

Reflections on the Hypostatic Union: How Can a Single Person Have Two Intellects and Wills?



One of the most difficult concepts for students of theology to get their heads around is the orthodox doctrine of the incarnation. Students generally are willing to affirm that Jesus Christ is a single person (against Nestorianism), that he is “God become a human being” and not a human being in whom God was especially present (against adoptionism), that he is fully God and fully human (Chalcedon); however, I have found that concerns arise when some of the affirmations of the later Councils are discussed. Affirmations of ditheletism (that Christ has two intellects and wills, one human and one divine) and *anhypostasia* (that because Christ is a single divine person, he has no distinct human person) create puzzlement. In an email conversation with a well-known contemporary Evangelical theologian, I was once told that the notion that Jesus had both a divine intellect and will and a human intellect and will sounded like “Nestorianism.” More recently, a student complained that saying that Jesus was not a human person sounded like

Apollinarianism. A student sent me an email awhile back, raising some of these questions, and I have belatedly responded:

I'm still stuck on the single personhood of Christ in the face of two natures. I understand the distinction (the who vs. the what) and the necessity to keep either from being diminished/replaced by the other. But I'm struggling with how to understand someone with two wills, two knowledges, two ontologies, as a single anything. I know at some point we plead mystery, but I want to get as close as I can before I do.

Concerning personhood, I think the following is necessary:

- a) A person is absolutely unique. There are many human beings, but there is only one unique Bill Witt or D___ S___ (name omitted).
- b) A person is consciously aware, and the source of his or her own actions.
- c) A person knows and wills and, on that basis, is able to act in a responsible manner.
- d) A person is relational – specifically a person is in relation to other persons as I and you.
- e) For all of the above reasons, a person is a “some one” rather than a “some thing.”

Where things get confusing for us is that in the only cases of personhood of which we have immediate experience (that of fellow human beings), every person is an embodied individual with a single intellect and will. If there is more than one intellect and will, there is more than one person.

However, in the case of the Trinity and the incarnation, this become problematic. The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity is

that there are three persons, but one nature and not three intellects and three wills, but a single intellect and will. The three persons of the Trinity all know, will, and love with one divine intellect and will. The Augustinian and Thomist "psychological" Trinitarian model goes so far as to equate the Son/Word with the divine Wisdom (Intellect) and the Spirit with divine Love (will). Karl Barth and Karl Rahner were so concerned that speaking of three divine "persons" might lead to a conception of three separate knowing and willing "individuals" that they preferred to speak of the Trinitarian persons as "modes of being." However, the more recent consensus seems to be that the traditional language is still preferable because Barth's and Rahner's position does not adequately enough distinguish the Trinitarian persons as individual centers of relational consciousness and loving. God really is three distinct persons (not one), but the three persons know and love one another with the same undivided intellect and will.

In the case of the Son, the orthodox position is that the Son is a single Divine Person; however, as human, it is necessary to speak of this divine person as knowing and willing with a human (not divine) intellect and will. Within the sphere of the incarnation, God the Son (a distinct divine person) knows and acts as a human being, and that necessarily involves a human intellect and will. If the puzzle concerning the Trinity is how three persons can share a single intellect and will, the puzzle concerning the incarnate Son is how a single person can have two intellects and two wills.

The best thinkers on this issue are in agreement that the fundamental distinction that enabled patristic trinitarian and incarnational theology to move forward was the distinction between person and nature. As long as the location of union continued to be "natures," then either monophysitism/Apollinarianism or adoptionism/Nestorianism were inevitable. If one focuses on union, and assumes that the

divine nature is at the center of the union between Christ's deity and humanity, then the humanity must yield to the divinity, and Jesus is not genuinely human. On the other hand, if one focuses on the distinctiveness of the natures, and insists that they must each maintain their own integrity, then the question arises of how Christ is genuinely one, and not simply a human being who has a special relationship with God. What the distinction between person and natures enables is to make it clear that the incarnate Christ's center of identity is that of the Second member of the Trinity. Who is Jesus Christ? He is God incarnate. At the same time, in order to maintain the integrity of both deity and humanity in the incarnation, it must be clear that both natures are complete – Jesus Christ is completely human and completely divine. What is the incarnate Jesus Christ? He is a man, but he is also God.

