειροτονία γυναικών

ⁱ Η ΧΕΙΡΟΤΟΝΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ: ΜΙΑ ΣΥΝΕΙΣΦΟΡΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΒΑΘΟΥΣ ΜΕ ΑΠΟΨΕΙΣ ΤΟΥ JUNG

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1. Introduction

Theology deals with eternal truths, which are discussed, take on different forms, and transcend time. Psychology deals with the human soul and studies how it expresses itself and grapples with the meaning of life, transcendence, the Divine, and the experience it gains (Jung, 1968). Religious truths have to do with the reality of the soul. This is how we acquire knowledge, rationality, and devotion. Jung's Depth Psychology successfully addresses these kinds of issues. To define the relationship between Jung's Depth Psychology and Theology, the theologian Wolfgang Kues (2000), wrote: "Become what you ought to be".

The issue of "the ordination of women" should not be examined solely in terms of the essential characteristics of the priesthood and the qualifications required for this sacrament. We must approach this issue from the perspective of Depth Psychology and examine the realities that touch the soul—the realities that women experience beyond the realm of knowledge and beyond factors related to time and culture.

2. Archetypes

The term "archetype" is derived from the words "arche" (beginning) and "typos" (type) and refers to the unconscious, vague mental structure that exists on the basis of the impressions it receives (Jung, 1968). Archetypes are relatively stable but are subject to change due to the passage of time and intellectual development. Birth, marriage, and death are some of the experiences that humans encounter through various behaviors and rituals. For thousands of years, these have remained constant and will continue to exist in different forms of expression.

Many archetypes are expressed through myths, stories, and religious beliefs. Mythical and religious images become symbols that make the reality we live in more understandable (Jung, 1968). However, the more we understand these symbols, the more they lose their power, because we place them within rational frameworks. Archetypes are personal but are never fully and completely understood. Identifying with an archetype has serious consequences, because it alienates you from dynamic energy.

From a psychological perspective, the topic of women's priesthood touches upon three archetypes: the central archetype (according to Jung)—that is, the Self itself—the archetype of the woman and the mother, and the archetype of the priest and the comforter (Jung, 1968).

2.1 The central archetype According to Jungian psychology, the self is not identical with the "Ego."

While the "Ego" in adults is the center of consciousness, my Self resonates with the totality of the soul, consciously or unconsciously, because psychologically it touches both the core and the periphery of my personality. It unites all opposites: the conscious and the unconscious, the masculine and the feminine, the mind and matter, the body and the soul. My self is the source of all growth.

There is a living relationship between the “I” and myself. They must work together. The “Ego” recognizes the rivalry and responsibility regarding the center of the soul and pays close attention to this center. This is how Jung understands Religion. Myself is a psychic organ, capable of transcendence, of knowing and experiencing myself and God. Consequently, they are not defined, not delimited, not represented symbolically. The inner voice of consciousness is the voice of God, like a breath, like a spiritual inspiration.

Christ came to restore the image of humanity and revealed to all the unique nature of the archetype that embodies His entire Self. His life is the perfect form of the reality of His Self, because He lived by consciously affirming God’s will in relation to His Self until the very end. With the crucifixion of Christ, His Truth shone forth. With the crucifixion of each person, their own truth shines forth. They learn and come to realize their very self and perceive its dark, unseen side.

When people sacrifice themselves en masse, they resolve their conflicts, become aware of their problems, and achieve their solution. People are not only opposed to one another due to hormones regarding their gender but also regarding their relationship with the opposite sex. There are psychological structures of men and women that are difficult for anyone to grasp.

Jung referred to all the feminine aspects of the human psyche as the “anima,” which is capable of experiencing emotions and moods. Our ability to form relationships with other people, both in terms of our nature and our unconscious, is mediated by the “anima.” The opposite element in terms of gender for women is the “animus,” which expresses “belief,” opinions, and fundamental principles as sacred convictions. It can be useful and creative as an impulse and as a constructive spirit. These oppositions within the human soul and among people create diversity, fertility, and conflict.

We need experiences to realize aspects of our personality, because through constant tendencies and contradictions, they create transcensus, that is, inspiration. Inspiration leads us to Theosis, and our soul unites with God. The union of God with humanity leads to the symbol of the Son of God, and consequently, we are led to the conviction that every human being develops through the need for feminine spiritual capacities that are receptive, protective, and prepare a person to humble themselves and be nurtured.

