

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

**THE PLACE  
OF THE WOMAN  
IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH  
AND THE QUESTION  
OF THE ORDINATION  
OF WOMEN**

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«daily ministrations» of the ancient deacons (Act 6:1-2), have been entrusted into their hands.

Reference to these three main points, together with their many ramifications, I believe reflect faithfully, as far as possible, the prevailing condition and presence of women in the liturgical and parochial ministry of the Church, at least as it appears in Greece. This was not done to give the impression that all is «very good». The worst possible inference that can be drawn from such a paper would be the affirmation that we are rich and «have need of nothing» (Rev. 3:17). However, between this extreme position and the equally unrealistic web of jeremiads (lamentations) concerning the exclusion of women from ecclesiastical life, there stands, I believe, the encouraging reality. This reality, which apparently differs according to place and circumstance, requires programing, rekindling and encouragement from such a broad and strategic inter-Orthodox consultation, as this present Conference.

I think that it is untimely and perhaps even rash for me to end up my presentation with concrete proposals. However, you will allow me to end by giving a synopsis of three points which correspond with the last part of my paper:

1. The better and fuller utilization of the female potential in education, in catechetical instruction, and in the general activities of the parish is imperative.
2. Female monastic communities, when properly guided and coordinated, can offer much to the people of God both from within and outside the walls of their sacred convents.
3. The already «gained» participation of women in the liturgical, catechetical and philanthropic ministry of the Church should be further strengthened, coordinated and expanded.

Were these three elements alone to receive the proper attention and refinement, it would justify, at least in an initial phase, the search for ways to better utilize the female members of the pleroma of the Church.

*(Translated from the Greek by V. Rev. Prof. Dr. Alkiviadis Calivas)*

## **The Institution of Deaconesses in the Orthodox Church And the Possibility of Its Restoration**

*Prof. Evangelos Theodorou*

### **1. The History of the Institution of Deaconesses**

During the earliest Christian centuries, there was a pluralism in the different regions and chronological periods in ascribing primacy to one or the other of the various orders of dedicated women in the Church (deaconesses, widows, virgins). In spite of this pluralism, from apostolic times, it appears that the first place was given to the order of the «women deacons». This becomes all the most evident in the subsequent historical development.

The first considered witness of the order of «women deacons» is Romans 16:1-2, in which mention is made of Phoebe, who is commemorated by the Church on September 3 and is referred to as a «model deaconess» in the Orthodox liturgical texts. St Paul thus speaks of her: «I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a Deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints... for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well».

In addition, the passage in 1 Timothy 3:11 («The women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things») in all likelihood refers to women deacons, as is indicated by the literary format, the logical connections and the context of the verse. As St John Chrysostom has already noted, «some say that this verse deals simply with women; but this is not so. For what reason would he have inserted in what was being said, something,

about women? Rather, he speaks about the deacons's office «ἀξίωμα» which they have».

Of significance for this study is a non-Christian witness from the beginning of the second century. In 111 or 112 A.D., Pliny the Younger, writing to Trajan, mentions the existence of deaconesses in Bithynia. He speaks regarding «ancillas, quae *ministrae* dicebantur». Clement of Alexandria (before 215) emphasizes that the female diaconate was necessary, and that it existed from the apostolic period itself, during which time the apostles were accompanied by sisters who were co-ministers «Συνδιακόνους» for the purpose of ministering to housewives. «It was through them that the Lord's teaching also penetrated the women's quarters without any scandal being aroused». And in continuation he adds, «We also know the directions about *women deacons* «Διακόνων Γυναικῶν», which are given by the noble Paul in his second letter to Timothy»<sup>1</sup>.

Origen, in the interpretation of the passage in Romans 16:1-2 which has survived in a Latin fragment, notes that «apostolica auctoritate» there were «feminae ministrae» in «ministerio ecclesiae». In the third century, the «(Apostolic) teaching» mentions for the first time the characteristic term «deaconess» instead of «woman deacon». It presents the deaconesses as gathered in an ecclesial order, which is commemorated along with the orders of bishops, presbyters and deacons. In accordance to the «teaching», the female diaconate was necessary «in multis rebus» inasmuch as the Lord Himself was ministered to by women. The deacons and the deaconesses have one and the same ministry, the ministry of service the «ministerium diaconiae», and they are as one soul in two bodies «duo corpora in una anima».

In some regions, during the first three years, widows were numbered along with the three orders of clergy. In the third century «Pseudoclementine Homilies» Peter is described as ministering in Tripolis of Phoenecia, «having ordained a bishop, twelve presbyters, and having established «orders of *widows*». The parallel passage, also from the third century «Pseudoclementine Recognitions»,

1. Clement of Alexandria, *Ad Stromateis* 3, 6, 53.

mentions that Peter «constituit eis episcopum et duodecim cum eo presbyteros, simulque diaconos ordinat. Instituit etiam *ordinem viduarum* atque omnia ecclesiae *ministeria* disponit». It is clear that in this passage the order of widows is listed among the ranks of the clergy and church positions, and considered as one *ministerium*. The term «widow» «χήρα» in some places was a «terminus technicus» by which an order of women was indicated, in which virgins were members. Thus, very early, Ignatius, writing to the Smyrneans says that there were «virgins called widows»<sup>2</sup>.

From the beginning of the 4th century and following, there are numerous references concerning the order of deaconesses. They are found in the canons of the ecumenical and local synods, in different literary, historic and archaeological monuments, e.g., the liturgical-canonical writings «Apostolic Orders» and «Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ», in the works of the great Fathers of the Church and other ecclesiastical writers of both East and West, in historians and the chronographers, in the lives of saints, in prayer books and other liturgical texts, in the legal corpus of the Byzantine Emperors, and in grave and tomb epigraphs.

From the witness of these sources, it is verified that the institution of the deaconesses, having experienced a flourishing during the period of the great Fathers of the Church, was maintained —even though little by little it was diminished in importance — to the end of the Byzantine period. Constantine Porphyrogennitos in the 10th century notes that there still existed in his own time «the Deaconesses of the Great Church» (= Hagia Sophia). Anna Comnena in the 12th century praises the care received at the hands of the deaconesses by her father Emperor Alexios I (1081-1118), who just a few weeks ago was widely-praised for his contribution 900 years ago to the establishment of the Holy Monastery of St John the Theologian on the island of Patmos. At the end of the 12th century, Balsamon notes that during his own days there were still deaconesses in the Church of Constantinople. To this very day, remnants of the order of deaconesses persist in the Greek women's

2. Ignatius., *Ad Smyrneans*, XIII, 1.

monasteries, in distant isolated mission communities, as well as in the Oriental Orthodox churches.

In the West, the institution of deaconesses did not have rapid nor significant development. During the end of the 4th century, it was almost unknown in the West, since it was considered there to be an Eastern institution. Thus, Pseudo-Jerome, provoked by Romans 16:1-2, notes: «Sicut etiam in *Orientalibus diaconissae* mulieres in suo sexu ministrare videntur». In the same manner, also, interpreting 1 Timothy 3:11, the author repeats that «in Oriente diaconissas appellant». In fact, many synods, such as the Synod of Orange (Concilium Arausicanum) in 441, the Synod of Epaon (Concilium Epaonense) in 517 and the 2nd Synod of Orleans (Concilium Aurelianense II) in 533, prohibited completely the ordination of deaconesses. These synodical measures, having authority only for certain ecclesiastical territories, did not influence the whole Church. Other documents, in contrast, show that until at least the 11th century, as a result of the influence and example of the East, women were ordained to the diaconate in the Western Church. Thus, in the 6th century, Saint Radegunde, the wife of the Frankish King Clovis I, was ordained a deaconess. In 866 the Council of Worms adopted the 15th canon of the 4th Ecumenical Synod held in Chalcedon, in reference to the deaconesses.