It is this distinction between person and nature that leads inevitably to the distinction between person (which is divine) and intellect and will (which, are respectively, divine in the divine nature, and human in the human nature). Either Apollinarianism or Nestorianism would be easier to understand. If Jesus is a single divine person with a single divine intellect and will (Apollinarianism), that fits within our known categories, but it means that Jesus is not genuinely human. If Jesus's genuinely human intellect and will mean that Jesus is a human person, then the question arises, how is he genuinely God, and not simply another example of a prophet or a saint?

I think the following might be at least semi-helpful in terms of providing some clarification, but without making things any easier to conceive (fit our heads around).

In the five distinctives of personhood above – (a), (d), and (e) point to characteristics of the person's distinctiveness – what distinguishes one person from another; (b) and (c) point not to characteristics of the person's identity in itself, but

to activities of the person. The person "is aware," "acts," "knows," "wills," "is responsible." In each case, it is possible to distinguish the person as the source of activity from the activity itself. It is the person who knows, acts, wills, and loves. The intellect and will do not know, will, and love; rather the person knows and loves using an intellect and will. A person is inseparable from an intellect and will, but is not simply identified with them. The person is the source of the action (the someone), but is not simply identified with the action.

In the case of the incarnation, a divine person, who, as one of the members of the Trinity, is the source of divine actions using the divine intellect and will, now has assumed a human nature, that is, the humanity of a single human individual. Within the sphere of the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity now takes on an additional role; the person of the Word (the center of identity in the sense of a), d), and e) becomes the source of activity of the human Jesus, but in this case, this same divine person exercises actions b) and c) through a human intellect and will. That is, the divine person of the Word (the "who" of Jesus) in the sense of a), d), and e), genuinely lives as a human being and so is conscious, is the source of human actions, knows, wills, loves, and is responsible in a completely human manner.

This, I think, is as far as the ecumenical councils got. They did not really address the question you ask: "how to understand someone with two wills, two knowledges, two ontologies, as a single anything?" I'm hoping that perhaps some of what I've written addresses that. The single unique center of identity who is the Word of God and who knows, wills, and acts, does so in two different ways, both as human and divine. The incarnate Word is not a "single anything," he is two "anythings," one divine, one human. At the same time, he is a single "anyone." He is the same distinct, knowing, willing, responsible individual exercising his personal

activities of knowing, willing, acting within two different spheres of activity, one divine, one human.

I also addressed some of this awhile ago in an essay I wrote on Cyril of Alexandria, and I'll include some of that below:

The uniqueness of the second person of the Trinity's access to the consciousness of the incarnate Jesus lies in personal identity. Or rather, the second person of the Trinity does not simply have access to the mind of Jesus. He is Jesus. The person of the Word takes the place of what would be a human person in the incarnate Word, and that person is the center of the human consciousness and will of the incarnate Word. It is not the human mind that knows or the human will that wills, but the divine person who knows using the human mind, and the divine person who wills using the human will. Because it is the person who acts, knows, and wills, the person of the Word knows himself (and not someone else) to be acting, knowing, and willing in the actions of Jesus.

But because there are two natures (with two minds and wills), the same person acting as the one center of consciousness experiences himself in two different ways (as human and as divine) in two consciousnesses. As divine (in his divine mind), the knowledge of the Word must encompass both the contents of his divine and human minds (because the divine mind is omniscient). As human (in his human mind), the same person of the Word knows only the contents of his human mind—because the two natures do not lose their personal integrity, and because it is not the nature of human minds to be omniscient.

At the same time, we must insist that the limitations of the person of the Word incarnate are not limitations on the Word in his divine nature as such. The divine nature neither changes, grows, or diminishes in the incarnation. Rather, through entering into a new relation to the humanity he has assumed, the Word begins a new mode of existence, in which he

experiences the limitations of a genuine human life. The limitations are those inherent to human nature as such. They are not limitations of deity.