2.2 The archetype of the woman as a woman and as a mother

Every human being is connected to the archetype of the woman and the mother. The archetypes of the feminine and the masculine constitute a mutually united pair, and one element complements the other, forming a fulfillment of the soul without any hierarchy of inferiority or superiority.

Specific feminine qualities serve life biologically, psychologically, and spiritually. The ability to connect the feminine elements in an erotic and creative way is a distinctly feminine and maternal trait. However, this corresponds to a psychological polarity that results in the creation of an abysmal, destructive, and dark side, such as images of Medusa.

The collective unconscious is awakened by maternal qualities (gifts) and brings the conscious mind back to life. This occurs in the development of every human being. Gradually, with the help of motherhood, the conscious mind is liberated from the masculine archetype. This is expressed through the creation of spiritual power, which is fundamentally characterized by reason, rationality, structure, and the element of design. It is also expressed through stability and via principles and beliefs (that is, the feminine creates and gives birth, while the masculine organizes, sets the framework, and guides). These psychological capacities (of the anima and animus) differ and intersect to bring fertility to both individual lives and the structures of society. We need to find the synthesis of masculine and feminine, matter and spirit, nature and transcendence in a way that is both possible and purposeful.

2.3 The archetype of the priest and the comforter-healer

The archetype that is closely related to the archetype of the “self” and the archetype of the feminine principle is the archetype of the priest and the comforter. Initially, the archetype of the priest was centered on the archetype of the physician. With the development of the natural sciences, the roles of the priest and the natural scientist (physician) changed.

Theology focused more on education and less on pastoral care and healing (Kues, 2000). Pastoral duties were the preserve of men for decades, while the healing professions were the domain of women, and in this way, the archetype of the priest and the physician (of soul and body) was expressed. Healing refers both to the treatment of the body and to the tranquillity of the soul, leading to the wholeness of the individual. As the masculine and feminine elements of the soul unfold, human existence undergoes psychological and physical experiences that bring about its completion through psychological and physical healing via the self.

In the same way, a person experiences fulfillment through the religious and transcendent function of Christ’s salvific work. The powers of the body and soul that heal the self are supported by therapies directed toward the divine and transcendent, either individually or through others. The deeper and more consciously one is connected to these archetypal forces, the more effective the therapeutic and sacred approach becomes.

From the perspective of Depth Psychology, women undoubtedly possess the greater part of this structure of the psychological archetype. The archetype of the priest and the healer is structured in a particular way. It is true that repressed psychic energy accumulates in the subconscious as an autonomous dynamic force that can lead to an uncontrolled outburst.

3. Questions (Concerns)

- *Can a woman serve as a priest and represent Christ?*

The priest acts as a mediator between God and humanity. In Christianity, the priest represents or symbolizes the congregation as well as the presence of God. In the Eucharist, Christ is presented as the high priest. Christ is presented as the second Adam,

as a human being who seeks perfect humanity. For Christians, He is the perfect image of the reality of His Self. Our orientation toward Christ is the relationship of Christ to the Holy Spirit as well as to the creation of the universe.

- *How can we determine in what form God allows Himself to be known so that we may communicate with Him? Does Christ allow Himself to be revealed to us through symbolic meaning? Should we seek God by considering these possibilities?*

A symbol never fully represents what it signifies. It does, however, offer a powerful point of access. In this sense, every person can and must become an image of Christ, just as Christ is an image of God. Psychologically, this corresponds to the image of God as it has been given to each individual separately, and this is the truest definition of the Self—that is, becoming oneself.

In this sense, a woman as a priest represents Christ and does so in her own special way, in a feminine way, as an enrichment of the image of Christ. Her personal relationship with Christ and His Father, inspired by the Spirit of God, is the most important factor, as every believer knows.

4. Vocation or Calling (Charism)

Regarding the ordination of women, we must discuss the essence of the priesthood or ordained ministry. It depends on how we understand it. Is the priesthood a profession that anyone can practice, provided they are properly educated and accepted by the people, or is the priesthood a ministry that is called to be performed by one who has a divine calling, because God wishes, through His calling, to express Himself through the characteristics of human personality? The calling is given; it is not demanded. The true calling serves the community. It requires sacrifice and is a gift.

From a psychological perspective, the call presupposes a relationship between the “ego” and the “self,” a relationship that is settled and creative, a relationship that is whole and capable of communicating with the dark side of the soul. He hears the voice of God within him. He hears God’s law, and it frees him from other voices that lead him to destruction. Therefore, his authentic personality emerges.