As we have previously noted at the first Inter-Church Historical Conference at Bari, under the influence of the Greek communities of Italy, the Roman Church little by little introduced the institution of the deaconesses. The «Liber Pontificalis» indicates that, when in 799 Pope Leo III and Charlemagne entered triumphantly into Rome, the Roman population came out to greet them «with deaconesses and the noble women» (cum diaconissis et nobilissimis matronis). Three Popes of the 11th century, Benedict VIII (1012-1024), John (1024-1033) and Leo IX (1049-1054), writing to eparchial bishops — that is, the first to the bishop of Porto, the second to the bishop of Sylvia Candida and the third to the bishop, again, of Porto — recognize their right to ordain deaconesses.

The title «diaconissa» or «diacona» re-appeared in modern times through the establishment of the Protestant sisterhoods of

deaconesses, and through the re-institution and the revival of deaconesses in the Anglican Church and, as of last year, in the Old Catholic Church.

## 2. The Presuppositions and the Liturgical «Order» of the Ordination of Deaconesses

Deaconesses were selected «after careful examination» either out of Orders of the *virgins* dedicated to God, or from the widows, who had been married only once. Moreover, the wives of bishops were also made deaconesses. The 48th canon of the Council in Trullo says that the wife of a Bishop «if she appears to be worthy, let her be raised to the rank of the diaconate». Among those ordained to the rank of deaconess were also exceptional nuns, of the great schema, as well as abbesses «Ἡγούμεναι» of female monasteries.

In regard to the age of those chosen to be deaconesses, originally, in accordance to the apostolic instruction (1 Tim. 5:9-10), they were to be sixty years of age or older. Later, however, because there had been frequent exceptions to this rule, as is indicated by the example of Saint Olympia, who even though very young, «having become a widow... Nectarios ordained her a deacon» (Sozomen). Because the spheres of diaconal service demand vigour, strength, and a significant mobility, the Church officially reduced the age limitation, requiring that the candidate be not less than forty years old. Thus, the 15th canon of the 4th Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon defines: «do not ordain a woman as deacon before her fortieth year». The 15th canon of the Fifth-Sixth Ecumenical Council in Trullo orders: «Deacons before the twenty - fifth year and deaconesses before the fortieth year ought not to be ordained». That the Fifth-Sixth Ecumenical Council in Trullo intended to encourage reverent women to be ordained deaconesses is clear from its 40th canon, which justifies the 40th year of age requirement as follows: «In the holy writings of the Apostles it is written that it has been handed down to us to rank the widows in the Church from the sixtieth year. The holy canons, on the other hand, have instructed that the ordination of the deaconess can take place at the age of for-

ty, the Church having by God's grace become mightier and advancing forward, and the habit of the faithful to keep the holy commandments having become more firm and secure, after we have come to understand this most clearly, we have more adequately decreed, that the blessing of grace be granted to those who would begin the struggle of service for the Lord, impressing it quickly just like a seal and thus seeking to prevent such a person from waiting too long, and promoting her, or rather, saying that we impel her to the choice and good state».

During all the subsequent centuries in Byzantium, the requirements of the Church in regard to the age of the deaconesses remained stable, maintaining unchanged the relevant prescriptions of the 4th Ecumenical Council and Fifth-Sixth Ecumenical Council in Trullo.

In addition to the faith, virtue, missionary mind and a sincere diaconal commitment to imitate Christ «who did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many» (22:28), those chosen to be deaconesses were required to have the necessary education so as to respond appropriately to their catechetical responsibilities.

Those selected for this diaconal service, were established and installed in the position by the bishop, who ordained them by means of a liturgical rite which is analogous to the ordination of deacons. The source-texts of this liturgical rite use various terms and phrases to refer to it (e.g. «ordination» [χειροτονία], «laying on the hands» [χειροθεσία], «to ordain», «consecrate» [«καθιέρουν»], «put on the hands», «lead forward», «ordinatio», «ordinare», «cheirotomia», «consecratio», «manu superposita consecrare», «manum impositio», «manus imponere»).

The absence from the sources of the first three centuries of a description of the liturgical rite of the ordination of deaconesses or of the widows who also had the diaconal ministry, cannot be considered as an «argumentum e silentio» for the view that there was no ordination of deaconesses during that period. For neither do we have a description of the ordination of the other orders of clergy in the «Didaskalia».

However, when the Apostolic Constitutions and the «Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ» appeared, including a full series of ordination rubrics for the different orders of clergy, among them there were the rubrics for the ordination of the deaconesses. And when later in the *Euchologia* (Book of prayers) of Byzantine times there appears a distinction between the simpler form of the «laying on of the hands» (χειροθεσία) on the lower orders of the holy clergy, and the more complex and celebratory form of the ordination (χειροτονία) of the higher orders of clergy, the Church uses the rubrics for the «ordination of the deaconess», which are of the same form as the rubrics for the «ordination of the deacon».

While in these Prayer books, the «laying on the hands» (χειροθεσία) on the so-called lower clergy (cantors, readers, sub-deacon) are conducted outside of the altar area and not during the Divine Liturgy, the ordination of the deaconess is absolutely uniform with the ordination (χειροτονία) of the orders of the higher clergy (bishop, presbyter, deacon), because it takes place within the «altar area» (Ἱερόν Βῆμα) and before the altar table, during the Divine Liturgy, and notably following the anaphora, that is, precisely after the blessing «And may the mercies of the great God...» The ordination of the deaconess, like that of the deacon, was permitted not only «with a complete offering», but also «with the pre-sanctified gifts», following the placing of the sacred gifts on the altar table after the great entrance.

The about to be ordained deaconess, during the service of ordination, apparently stood on the soleas, as does the about to be ordained deacon, with her head covered by a veil. She was then led to the altar table, where the bishop ordained her by laying his hands on her head, reciting not one prayer, as is the case with the «laying on the hands» (χειροθεσία) on the lower clergy, but with two prayers, which is precisely a characteristic of the ordinations of the higher clergy. Both of these prayers, following upon the exclamation «The Divine Grace, which heals shortcomings...» and the blessing related to it, having been recited by the bishop, whose hands rest upon the

head of the woman being ordained, end with a doxology to the Holy Trinity.

The prayer, «The Divine Grace, which heals shortcomings...», which is heard during the ordination of the deaconess, is to be found only in the ordinations of the higher clergy (bishop, presbyter, deacon), insomuch as it is never a part of the «placing of hands» (χειροθεσία) on the lower clergy, not even that of the sub-deacon. It is also worthy of notice that in ordinations of the higher clergy, following the first of the prayers, a liturgical minister having the same rank as that to which the person is about to be ordained (bishop at the ordination of a bishop, presbyter at the ordination of a presbyter and deacon at the ordination of a deacon) intervenes and recites the petitions which are inserted between the two prayers. In the case of the ordination of the deaconess, these petitions are recited by the deacon. Such a thing never takes place during the services of the «placing of the hands» (χειροθεσία), which take place outside the «altar area».

From these things it becomes clear that during the ordination of the deaconess there take place nearly all the same things which occur during the ordination of the deacon. The ordination of the deaconess is distinguished from the ordination of the deacon in only a few points. While the deacon is being ordained, he rests his forehead on the holy altar table bending his left knee. The deaconess does not kneel, but remains standing.

During the ordination of the deaconess, just as during the ordination of the deacon, she was vested with the «orarium», which she wore «under the veil» wrapped so that its two ends were in front. During the communion, the deaconess receives, as does the deacon, by receiving the holy chalice from the hands of the bishop, but she «does not administer communion to anyone» other than herself. She then «places it (the holy chalice) on the holy altar table».

The Byzantine ordination of the deaconess significantly influenced the «Ordo chirotoniae mulierum diaconissarum», which developed among the Nestorians and the Monophysites, as well as on the related western rubrics (Ordo ad diaconissam faciendam —

Ordinatio abbatissae canonicam regulam profitentis). In the West, the ordination of deaconesses was connected to a special liturgy (Missa ad diaconam faciendam). During this ordination, in addition to the «orarium» the newly ordained deaconesses were given a ring (annulus) and a crown of flowers (torquis).