Finally, it is important to recognize . . . that the humanity of the incarnate Christ is permanent. The incarnation is not a temporary measure in which the Eternal Word starts out being God, ceases to be God for awhile and becomes human, and then (after his resurrection) becomes God again. Rather, in the incarnation, the Word undergoes a permanent kenosis, in which he makes our humanity personally his own, and retains it for eternity, both lowering himself to experience personally the smallness of our humanity, but also elevating that humanity which becomes his forever. It is through the mediation of that permanently assumed humanity that we come to share in the communion of the Triune life, that is always the grounds of our own access to God the Father, through the Son in the unity of the Spirit.

I Get Mail: A Response to a Catholic Reader

I got an email awhile ago from a young Roman Catholic gentleman who expressed appreciation for some of what I've written on my blog, following a growing frustration with online rationalist Roman Catholic apologetics.

I first came across your blog ten years ago when I was fifteen and beginning to seriously study the Reformation and Roman Catholicism from a Baptist background, and read it intermittently for a couple of years. I did eventually become a Catholic, at twenty four, but recently began reading your

blog again. . . . The reason I've returned to reading your blog is largely because of a burnout with modern Catholic discourse [especially rationalist Catholic apologetics] . . . I've found that reading solid devotional writing like yours, whether from Catholics, Protestants, or Orthodox, does far more for my faith than the old polemical reading I used to do.



Dear xxxxx,

I've been meaning to reply to your kind email. It is Ash Wednesday, and I have a little time. Your email was quite encouraging to me. Around six months ago, I began receiving repeated emails from a Roman Catholic gentleman who would ask one-line questions such as "Who founded your church?," while including links to conservative Catholic apologetics sites. I sent several replies that I hoped would be charitable, but he ignored what I actually wrote, and just kept bombarding me. Finally, I had to block his email address. So imagine how encouraging it was to receive a positive email from a Catholic reader of my blog. I often wonder whether what I write is helpful to anyone except myself, and I am always happy to hear when it is.

Concerning what you write about rationalist apologetics: I find conservative online apologetics to be generally toxic; it does not matter what brand is being sold. The biggest problem with these people seems to be a peculiarly modern obsession with epistemological certitude coupled with an obsessive Cartesian anxiety about doubt. These folks spend way too much time focusing on arguments as to why their side is the only correct one, and far too little time exploring the substance of their Christian faith, whether they be Catholic, Orthodox, some kind of Protestant, or Anglican (like myself).

One of the most helpful books I have read in recent years was

D. Stephen Long's *Saving Karl Barth: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Preoccupation* (Fortress Press, 2014). In this book, Long (a Methodist) writes about how Balthasar (a Roman Catholic) rediscovered the heart of Christian faith through reading Karl Barth (Reformed). Barth's theology focused on the Nicene-Chalcedonian center of Christian faith: the Trinity and the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Balthasar believed that if Catholicism were going to be renewed in the 20th century, it needed to return to this Nicene-Chalcedonian center, and abandon the unfruitful manualist Apologetics of the late 19th and early 20th century that focused on Catholic quarrels with Protestantism and modernity. It is this creedal center that I have found most fruitful for my own theology and spiritual life.

I too am a former Baptist who, after pursuing an MA at a Roman Catholic seminary, got as far as Canterbury (Anglicanism), but never was quite able to cross the Tiber. Still, I received all of my graduate training at Roman Catholic institutions and have always been grateful to those Catholic donors who made possible my scholarship at the University of Notre Dame. I have learned much from Catholics, and continue to read them with profit.

If you have now found your home in the Catholic Church, I would encourage you to begin exploring the riches of your tradition. In the modern era, I would recommend reading people like von Balthasar, Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar, or Louis Bouyer. Among better contemporary writers, I would point to Matthew Levering, Giles Emery, Robert Barron, and Thomas Weinandy. I return again and again to the spiritual writings of Dominican Simon Tugwell, but also have appreciated Thomas Merton and Dorothy Day.