There must be clarification regarding the necessary character traits and the potential implications for the ordained priesthood. A female priest will be subject to different implications than those of a male priest. These implications must reflect the workings of each person’s soul. If the priest’s ministry is a calling from God, we can do nothing but obey their will and watch the times. Psychologically, we must activate an archetype and participate by negotiating it responsibly.

5. The Ordination of Women

- *What is the basis for women’s demand for ordination? Is it a trend stemming from human rights? Is it a need to personally engage in church work? Do women want to gain power and influence to affect the inaccessible realm of religious authority? Are women seeking*

ordination because they are excluded from the divine calling? Is this an issue arising from the needs of our times, as we seek change in our church activities? Will women's ordination help or hinder the Christian work of salvation? Do we need to explore female perspectives on the image of God that may be causing concern?

People want decisions to be made through negotiation when there are serious reasons for doing so. To gain insight from our actions, we must keep track of developments and be open to making adjustments. Undoubtedly, Tradition offers experience that we have received from the Holy Spirit in the Church throughout the centuries. According to Depth Psychology, women share an equal part with men in the archetype of the priest and the healer.

- *Will the ordination of women respond to the needs of the Church, to social problems, and to the need of certain women who feel called by God? Do they want ordination because they feel diminished? Have men neglected to develop the feminine side of their souls because they feared that the feminine might dominate within them and they would lose power?*

Perhaps this argument is understandable, but the more dangerous it seems, the more it is ignored. If it is necessary to examine the religious calling, then a woman's egocentric ambition is more noteworthy than the psychological immaturity of a man who believes he is destined to serve as a priest because he is possessed by an unresolved Oedipus complex.

6. Weighing the weight of the arguments

There has been much discussion about ordination, including doctrinal, religious, historical, psychological, and social perspectives.

- *How do these perspectives relate to one another? Is uniformity more important than vitality? Is tradition more valuable than change? How are functional issues, as opposed to emotional issues, evaluated? Can theological and psychological positions be considered complete in and of themselves?*

Before any decision is made, we must discern and see whether and to what extent it is possible for the masculine and the feminine, eros and logos, tradition and the modern, the changeable and the eternally stable principle and command to coexist constructively.

7. Conclusions - Expectations Regarding the Ordination of Women

This study does not allow us — though it is necessary — to distinguish between the various expectations regarding the Church, the priesthood, individual women who feel they have been called (have a divine charism) to ordination, and women in general. However, the greatest hope lies within the Church and within society, which is feminine and maternal and will become whole in a more conscious and responsible way for the service of humanity and all of creation. The feminine in itself expresses the foundation and

affirmation of life, the meaning of “becoming” in “being,” the sense of the cycle, of growth, and of maturity. The development of values, emotion, and the heart is grounded in the integrity of the feminine. These values are important, and every person possesses them and is responsible for acting in accordance with their abilities.

Despite the fruitful contribution of depth psychology, Jung’s approach cannot, on its own, serve as a sufficient theological foundation for the issue of women’s ordination. The psychological interpretation of archetypes and symbols, while shedding light on aspects of human experience, may relativize the Church’s doctrinal truths. Furthermore, the identification of Christ with archetypal structures of the soul may raise theological questions (Jung, 1968), as the Christian faith is not limited to symbolic or psychological interpretations, but refers to historical and revelatory reality.

Ordination concerns the divine calling and the personal relationship with God (Jung, 1968; Kues, 2000). A woman who is ordained participates in the archetype of the priest and the healer on a completely equal footing with men, while the Church is called upon to recognize and support this ministry (Jung, 1968). The priesthood of women is linked to deep psychological and spiritual structures, and the feminine aspect of the soul is fundamental to the development of the community and the attainment of human wholeness (Jung, 1968; Kues, 2000). By recognizing the value of women’s priesthood, the Church can adapt to the needs of society and better serve humanity.

The Church is committed to carrying out its work through the ministry of women and the priesthood of men. However, it must take a stance on the issue of ordination by providing clearer explanations regarding the priesthood and ordination. It is both its duty and its calling to provide solutions. In conclusion, the issue of women’s ordination cannot be examined in a one-dimensional manner, but requires a combination of theological tradition and contemporary reflection. The contribution of Depth Psychology offers an essential tool for understanding the human psyche and the archetypal structures that influence religious experience. However, the final judgment rests with the theological conscience of the Church, which is called upon to discern responsibly between tradition and the needs of the modern age.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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