### 3. The Canonical Character and the Canonical Consequences of the Ordination of Deaconesses

St Epiphanius notes that «there is in the Church the order of deaconesses, but not for the conducting of services» (ιερατεύειν)<sup>3</sup>. And though by the Apostles «there were established successions of bishops and presbyters in the house of God, nowhere was a woman established in them. There were four daughters of Philip the Evangelist who prophesied, but they did not offer worship (ιερουργήσαι). And there was Anna the prophetess, the daughter of Phanouel, but she was not entrusted with the priestly function (ιερατεῖον)». «If the priestly role (ιερατεύειν) had been ordered by God for women, «it should have been Mary herself, who would fulfill priestly functions in the New Testament, she who was made worthy to receive God into her own bosom, the heavenly Ruler of All, the Son of God... But this He was not pleased to do. Nor did he entrust her with baptism, since it would have been possible for Christ to have been baptized by her, rather than by John»<sup>4</sup>. The same Father notes that ecclesial practice of the past and in his own times disowns the idea of the female priesthood. «It must be noted that only to the rank of deaconesses did the Church have need, which order it named «widows», and these were chosen from the older women advanced in age, but nowhere did the Church establish women presbyters or priestesses»<sup>5</sup>.

In the «Apostolic Constitutions» it is emphasized: «Now, as to women baptizing, we let you know that there is no small peril to those that undertake it. Therefore we do not advise you to it; for it is

3. St. Epiphanius., PG 42, 744, 745.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

dangerous, or rather wicked and impious.... But if in the foregoing constitutions we have not permitted them to teach, how will any one allow them, contrary to nature, to perform the office of a priest? For this is one of the ignorant practices of the Gentile atheism, to ordain women priests to the female deities, not one of the commandments of Christ<sup>6</sup>.

Separate from the question of how the concrete arguments of St Epiphanius are addressed by the non-Orthodox who accept the ordination of women to the offices of Presbyter and Bishop, it must be noted that *never* in the consciousness of the Church, was there an acceptance of the view of certain heretical circles (Gnostics, Montanists, Marcionites, Priscillians, Collyridians, etc.) that women were able to assume priestly duties analogous to those of the presbyter or the bishop. From the apostolic period to the present day there is maintained a permanent and stable tradition on this issue.

While these things are pointed out to explain why the female diaconal ministry can never create the possibility of the advancement of deaconesses to the offices of presbyter and bishop, they do not in principle or by causal relationship lead to the conclusion that the deaconesses did not belong to the clergy nor to the conclusion that their ordination was not sacramental in character, fully comparable with that of the deacon.

This kind of erroneous conclusion has been projected by many Orthodox, such as, for example, Nicholae Chitescu and George Khodre. The first wrote that deaconesses «erhielten nicht die Diakonenweihe. Sie empfangen nur eine Segnung»<sup>7</sup>. The second supported the view that «die Handauflegung (während der Diakonissenweihe)»<sup>8</sup>. More recently other Orthodox writers have also supported the view that deaconesses do not have a canonical ordination, but that they are installed in their office by a «laying on the hands» (χειροθεσία).

6. *Apostolic Constitutions*, XIII, 9.

7. N. Chitescu., *Das Problem der Ordination der Frau*, in *Zur Frage der Ordination der Frau*, Oekumenischer Rat der Kirchen, Genf 1964, p. 17.

8. G. Khodre, *Ibid.*, p. 74.

This position, which betrays ignorance of the Byzantine *Euchologia*, is based on the logical fallacy of «terms by four» (quaternio terminorum). This fallacy consists of presenting as a conclusion in a syllogism a judgment formed from two other syllogisms, in which the middle term is not, as it properly should be, common, but has a different meaning in each of them. In this fashion, those who deny that the ordination of the deaconess is the same as that of the deacon, in their reasoning process connect and relate the meaning of ordination and the ministry of the clergy function only in reference to the presbyter and the bishop, who conduct the sacraments and the Holy Eucharist, in particular.

Doing this, they forget that not only the deaconesses, but even the deacons themselves, who unquestionably belong to the higher clergy according to Orthodox canonical tradition, concurrently without question, do not have a sacerdotal sacramental ministry, which is in itself the distinctive difference of the diaconal rank within the higher clergy. The fact that the phrase of St Epiphanius «there is in the Church the order of deaconesses, but not for the conducting of services (ἱερατεύειν)», in no way disproves the inclusion of the deaconesses in the orders of the clergy and the ecclesiastical ministry, for in using the word «ierateuein» he clearly means only to identify the performance of the Eucharist and the other sacraments. That this is precisely so is proven from the fact that the same Church Father in the same paragraph underscores the truth that the deacons, who without doubt belong to the higher order of clergy, do not perform the sacraments of the Church: «For neither have the deacons in the Church's order been entrusted to perform any sacrament, but only to serve at those things which are performed (Διακονεῖν τὰ ἐπιτελούμενα)». In similar vein, the *Apostolic Constitutions* note that «the deacon does not bless, nor does he give the blessing, rather he receives it from the bishop and the presbyter; he does not baptize, nor does he make the offering, which is offered by the bishop or the presbyter. The deacon gives it to the people, not as a priest (ἱερεύς), but as one who serves the priests». And the *Testament* notes that deacon *non ad sacerdotium ordinatur sed ad ministerium episcopi et ecclesiae*.

The Byzantine order of the ordination of the deaconesses has, as has been noted above, all of the special characteristics of the order of ordination of the higher clergy. In the order of the ordination of the deaconess the prayer is included for the healing of weaknesses by divine grace, and the Bishop's petition to the All-powerful God there, says, «not only to the men, but also to women You have granted the Holy Spirit», so that God may send down upon the woman being ordained «the rich gift» of the Holy Spirit, and that He may receive her «in the order of ministers».

According to the *Teaching* the deaconess is accorded a very honoured position among the orders of the clergy, for there it is emphasized that the deacons and the deaconesses belong to one and the same ministry, the «ministerium diaconiae», and that they are as one soul in two bodies. The deaconess is listed together with the other orders of the higher clergy, in as much as a parallel is drawn by the *Teaching* between the Bishop and the Father, the deacon and Christ, the deaconess and the Holy Spirit, and the presbyters with the Holy Apostles: «Hic locum Dei signans sicuti Deus honoretur a vobis. Diaconus autem in typum Christi adstat; ergo diligatur a vobis. Diaconissa vero in typum Sancti Spiritus honoretur a vobis. Presbyteri etiam in typum apostolorum spectentur a vobis...» And in the *Apostolic Orders*<sup>9</sup> the question is raised, «in whose type and rank has each in the clergy been placed by God?», what is said by the *Teaching* is repeated in response: «Let the Bishop preside over you as one honoured with the authority of God, which he is to exercise over the clergy, and by which he is to govern all the people. But let the deacon minister to him, as Christ does to His Father; and let him serve him unblameably in all things, as Christ does nothing of Himself, but always does those things that please His Father. Let also the deaconess be honoured by you in the place of the Holy Spirit and do not do or say anything without the deacon; as neither does the Comforter say or do anything of Himself, but gives glory to Christ by waiting for his pleasure... Let the Presbyters be esteemed

9. *Apostolic Orders*, II, 26.

by you to represent to us the Apostles, and let them be the teachers of divine knowledge».

A further indication of the place of the deaconess in the order of the clergy is the fact that the service for their ordination in the *Apostolic Constitutions* is located following the ordination of the deacon and precedes the order for the making of the sub-deacon. This is also followed in the Byzantine *Euchologia* (Book of Prayers).