If you still find yourself drawn to apologetics, I would recommend reading modern Catholic philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre or Charles Taylor.

Of course, you should not neglect the stream of Catholic tradition from which all modern orthodox Christians drink. (Since they wrote before the Reformation, I am happy to claim these people as well). Thomas Aquinas continues to be the pre-modern thinker I read most, and, fortunately, there is a modern revival of scholarship. The best introduction to Thomas's thought is probably Jean-Pierre Torrell's two volume work on *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and his Work* and *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*. Although he is primarily a philosopher, I have learned much from my doctoral dissertation director, David Burrell. Just as important are Medieval spiritual writers like Julian of Norwich and Walter Hilton.

And, of course, there is the entire treasure of patristic writers to explore: Irenaeus, Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, the Cappadocians, Augustine.

Finally, if enough time has passed that you're willing to venture again into non-Roman Catholic territory, I would recommend reading for spiritual refreshment (among Anglicans) the poetry of George Herbert, the sermons of John Donne, and the spiritual writings of Thomas Traherne. In theology, besides Karl Barth, Thomas F. Torrance is perhaps the greatest of modern ecumenical theologians. Among philosophers – again, there's that apologetic stuff – I would recommend James K. A. Smith's *Kingdom* trilogy (or the popular short version, *You are What You Love*), or the writings of David Bentley Hart (Orthodox). In the area of Christian ethics, Stanley Hauerwas and Oliver O'Donovan can't be beat.

What all of these writers have in common is a generous Catholic (or catholic) theology that is rooted in the creedal center of Nicene-Chalcedonian orthodoxy. If you immerse yourself in the writings of such people, and combine it with a spirituality rooted in Scripture, daily prayer, and regular liturgical worship, you cannot go far wrong. And you're right. Stay away from the apologetics blogosphere. It is toxic.

Grace and Peace,
Bill Witt

Concerning Women's Ordination: Aquinas and the "Tradition Challenge"



Of all of the essays I have written on the topic of women's ordination, the one that has received the most negative feedback has been the one entitled "Concerning Women's Ordination: The Argument 'From Tradition' is not the 'Traditional' Argument." In this essay, I argue that despite claims simply to be upholding the church's historic tradition, both versions of the current arguments against women's ordination used respectively by Roman Catholics and by Protestants are not traditional at all, but actually represent departures from the historical reasons that women were not ordained.

In that essay, I made the case (citing numerous historical examples) that historical opposition to women's ordination is rooted in an ontology of inequality: women could not be ordained because they were less intelligent, emotionally unstable, and more subject to temptation than men. Moreover, the traditional argument was not simply an argument against

the ordination of women, but against any leadership of men over women.

It seems fairly obvious why so many have reacted negatively to this essay. If I am correct, historical opposition to women's ordination is not only based in a questionable major assumption, but is also directly contrary to a key claim of both the new Catholic and the new Protestant positions, that opposition to women's ordination is not based on any kind of intellectual or moral inequality. Resistance to this essay led me to post something I called the "Tradition Challenge." In that essay, I laid out the traditional position in three premises:

(A) Women are less intelligent, more emotionally unstable, and more subject to temptation than men.

(B) Ordination necessitates exercising authority over others, particularly teaching and speaking in an authoritative manner. Women cannot be ordained because they are necessarily subordinate to men, and therefore cannot exercise authority in this manner. This is primarily an exclusion from women exercising any authority whatsoever over men, and only secondarily a specific exclusion from ordination.

(C) Proposition (B) is a direct corollary or consequence of Proposition (A). Women are necessarily subordinate to men, and cannot exercise authority over them because of an ontological incapacity located in a deficiency in reason, emotional instability, and susceptibility to temptation. Because of this ontological deficiency, they cannot exercise authority over or teach men, and so cannot be ordained.

To the contrary, both Evangelical "complementarians" and Catholic traditionalists affirm:

(A1) Women share an equal intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacity with men. They are not less intelligent, emotionally unstable, or more subject to temptation than men.

Protestant “complementarians” continue to affirm (B), but because they no longer affirm (A), must affirm the following rather than (C):

(C1) Although (A1), women still cannot be ordained because God has created different “gender roles” rooted in “male headship.”

The Catholic traditionalist affirms neither (A), (B), nor (C), but rather affirms (A1) plus:

(B1) The argument from authority no longer applies. Women can exercise any role of teaching, exercising authority, and speaking, and even preaching within the church. (There are no “gender roles” rooted in “headship.”)

(B2) The distinct function of ordination has to do with presiding at the sacraments. The presiding minister (the priest) represents Jesus Christ, that is, acts in the “person of Christ” (in persona Christi) when presiding at the sacraments. Because Jesus Christ is a male, only a male priest can represent a male Christ.

(C2) Because women do not resemble a male Christ, women cannot be ordained.

In order for Protestant “complementarians” and Catholic traditionalists to make the case that they are simply defending the traditional position, they would need to affirm (A), (B), and (C); however, they rather affirm (A1) (both), (C1) (Protestants), (B1), (B2) and (C2) (Catholics). In conclusion, not only do Protestant “complementarians” and Catholic traditionalists depart from the traditional reasons for opposition to women’s ordination, they do not even agree with each other in their reasons for doing so.

I concluded that essay with a challenge:

Provide an actual historical reference from the Christian

tradition that corresponds to what I have called the Complementarian or Sacramentalist positions. It is not enough to provide some individual positive statement about women mentioned by a Patristic, Medieval, or Reformation author.

Rather, from a discussion that specifically deals with the issue of women's ordination and opposes it, provide an example from a Patristic, Medieval, or Reformation author (or authors) that clearly endorses either (A1), (B), and (C1), or (A1), (B1), (B2), and (C2) as a coherent and integrated position. It is not enough to find individual quotations from an author that can be read to endorse any single one of the above propositions. Rather, in the same way that I have shown through detailed quotations that there is a sizeable body of Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation writers who endorse (A), (B), and (C) and bring them together to form a coherent argument against women's ordination based on female ontological incapacity, an adequate demonstration that what I have called the (2) Protestant Complementarian or (3) Catholic Sacramentalist positions are not innovations to the tradition would have to substantiate with actual textual references that one or the other of these two was an actual position that was held by someone in the history of the church before the mid-twentieth century.

So far, there has been only one attempt to respond to the challenge, which I addressed in "Concerning Women's Ordination: A Response to the 'Ordination Challenge.'" I recently discovered what might be considered a kind of "response" to the original essay, but the author neither contacted me nor commented on my blog. The comment appeared after my "Tradition Challenge," but the author seems unaware of it. The writer, who only identified himself (I assume the author is "he") as *post-Presby papist prowler*, challenges my reading of Thomas Aquinas:

I only read the third article in the series, but I found it

selective to the point of dishonesty. He claims that before the 20th century everyone thought women were intellectually inferior to men, yet ignores this from Aquinas:

Of course, no one likes to be accused of dishonesty. In my case, if I have misstated, I am more than willing to be corrected, especially regarding Thomas Aquinas, as I consider myself at least a "Peeping Thomist." If it should turn out that Thomas Aquinas was a glaring exception to the standard argument, I would be thrilled. Unfortunately, the writer shows that he did not read me very well when he states that I claim that "before the 20th century everyone thought women were intellectually inferior to men." In the essay, I actually stated: "It seems that Martin Luther may be an exception to the patristic and Medieval notion that women are inherently less rational and capable of leadership than men." In another essay, I wrote: "There have been some exceptions. In his exegesis of Genesis, Martin Luther suggested that, apart from the fall, women would not have been subordinate to men. John Chrysostom, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, stated that the subjection of women to men is a direct consequence of the fall . . ." Yet we need to be careful. "One swallow does not a summer make." The same Chrysostom states that "To woman is assigned the presidency of the household; to man all the business of state, the marketplace, the administration of government . . . She cannot handle state business well, but she can raise children correctly . . ." and that God has assigned "greater tasks" to men and "lesser" ones to women. In other words, whatever might have been the case before the fall, Chrysostom seems to have believed that one of the consequences of the fall is that women are lacking in a certain kind of competence that would prohibit them from doing "greater tasks," such as, presumably, ordained ministry.