In the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* the widows, who have a ministerial function, belong to the clergy and are always ranked after the Bishops, presbyters and deacons, and before the sub-deacon and the reader. During the offering, the widow-deaconesses, have in accordance with the *Testament* a place within the altar area, standing with the presbyters on the left side and thus have a position analogous to the deacons, who stand on the right: «Primus in medio consistat episcopus, et post ipsum immediate sistant presbyteri hic et inde, et post presbyteros, qui sunt in dextera, stent diaconi, et post hos lectores, et post lectores hypodiaconi...» At the time of Holy Communion the deacon-widows commune immediately after the deacons and before the readers and the sub-deacons: «Suscipiat prius clerus equenti ordine: episcopus, dein presbyteri, postea diaconi, hinc viduae, tunc lectores, tunc hypodiaconi...»

That the ordained deaconesses belong to the clergy is witnessed to most clearly by the imperial legislation of the Byzantine period. The Justinian Corpus speaks of them in certain legal provisions, which have as their title, «Concerning Bishops and Clergy» (*De Episcopis et clericis*) (*Liber Primus*, III). The 6th *Neara* of Justinian has the characteristic and most illuminating title, «Concerning the Ordination of Bishops and Presbyters and Deacons, Male and Female». The 3rd *Neara* of Justinian which carries the title «Concerning the Exact Number of Clergy of the Most Holy Church of the Most Blessed City», orders that in the church of the Holy Wisdom, there are to serve 60 priests, 100 deacons, 40 deaconesses («one hundred male deacons and forty female»), 90 sub-deacons, 110 readers, and 25 cantors. The total number of clergy in the



church of the Holy Wisdom comes to 425. In addition to these, 100 porters and door keepers, serve in the church.

The treatise on the canons of St Photios reports that a certain Neara of the Emperor Heraclius (610-614) ranks the deaconesses as clergy and repeats that forty deaconesses should serve in the church of the Holy Wisdom.

In the Jerusalem diptychs of the Liturgy of St James, which are dated as belonging to the twelfth century, deaconesses are twice commemorated with the deacons and sub-deacons. «Let us again pray for presbyters, deacons, deaconesses, sub-deacons, readers, interpreters, exorcists, cantors and monastics» (repeated one more time).

Each deaconess, subordinate directly to the bishop, was considered to be responsible to him and to the Church.

The life of the deaconesses was analogous to that of the other ecclesiastical ministers.

They were referred to as «canonical», precisely because they belonged to the ecclesiastical «canon», that is to the list of the clergy who were financially supported by the Church. For this reason, as the *Apostolic Canons* witness, they received their analogous portion of the surplus offering bread, which precisely were intended for the ecclesiastical ministers.

Because the deaconess as a consequence of her ordination was dedicated to God, she was obliged to conform with the 6th Neara of Justinian, requiring «that which is obligatory to the priesthood» that she remain absolutely pure. In the case of her marrying or some moral offense the punishments which were imposed by both the Church and the State upon both the deaconess and accessories were most severe. According to the 15th canon of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod held in Chalcedon, the deaconess, «after having received the laying on of the hands and remaining for some time in the ministry, proceeds to give herself in marriage, thus insulting the grace of God, let any such person be anathematized together with the man who has joined himself with her in marriage». The 44th canon of St Basil, among other things, says: «We no longer permit the body of the deaconess to be put to carnal use, on the ground

that it has been consecrated». Justinian's legislation was even more strict, because it imitated the ancient Roman legislation regarding the Vestal Virgins, which imposed the death penalty upon those who violated their vow of virginity. But little by little this harsh political legislation was abandoned and forgotten. Deaconesses who transgressed were judged more leniently and mercifully. The 32nd Neara of Leo the Wise orders that «those who cause deaconesses to fall into licentiousness, thus disparaging the bride of Christ, will have their nose cut off, as well as those with whom they have been corrupted».

On the other hand, the deaconesses enjoyed great honour and were addressed on different occasions as «Lady» (Δέσποινα), «God-beloved» (Θεοφιλέσταται), «Most Honoured» (Τιμιώταται), «Most Pious» (εὐλαβέσταται). The respect and love given to the deaconesses is also shown by the many burial inscriptions which have survived, and the fact that sometimes even Church buildings were dedicated to deaconesses. History has preserved a relatively large number of the names of deaconesses.

#### 4. Spheres of Activity of Deaconesses

a) One of the most important spheres of activity of the deaconesses was the doing of the works of Christian love. They were the angels of mercy and the visiting sisters of sick, afflicted and needy women. They provided hospitality for women. Their philanthropic work was always conducted in conjunction with the Bishop, whom they represented among the female members of the Church. *The Apostolic Constitutions*<sup>10</sup> instruct the deacons and the deaconesses, as follows: «It is your duty as deacons to visit all those who stand in need of visitation. And tell your bishop of all those who are in affliction; for you ought to be like his soul and senses — active and attentive in all things to him as to your bishop, and father and master».

10. *The Apostolic Constitutions*, III, 19.

b) An important part of the work of the deaconesses was the missionary, catechetical and teaching ministry among the women. On the one hand, they attracted many pagan women to the Christian faith, on the other, they were responsible for the catechetical instruction of the female catechumens. They taught them the truths of the Creed, the manner of response to the questions of the ecclesial minister during the baptismal service, as well as the canons of appropriate behaviour both before and after their baptism. Thirdly, they taught and counseled the newly baptized women, either in groups or individually, concerning issues sometimes in reference to their personal, familial, social life, and at other times in reference to their responsibilities of a woman who had committed her life to God. In a similar fashion, the deaconesses had responsibility for the instruction of orphans, and occasionally, the teaching and catechetical instruction of young boys and youths.

c) The deaconesses in every aspect of life were the connecting link between the clergy and all the Christian women, presenting them to the clergy: «...let not any woman» say the *Apostolic Constitutions*, «address herself to the deacon or bishop without the deaconess»<sup>11</sup>. The deaconesses convey the instructions of the Bishop to Christian women, as it was not possible to send the deacon for reasons of propriety. «For sometimes he (the Bishop) cannot send a deacon, who is a man, to the women, on account of unbelievers. (O Bishop), you shall therefore send a woman, a deaconess, on account of the imagination of the bad. For we stand in need of a woman, a deaconess, for many necessities...»<sup>12</sup>.

d) Another chief responsibility of the deaconesses was the general supervision of Christian women, which was exercised not only within the church structure, but also outside it, when it was combined with the pastoral care of individual persons through visits to the home. Occasionally, the deaconesses became «God-parents» or «spiritual mothers» (*matres spiritalis*) of newly baptized women. The deaconesses had also responsibility for overseeing the «ec-

11. *Ibid.*, II, 26.

12. *Ibid.*, III, 15.

clesiastical virgins» and the «ecclesiastical widows». Exceptional deaconesses administered «homes for virgins» as well as «deaconesses homes», which were to be found close by some large church buildings.

e) Large numbers of deaconesses fulfilled their duties in monasteries. Frequently, nuns of the «great schema» and «Ἡγουμέναι» (abbesses) were ordained to the diaconate. And conversely, often deaconesses were made «Mother Superior». For example, Saint Olympia was the Mother Superior «Ἡγουμένη» of the monastery which she established near the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople. In the West, there is frequent mention of the deaconess-hegoumena (*diacona-abbatissa* or *diaconissa-abbatissa*).

f) During the time of worship, the deaconesses oversaw the women in attendance at the services, they led the participation of the women in «subsinging» of the Church hymns by the laity and at the «kiss of peace». And doubtlessly, they entered the altar area. In accordance to Gregory of Nyssa, Makrina «anointed her hands with her service at the mysteries». The *Testament* witnesses to the fact that during the «proskomide» the widows having the rank of deacon stood in the altar area to the left of the Bishop, together with the presbyters. In accordance with the 6th *Neara* of Justinian, it was permitted to the deaconesses, «to serve at the baptisms of the pilgrims, and to be present at the services for others, for the sake of those things which they were accustomed to do at the most revered sacraments». According to Matthew Blastaris, not only were deaconesses permitted to enter the altar area, but to also «go out and stand next to the male deacons». Nevertheless, these things witness simply that the order of deaconesses enjoyed many privileges. It cannot, however, be concluded from them that the deaconesses participated actively in the services at the altar during the Eucharist, as did the deacons. For this reason, Matthew Blastaris in this connection says: «It does not appear possible to me that a female deacon served at the holy and bloodless sacrifice». In the monasteries, it appears possible that they read Epistle and Gospel passages, chanted supplicatory services, etc.

g) Of great significance was the work of the deaconess during the Baptismal Service. According to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the deaconess assisted «the presbyters in the baptism of the women, for the sake of propriety». Since, on the one hand, in the ancient Church, infant baptism had not yet become the practice, and because during the baptism of adults, the candidate was immersed with a minimum of clothing, for this reason the presence of deaconesses at the Baptism was necessary. Thus, the performance of the holy sacrament could take place with complete decency and modesty, and consequently avoided scandalizing the conscience of not only the pagans, but also of the clergy who were conducting the service. According to Epiphanius, the order of the deaconesses is essential «because of the modesty of the female sex, and precisely when the female body is uncovered, so that it not be seen by the male minister, but only by the deaconess...» As Matthew Blastaris said, the deaconesses «served the women being baptized, it not being proper for the eyes of males to look upon the nakedness of those who were being baptized as adults».