post-Presby papist prowler accuses me of being "selective" because I ignore the following passage in Aquinas:

Therefore we must understand that when Scripture had said, "to the image of God He created him," it added, "male and female He created them," not to imply that the image of God came through the distinction of sex, but that the image of God belongs to both sexes, since it is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction of sex, but that the image of God belongs to both sexes, since it is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction. Wherefore the Apostle (Col. 3:10), after saying, "According to the image of Him that created him," added, "Where there is neither male nor female." ST 1.93.6.ad 2

However, it would appear that I am not the one who is being selective. The section of my essay that covered Aquinas was only a few paragraphs long, and I began in an entirely positive manner – “Thomas could speak in almost glowing terms of the relations between men and women” – and followed with a citation in which Aquinas speaks of “the social union of man and woman,” writing that woman should not be subject to man’s contempt as his slave because she was created from his side (*Summa Theologiae* 1.1.92.3). I did not include a citation from ST 1.93.6, although I did acknowledge that Aquinas “argues that women share equally in human nature with men.” I am happy to have it pointed out that Aquinas states that the image of God “is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction.” At first reading, this would indeed seem to accord with (A1). However, what Aquinas writes in 1.1.93.6 has to be read alongside what he writes in the previous question, which I cited: “At the same time, however, women are subject to men based on an economic subordination in which ‘the superior makes use of his subjects for their own benefit and good. . . . For good order would have been wanting in the human family if some were not governed by others wiser than themselves. So by such a kind of subjection woman is naturally subject to man, because in man the discretion of reason predominates.’” (S.T. 1.92.1). So whatever Aquinas means by stating that women

equally share in the image of God, and that there is no sexual distinction "in the mind," this does not prevent him from also stating that women are subject to men "for their own benefit and good," because "in man [in contrast to woman] the discretion of reason predominates."

post-Presby papist prowler then turns to *Supplement to the Summa Theologiae*, q. 39, which I had cited, and states:

Furthermore, Aquinas explicitly uses the sacramental argument:

Objection 1: It would seem that the female sex is no impediment to receiving Orders. For the office of prophet is greater than the office of priest, since a prophet stands midway between God and priests, just as the priest does between God and people. Now the office of prophet was sometimes granted to women, as may be gathered from 4 Kgs. 22:14. Therefore the office of priest also may be competent to them.

Reply to Objection 1: Prophecy is not a sacrament but a gift of God. Wherefore there it is not the signification, but only the thing which is necessary. And since in matters pertaining to the soul woman does not differ from man as to the thing (for sometimes a woman is found to be better than many men as regards the soul), it follows that she can receive the gift of prophecy and the like, but not the sacrament of Orders.

And he even said that women may exercise temporal power, and presumably over men given that his given example was Deborah:

And thereby appears the Reply to the Second and Third Objections. However, as to abbesses, it is said that they have not ordinary authority, but delegated as it were, on account of the danger of men and women living together. But Deborah exercised authority in temporal, not in priestly matters, even as now woman may have temporal power.

Again, however, it is *post-Presby papist prowler* who is being selective, and not myself. *post-Presby papist prowler* states that Aquinas uses the “sacramental” argument, but he does not state what Aquinas’s sacramental argument actually is. In his *sed contra*, Aquinas cites 1 Tim. 2:12, making clear that his concern is with authority of men over women (the traditional argument), and not whether a female priest can represent a male Christ (which is the current “sacramental” argument). Aquinas makes a standard sacramental distinction between a sign and the reality of the sign. In his reply to objection 1, he distinguishes between prophecy and a sacrament, distinguishing between I would call “charisma” and “orders.” Women can prophecy (exercise a charismatic gift) because they have the reality – “sometimes a woman is found to be better than many men as regards the soul” – but women cannot have the signification, i.e., the sign. What is the “sign”? Not resemblance to a male Christ, but authority. Thomas states the reason for his opposition to the ordination of women at the conclusion of his *Respondeo*, which I cited: “Accordingly, since it is not possible in the female sex to signify eminence of degree, for a woman is in the state of subjection, it follows that she cannot receive the sacrament of Order.”