The deaconess assisted especially in the undressing and dressing of the women being baptized, and in anointing the woman's body with oil and Holy Chrism, a service conducted by the Exorcist. The officiating clergyman anointed only her forehead (*Apostolic Canons*, see the *Didaskalia* and the *Testament*).

Following the triple immersion, «let the deacon receive the man, and let the deaconess receive the woman, so that the granting of the perfect seal of Baptism take place with all propriety» (*Apostolic Canons*, see the *Didaskalia*).

h) Another sphere of the liturgical work of the deaconesses was the transfer and administration of Holy Communion to women who were sick, and unable to go to church.

i) Evidence indicates that the deaconesses also took an active part in the preparation of the bodies of deceased Christian women, including the wrapping of the body in the «savanon» or burial shroud, the arrangements, the funeral and the burial.

From the above it is made quite clear that the ordination of the deaconesses authorized them to participate in the internal and exter-

nal mission work of the Church, especially among women. The deaconesses, as representatives of the Bishop in their diaconal work, assisted in the consolidation and the personalization of the whole missionary effort. The female diaconate, which was primarily focused on women, however, did not preclude service to males, as well, in as much as the Lord Himself was also served by women.

In addition to the dimensions and expressions of the female diaconate which have been mentioned and which only in part can be identified with the spheres of activity of the deacons, in all likelihood there must have been aspects of their work, which are unknown to us. The love for the Saviour, which must be the motive of activity for the deaconesses, most certainly would have led them to the discovery of new ways to express that love in radiant service.

## 5. Conclusions - Recommendations for Action

All that has been described above leads to the conclusion that the ordination of the deaconesses was the singular type of ordination of women in the Church, by which there was created a singular office of female clergy and its singular order, that is, the office and order of the deaconesses. The ordination of the deaconesses, in spite of liturgical similarities with the ordination of the deacon, when compared, had a unique (*sui generis*) character: for it did not mean advancement of those ordained from a lower order (e.g. the sub-diaconate) nor did it grant to them the right of advancement to the orders of the Presbyter or the Bishop. The deaconesses were not able to exercise clearly priestly duties.

Deaconesses were ranked above the «lower clergy» in that whenever they were counted among the male clergy, they were ranked between deacons and sub-deacons, immediately under the deacons.

A renewal of the institution of deaconesses exists today in a new form in Protestantism, among the Anglicans, the Old Catholics and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

The restoration and re-establishment of the institution of deaconesses in the whole of the Orthodox Church in no way can

violate the canons, because this institution remains potentially in force to this day, since it is recognized by three Ecumenical Councils and has not been abolished by any later authoritative ecclesial decision. Besides, examples of the ordination of deaconesses exist to this day in Greek monasteries. The example of St Nektarios, who ordained deaconesses, has been followed by some contemporary bishops. In our age, generally speaking, the desire to restore the institution of the deaconess is becoming continuously more evident. Such a desire was expressed, for example, in 1906 in the pre-conciliar committees of the Pan-Russian Council, and in Greece, with the founding — by the Church of Greece — of the «School of Deaconesses» which, inappropriately, fell into the hands of the State and developed simply into a school for social workers. As a preparation for the «School of Deaconesses», during the academic years 1951-1952 and 1952-1953 a series of lectures was held in the Church of «Chrysospilitissa» in Athens regarding the female diaconate. The lectures were organized by the official Church of Greece office of church service known as «Apostolike Diakonia» for the women students of the School of Theology and other young women who were moved by missionary ideals. The first to teach in this School — which was under the supervision of the late then Archimandrite and later Metropolitan of Kitros, Barnabas — were the theologians Harikleia and Evangelos Theodorou. On the 21 May 1952 the students of the School, during a day's outing to the Holy Monastery of «Phaneromenes» in Salamina, unanimously decided to establish «The Association of Friends of the Institution of Deaconesses». The «Apostoliki Diakonia of the Church of Greece», in order to advance the idea of the restoration of this institution, as early as 1949 had published the book by Evangelos Theodorou, *Heroines of Christian Love: Deaconesses Throughout the Centuries*, Athens 1949. Also contributing to the promotion of this idea was the course on «The History and Theory of Ecclesial Social Service», which was taught originally in the Department of Social Service of the Theological School of the University of Thessaloniki, and more recently in the Department of Pastoral Care of the Theological School of the University of Athens. Mention must also

be made of the relative contribution of Pan-Orthodox conferences.

In planning for the re-establishment of the potentially existing institution of deaconesses, above all, the ideal of the female diaconate in the Byzantine Church must be kept in mind and projected, but also not to be ignored are the excellent examples to be found in female diaconal work in some non-Orthodox churches, which could be adapted to the Orthodox climate and to the concrete contemporary conditions of Orthodox parish life. Neither is it proper to disregard in this effort the contemporary social and cultural realities and the needs and perspectives of today's women. In reference to this last point, there is the issue of whether only unmarried women and widows could become deaconesses, or whether it would be possible that married women, living with their families, could also assume the office. Also, an issue for study is the question of the establishment of an order of postulates, or lay-deaconesses. The entrance into this order could perhaps take place through a «dedication prayer» in front of the altar area, comparable to the prayers said at the «laying on of hand» of the lower clergy. This prayer could be pronounced by the Bishop in front of the worshipping congregation. It is true that in the Byzantine Orthodox «*Euchologia*» a prayer of the lower order of the «placing of the hands» (χειροθεσία) for deaconesses does not exist. But if the higher order of ordination exists, what would prohibit the use of a lower order established by means of the «laying on of hands» (cheirothesia)? Further, the direct accountability of the postulates and the lay-deaconesses to the Bishop, as well as their cooperation with the priests, would have to be assured.

The way toward the revival of the higher ordination of the deaconesses would be made easier, if it were decided that at the beginning, the first to be ordained as deaconesses would be a large number of well-regarded nuns, once they had received direction in special seminars.

## 6. Conclusions

As a conclusion, I offer the following which I presented in 1986 at the Catholic Academy of Freiburg, whose theme was «Why Is There No Ordination of Women?». Among other things, I said the following:

«The history of the ministry of the deaconesses and the ordination of the deaconesses in the Byzantine Church and in all of the Oriental Churches can help us discover the correct stance regarding the issue of the ordination of women. These Churches, precisely as was the case in the early Church, had as their first criterion the ecclesial perception, which, taking into account the circumstances of each situation, was related to personal pastoral care. Consequently the issue of the ordination of women is in the first case, a question of Ecclesiology, which seeks the upbuilding of the Church, and only secondly and thirdly is it a case of biology, psychology, sociology, ethics, the women's movement, or feminism».

Therefore, I added the following:

The potential renewal of the ordination of the deaconesses in the Orthodox and other Churches could create new experiences and pastoral perspectives, which would assist, so that the mediating and bridge-building stance of the Orthodox Church as a whole, regarding the ordination and sacramental ministry of women, could find its many-sided foundation and formulation. In particular, what must be clarified, is if the practical consequences of the «charism» for the grace and outpouring of the Holy Spirit, about which the episcopal prayer during the ordination of the deaconesses, in comparison and in relationship with the ordination of the Presbyter and the Bishop, display only quantitative differences, which are dependent *de jure humano* on socio-historical circumstances or if these differences of the grace given indicate a permanent *de jure divino*, of essential and qualitative distinction regarding the female sex.

*(Translated from the Greek by V. Rev. Prof. Stanley Harakas)*

## APPENDIX\*

A'

«Εὐχή ἐπὶ χειροτονία διακονίσσης»  
(Κώδικες Β καὶ Κ - Εὐχολόγιον Goar)

«Μετά γενέσθαι τὴν ἁγίαν ἀναφορὰν καὶ ἀνοιγῆναι τὰς θύρας' πρὶν ἢ εἰπεῖν τὸν διάκονον' Πάντων τῶν ἁγίων, προσφέρεται ἡ μέλλουσα χειροτονεῖσθαι τῷ ἀρχιερεὶ καὶ ἐκφωνῶν τό, Ἡ θεία Χάρις, κλινοῦσης αὐτῆς τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἐπιτίθησι τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς, καὶ ποιῶν σταυρούς τρεῖς ἐπεύχεται ταῦτα.

Ὁ Θεός ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ Παντοδύναμος, ὁ διὰ τῆς ἐκ Παρθένου κατὰ σάρκα γεννήσεως τοῦ μονογενοῦς Σου υἱοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἁγίας τὸ θῆλυ' καὶ οὐκ ἀνδράσι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς γυναῖξιν δωρησάμενος τὴν χάριν καὶ τὴν ἐπιφοίτησιν τοῦ ἁγίου Σου Πνεύματος' Αὐτός καὶ νῦν, Δέσποτα, ἐπιδε ἐπὶ τὴν δούλην σου ταύτην' καὶ προσκάλεσαι αὐτὴν εἰς τὸ ἔργον τῆς διακονίας σου, καὶ κατὰπεμψον αὐτῇ τὴν πλουσίαν δωρεάν τοῦ ἁγίου Σου Πνεύματος' διαφύλαξον αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ὀρθοδόξῳ Σου πίστει, ἐν ἀμέμπτῳ πολιτείᾳ κατὰ τὸ Σοὶ εὐάρεστον τὴν ἑαυτῆς λειτουργίαν διὰ παντός ἐκπληροῦσαν. Ὅτι πρέπει Σοι... ἀμήν.

Καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀμήν ποιεῖ εἰς τῶν διακόνων εὐχὴν οὕτως'

Ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τῆς ἄνωθεν εἰρήνης, καὶ εὐσταθείας τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου' τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου' τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἡμῶν (τοῦ δεῖνος), ἱερωσύνης, ἀντιλήψεως, διαμονῆς, εἰρήνης, ὑγείας, σωτηρίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἔργου τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τῆς νῦν προχειροζομένης διακονίσσης τῆσδε καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῆς τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

(\*) The following Appendix presents the prayer and order of service of «Cheirothesia» of the deaconess in the Early Church which is found in different Codices. The texts are not translated into English, but are published in the Greek original. (Editor's Note).

*Ὅπως ὁ φιλόνητος Θεός ἄσπιλον καὶ ἀμώμητον αὐτῇ τὴν διακονίαν χαρίσεται τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.*

Ἐπὲρ τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου καὶ θεοφιλεστάτου βασιλέως ἡμῶν.

Ἐπὲρ τοῦ ῥυσθῆναι ἡμᾶς.

Ἀντιλαβοῦ σῶσον.

Καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι ταύτην τὴν εὐχὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ διακόνου, ἔχων ὁμοίως τὴν χεῖρα ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς χειροτονουμένης ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος, ἐπεύχεται οὕτως.

Δέσποτα Κύριε, ὁ μηδὲ γυναῖκας ἀναθεμένας ἑαυτὰς καὶ βουληθείσας καθ' ὃ προσῆκε λειτουργεῖν τοῖς ἁγίοις οἴκοις σου ἀποβαλλόμενος, ἀλλὰ ταύτας ἐν τάξει λειτουργῶν προσδεξάμενος δώρησαι τὴν χάριν τοῦ Ἁγίου Σου Πνεύματος καὶ τῇ δούλῃ σου ταύτῃ, βουληθείση ἀναθεῖναι Σοι ἑαυτήν, καὶ τὴν διακονίας ἀποπληρῶσαι χάριν, ὡς ἔδωκας χάριν τῆς διακονίας Σου Φοίβῃ, ἣν ἐκάλεσας εἰς ἔργον τῆς λειτουργίας παράσχου δέ αὐτῇ ὁ Θεός, ἀκατακρίτως προσκαρτερεῖν τοῖς ἁγίοις ναοῖς Σου, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς οἰκείας πολιτείας, σωφροσύνης δέ μάλιστα, καὶ τελείαν ἀπόδειξον δούλην Σου ἵνα καὶ αὐτῇ, παραστῶσα τῷ βήματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἄξιον τῆς ἀγαθῆς πολιτείας ἀπολήψῃται τὸν μισθόν. Ἐλέει καὶ φιλονητοῦ τοῦ μονογενοῦς Σου Υἱοῦ, μεθ' οὗ εὐλογητός εἶ καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς.

Καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀμὴν, περιτίθησι τῷ τραχήλῳ αὐτῆς ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ μαφωρίου τὸ διακονικὸν ὠράριον, φέρων ἔμπροσθεν τὰς δύο ἀρχὰς καὶ τότε ὁ ἐν τῷ ἄμβωνι διάκονος λέγει Πάντων τῶν ἁγίων μνημονεύσαντες καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ.

Μετὰ (δέ) τὸ μεταλαβεῖν αὐτὴν τοῦ ἁγίου σώματος καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου αἵματος, ἐπιδίδωσιν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τὸ ἅγιον ποτήριον ὅπερ δεχομένη ἀποτίθεται τῇ ἁγίᾳ τραπέζῃ.

Β'

«Εὐχὴ ἐπὶ χειροτονίᾳ διακονίσεως»

(Κατὰ τὸν κώδικα Σ)

«Μετὰ τὸ γενέσθαι τὴν ἀναφορὰν καὶ ἀνοιγῆναι τὰς θύρας προσφέρεται ἢ μέλλουσα χειροτονεῖσθαι, καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐκφωνεῖ τὸ Ἡθεῖα χάρις, κλινούσης αὐτῆς τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ ἐπι-

τίθησι τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς, καὶ ποιῶν σταυρούς τρεῖς ἐπεύχεται. Ὁ Θεός ὁ ἅγιος καὶ παντοδύναμος...».

Καὶ μετὰ τὸ Ἀμὴν, ποιεῖ εἰς τῶν διακόνων εὐχὴν καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι ταύτην, ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος ἔχων τὴν χεῖρα ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς, ἐπεύχεται οὕτως Δέσποτα Κύριε, ὁ μηδὲ γυναῖκας ἀναθεμένας ἑαυτὰς...».

Ὅτι πρέπει Σοι... ἀμὴν.

Καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀμὴν ποιεῖ εἰς τῶν διακόνων εὐχὴν οὕτως

Ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τῆς ἄνωθεν εἰρήνης, καὶ εὐσταθείας τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τοῦ ἀρχιεπισκόπου ἡμῶν (τοῦ δεῖνος), ἱερωσύνης, ἀντιλήψεως, διαμονῆς, εἰρήνης, ὑγείας, σωτηρίας αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἔργου τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

Ἐπὲρ τῆς νῦν προχειροζομένης διακονίσεως τῆσδε καὶ τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῆς τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.