What then about Aquinas’s references to “abbesses” and to the prophetess Deborah? Both cases actually make clear that Aquinas’s concerns are about women exercising authority over men in the church (the traditional argument) and not about sacramental representation of a male Christ (the new argument). Concerning abbesses, Aquinas writes that their authority is “delegated . . . on account of the danger of men and women living together,” delegated, that is, from a superior male authority, a male authority which would be preferable if there were no dangers of sexual temptation. Aquinas does seem to acknowledge concerning Deborah that women can exercise “temporal,” but not “priestly” power. This would indeed make his position different from those earlier writers like John Chrysostom or Thomas’s teacher Albertus Magnus or

(later) Richard Hooker and John Knox, who quite explicitly draw a connection between an inability to exercise temporal authority and an inability to exercise ecclesial authority. I am pleased to acknowledge that difference. At the same time, Aquinas makes clear that his opposition to the ordination of women is nonetheless because "it is not possible in the female sex to signify eminence of degree," specifically because a "woman is in the state of subjection." Aquinas wrote this early in his career, but when he later wrote the *Summa Theologiae*, he made clear the reason for female subjection: "woman is naturally subject to man, because in man the discretion of reason predominates."

It is apparent then that Aquinas's reasons for opposition to the ordination of women are the traditional ones. He endorses (A), (B), and (C). But how is this consistent with what Aquinas wrote about women (like Deborah) exercising temporal power? I honestly cannot see that it is. If the necessary subjection of women to men provides the reason why women cannot be ordained (and Aquinas states that it is), then this should apply not only in the case of priestly ordination, but in temporal power as well. If subjection of women to men is not sufficient grounds for denying temporal power to women, "since in matters pertaining to the soul, woman does not differ from man . . . [and] sometimes a woman is found to be better than many men as regards the soul . . . ," then it should not be grounds for denying ordination. Aquinas is simply inconsistent here, not to say incoherent.

Whether Aquinas is consistent or not, it is once again necessary to be reminded that his position is not the current Roman Catholic position. In my original essay, I had quoted Roman Catholic author Sarah Butler: "Because the contemporary magisterium has abandoned the view that women are unilaterally subject to men, it obviously does not supply this as the reason women cannot be priests." It was, however, Aquinas's reason.

Finally, this again make clear that the main argument of my original essay stands. In my "Tradition Challenge," I had written: "from a discussion that specifically deals with the issue of women's ordination and opposes it, provide an example from a Patristic, Medieval, or Reformation author (or authors) that clearly endorses either (A1), (B), and (C1), or (A1), (B1), (B2), and (C2) as a coherent and integrated position. It is not enough to find individual quotations from an author that can be read to endorse any single one of the above propositions." At the most, *post-Presby papist prowler* has shown that Aquinas allowed that under certain circumstances, women could exercise charismatic gifts and some kind of temporal authority. I am happy to concede that in this one area, Aquinas differed from the vast majority of the earlier tradition. He did not affirm (B) in its totality. However, at the most, all that *post-Presby papist prowler* has done is to "find individual quotations . . . that can be read to endorse [one] of the above propositions." Aquinas seems to have embraced a kind of incomplete (or rather inconsistent) version of (A1) and a slightly modified (B), which does not exclude women from occasionally exercising temporal authority. He continues to affirm (C). *post-Presby papist prowler* has not shown that Aquinas affirmed either "(A1), (B), and (C1), or (A1), (B1), (B2), and (C2) as a coherent and integrated position."