*Ὅπως ὁ φιλόνητος Θεός ἄσπιλον καὶ ἀμώμητον αὐτῇ τὴν διακονίαν χαρίσεται τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν.*

Ἐπὲρ τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου καὶ θεοφιλεστάτου βασιλέως ἡμῶν.

Ἐπὲρ τοῦ ῥυσθῆναι ἡμᾶς.

Ἀντιλαβοῦ σῶσον.

Καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι ταύτην τὴν εὐχὴν ὑπὸ τοῦ διακόνου, ἔχων ὁμοίως τὴν χεῖρα ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τῆς χειροτονουμένης ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος, ἐπεύχεται οὕτως.

Δέσποτα Κύριε, ὁ μηδὲ γυναῖκας ἀναθεμένας ἑαυτὰς καὶ βουληθείσας καθ' ὃ προσῆκε λειτουργεῖν τοῖς ἁγίοις οἴκοις σου ἀποβαλλόμενος, ἀλλὰ ταύτας ἐν τάξει λειτουργῶν προσδεξάμενος δώρησαι τὴν χάριν τοῦ Ἁγίου Σου Πνεύματος καὶ τῇ δούλῃ σου ταύτῃ, βουληθείση ἀναθεῖναι Σοι ἑαυτήν, καὶ τὴν διακονίας ἀποπληρῶσαι χάριν, ὡς ἔδωκας χάριν τῆς διακονίας Σου Φοίβῃ, ἣν ἐκάλεσας εἰς ἔργον τῆς λειτουργίας παράσχου δέ αὐτῇ ὁ Θεός, ἀκατακρίτως προσκαρτερεῖν τοῖς ἁγίοις ναοῖς Σου, ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τῆς οἰκείας πολιτείας, σωφροσύνης δέ μάλι-

στα, καί τελείαν ἀπόδειξον δούλην Σου ἵνα καί αὐτή, παραστῶσα τῷ βήματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἄξιον τῆς ἀγαθῆς πολιτείας ἀπολήψεται τόν μισθόν. Ἐλέει καί φιλανθρωπία τοῦ μονογενοῦς Σου Υἱοῦ, μεθ' οὗ εὐλογητός εἶ καί τά ἐξῆς.

Καί μετὰ τό ἀμήν, περιτίθησι τῷ τραχήλῳ αὐτῆς ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ μαφωρίου τό διακονικόν ὠράριον, φέρων ἔμπροσθεν τὰς δύο ἀρχάς καί τότε ὁ ἐν τῷ ἄμβωνι διάκονος λέγει Πάντων τῶν ἁγίων μνημονεύσαντες καί τά λοιπά.

Μετὰ (δέ) τό μεταλαβεῖν αὐτήν τοῦ ἁγίου σώματος καί τοῦ ἁγίου αἵματος, ἐπιδίδωσιν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος τό ἅγιον ποτήριον ὅπερ δεχομένη ἀποτίθεται τῇ ἁγία τραπέζῃ».

### Γ'

«Τάξις ἐπί χειροτονία διακονίσσης»  
(Κατά τούς κώδικας Π καί Ἀθ.)

«Τάξις γινομένη ἐπί χειροτονία διακονίσσης, ἣτις ὀφείλει εἶναι μ' (= τεσσαράκοντα) χρόνων, παρθένος ἀγνή καί, κατά τό νῦν κρατοῦν, μονάζουσα μεγαλοσχέμων, κεκαρμένη τε κοσμίως, καί εἰς τοσοῦτον διά τῆς ἐπανθούσης αὐτῇ ἀρετῆς ἀνηγμένη εἰς ὕψος, ὡς ἀμιλλᾶσθαι κατά γε τοῦτο τοῖς ἀληθῶς ἀνδράσι, κἀντεῦθεν ἀξιοῦσθαι καί τῆς τοσαύτης τιμῆς. Τελεῖται τοίνυν καί ἐπί ταύτη πάντα, ὅσα καί ἐπί τοῖς διακόνοις, ὀλίγων τινῶν γινομένων ἐνηλλαγμένως ἑπιτίθεται γάρ τῇ ἱερῇ τραπέζῃ μαφωρίῳ καλυπτομένη τήν κάραν, οὗ τὰ ἀμφοτέρα ἄκρα ἔμπροσθεν ἀπηώρηται, καί μετὰ τό ρηθῆναι Ἡ Θεία Χάρις, οὐ κλίνει γόνυ, καθάπερ ὁ διάκονος, ἀλλά μόνην τήν κάραν, καί ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς σφραγίζων ταύτην τρίς καί ἔχων ἐπικειμένην αὐτῇ τήν χεῖρα εὐχεται οὕτως. Ὁ διάκονος τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν. Ὁ Θεός, ὁ ἅγιος καί παντοδύναμος...».

Καί λεγομένων τῶν διακονικῶν, ἃ λέγεται καί ἐπί τοῖς διακόνοις, ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, ἔχων ὡσαύτως τῇ τῆς χειροτονουμένης κορφή τήν χεῖρα ἐπικειμένην, εὐχεται οὕτως:

Δέσποτα Κύριε, ὁ μηδέ γυναικάς ἀναθεμένας ἑαυτὰς καί βουληθείσας...

Καί μετὰ τό Ἀμήν περιτίθησι τῷ τραχήλῳ ταύτης ὑποκάτωθεν τοῦ μαφωρίου τό διακονικόν ὠράριον, φέρων εἰς τό ἔμπροσθεν τὰς δύο ἀρχάς, καί οὕτως ὁ ἐπί τοῦ ἄμβωνος διάκονος λέγει τό Πάντων ἁγίων μνημονεύσαντες. Κατά δέ τόν τῆς μεταλήψεως τῶν θείων μυστηρίων καιρόν, κοινωνεῖ μὲν τοῦ θείου σώματος καί αἵματος μετὰ τούς διακόνους, λαμβάνουσα δέ τό ποτήριον ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως χειρῶν οὐδενί μεταδίδωσιν, ἀλλ' εὐθύς ἐπιτίθησιν αὐτό τῇ ἁγία τραπέζῃ. Ἐπληρώθη ἡ χειροτονία τῆς διακονίσσης».

### Δ'

«Τάξις χειροτονίας διακονισσῶν»

«Τά γε μὴν παλαιά τῶν βιβλίων, οἷς ἡ τῶν χειροτονιῶν ἀπασῶν ἀκριβῶς ἐγγέγραπται τελετή καί τόν καθ' ἡλικίαν ὁποῖον εἶναι δεῖ χρόνον ὑφηγεῖται τῆς διακόνου, ὅτι τεσσαρακοστός καί τό σχῆμα, ὅτι μοναχικόν, καί τοῦτο τέλειον καί τόν βίον, ὅτι τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀμιλλᾶσθαι χρή ταύτην τοῖς ἄκροις τήν ἀρετήν τελεῖσθαι δέ καί ἐπ' αὐτῇ, πλήν ὀλίγων, ὅσα καί ἐπί τοῖς διακόνοις τῇ ἱερῇ τραπέζῃ προσαγομένην μαφωρίῳ καλύπτεσθαι, τῶν ἄκρων τούτου ἔμπροσθεν ἀπηωρημένων καί μετὰ τό ρηθῆναι τό Ἡ Θεία Χάρις, ἡ τὰ ἀσθενῆ θεραπεύουσα, οὐδέτερον τῶν ποδῶν εἰς γόνυ κλίνειν, ἀλλά μόνην τήν κεφαλὴν καί ἐπιτιθέντα ταύτη τόν ἀρχιερέα τήν χεῖρα, ἐπεύχεσθαι ἀμέμπτως αὐτήν τό τῆς διακονίας ἔργον ἐπιτελέσαι, σωφροσύνην καί σεμνήν πολιτείαν μετερχομένην, καί τοῖς ἁγίοις οὕτω ναοῖς προσκαρτερεῖν, οὐ μὴν καί τοῖς ἀχράντοις μυστηρίοις ὑπηρετεῖν ἐπιτρέπει, ἢ ριπίδιον ἐγχειρίζεσθαι, ὡς ἐπί τοῦ διακόνου εἶτα τῷ τραχήλῳ ταύτης ὑπό τό μαφωρίον ἐπιτιθέναι τόν ἀρχιερέα τό διακονικόν ὠράριον, φέροντα εἰς τὰ ἔμπροσθεν τὰς δύο τούτου ἀρχάς. Ἐν δέ τῷ καιρῷ τῆς μεταλήψεως, μετὰ τούς διακόνους τῶν θείων κοινωνεῖν αὐτήν μυστηρίων εἶτα λαμβάνουσιν τό ποτήριον ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως μηδενί μεταδίδουσι, ἀλλ' εὐθύς ἐπιτιθέναι τοῦτο τῇ ἁγία τραπέζῃ».

Ε'

«Τάξις γινομένη ἐπὶ χειροτονία διακονίσης»  
(Κατὰ τὸν κώδικα Ἀλ.)

Ἡ τάξις αὕτη εἶναι ἡ αὐτὴ πρὸς τὴν τῶν κωδίκων Π καὶ Ἀθ', διαφέρουσα ἐκείνης κατὰ τὸ ὅτι αὕτη ἔχει τὴν λέξιν «κεφαλὴν» ἀντὶ τῆς λέξεως «κάραν».

Στ'

«Χειροτονικὸν τοῦ Εἰληταρίου Ξ»

Ἐν τῷ Χειροτονικῷ τούτῳ, μετὰ τὴν «τάξιν ἐπὶ χειροτονία διακόνου» ὑπῆρχεν ἡ σημείωσις:

«Τὰ δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ ἐπὶ διακονίσης ἄνευ τοῦ γονυκλιτῆσαι αὐτὴν' ἐκείνη γάρ μόνην τὴν κεφαλὴν κλίνει, καὶ μετὰ τὴν θείαν μετάληψιν λαμβάνουσα τὸ ἅγιον ποτήριον παρὰ τοῦ χειροτονήσαντος αὐτὴν, οὐδενὶ μεταδίδωσιν ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' εὐθέως ἀποτίθεται αὐτὸ ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ τραπέζῃ».

Ζ'

«Νεστοριανὴ Ordo mulierum diaconissarum»  
(Κατὰ τὸ χειρόγραφον Συρ.)

Jubente autem pontifice, in diaconicum introducitur tempore Sacramentorum, et offert eam archidiaconus coram episcopo, iunctas manus habentem et caput inclinantem et adorantem usque ad medium lumborum suorum, non tamen genua flectentem; hoc enim indexorum est.

Κελεύσαντος τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, ὀδηγεῖται (ἢ χειροτονησομένη) εἰς τὸ Διακονικὸν κατὰ τὸν χρόνον (τῆς τελέσεως) τῶν μυστηρίων. Καὶ ὁ ἀρχιδιάκονος προσάγει ταύτην ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, ἔχουσαν ἠνωμένας τὰς χεῖρας καὶ κλίνουσαν τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ ἄνω μέρος τοῦ σώματος αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ μὴ κάμπτουσαν τὰ γόνατα, διότι τοῦτο εἶναι ἀνάρμοστον.

Ἀκολουθοῦσιν αἱ δύο καθιερωτικαὶ εὐχαὶ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, ὧν ἡ μὲν πρώτη ταυτίζεται πρὸς τὴν ἀντίστοιχον τῆς χειροτονίας τοῦ διακόνου, ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα ἔχει ὡς ἐξῆς:

Domine Deus, Fortis, Omnipotens, Tu, qui omnia verbo virtutis tuae fecisti (ἦ: qui fecisti omnia virtute verbi tui), iussuque tuo universa contines (ἦ: contines omnia, quae sunt), quae tuo nutu creasti (ἦ: quae nutus tuus creavit); qui pariter in viris simul et mulieribus tibi complaces (ἦ: complacuiisti), ut donum Spiritus Sancti illis dares; Tu, Domine, etiam nunc in misericordia tua (ἦ: per misericordiam tuam) elige pauperem hanc ancillam tuam (ἦ: ancillam hanc humilem) ad bonum opus diaconatus, et da ei, ut sine macula hoc magnum et sublime ministerium coram te perficiat et in omnibus virtutis operibus sine noxa custodiat: utque muliebrem coetum erudiat, doceatque castimoniam, et opera justa et recta; mereaturque bonorum operum retributionem a te recipere...

(Μετὰ τὴν εὐχὴν ταύτην) Imponit episcopus manum super caput eius... et recitat precationem secretam.

«ὦ Κύριε Θεέ, Ἰσχυρέ, Παντοδύναμε' Σὺ, Ὅστις ἐποίησας τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεώς Σου (ἦ: τῇ δυναμει τοῦ ῥηματός Σου) καὶ συγκρατεῖς διὰ τοῦ κελεύσματος Σου τὰ σύμπαντα (πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα), ἅτινα ἐδημιουργήσας διὰ τοῦ νεύματός Σου (ἦ: ἅτινα τὸ νεῦμά Σου ἐδημιούργησε) Σὺ, Ὅστις εὐδοκεῖς (ἦ ἠδύδοκῆσας) ἐξ ἴσου ἐν ἀνδράσι καὶ γυναίξιν, ἵνα παράσχῃς αὐτοῖς τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ Ἁγ. Πνεύματος' Σὺ, ὦ Κύριε, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῇ εὐσπλαγχνίᾳ Σου (ἦ: ἔνεκα τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας Σου) ἔκλεξον τὴν πτωχὴν (ἦ: ταπεινὴν) ταύτην δούλην Σου διὰ τὸ καλὸν ἔργον τῆς διακονίας καὶ δός αὐτῇ, ἵνα ἄνευ κηλίδος ἐκτελῇ ἐνώπιόν Σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ὑψηλὴν ταύτην διακονίαν καὶ ἵνα διαφυλάττηται ἄνευ βλάβης ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἵνα ἐκπαιδεύῃ τὴν γυναικειαν τὰς διδάσκει τὴν ἀγνείαν καὶ τὰ δίκαια καὶ ὀρθὰ ἔργα καὶ ἵνα οὕτως ἀξιοθῇ νὰ δεχθῇ ἐκ Σοῦ τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῶν καλῶν ἔργων...».

(Μετὰ τὴν εὐχὴν ταύτην) ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἐπιτήθησι τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς... καὶ ἀπαγγέλλει μυστικὴν δέησιν.



Η'

«'Η ἐν τῇ Δύσει διαμορφωθεῖσα Ordo ad diaconam faciendam.»  
(Κατά τὴν συλλογὴν Ο, τὸν κώδικα Ε.)

Episcopus, cum diaconam benedicti, orarium in collo eius ponit. Quanto autem ad ecclesiam procedit, portat illud super collum suum, sic vero, ut summitas orarii ex utraque parte sub tunica sit. Item missa ad diaconam consecrandam.

Ὅταν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος καθιεροῖ μίαν διακόνισσαν, τίθησιν εἰς τὸν τράχηλον αὐτῆς τὸ ὄραριον. Ὅταν δέ αὕτη μεταβαίνει εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, φέρει τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ τραχήλου αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τοιοῦτον τρόπον, ὥστε ἀμφοτέρω τὰ ἄκρα τοῦ ὄραριου εὐρίσκονται κάτωθεν τοῦ χιτῶνος αὐτῆς. Κατὰ τὸν ἀκόλουθον τρόπον (γίνεται ἡ εἰδικὴ λειτουργία) διὰ τὴν καθιέρωσιν τῆς διακόνισσης.

Μετά τὰ ἀντίφωνα καὶ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τῶν Ψαλμῶν ἀκολουθεῖ ἡ προσευχή:

Deus, castitatis amator et continentiae conservator, supplicationem nostram benignus exaudi et hanc famulam tuam propitius intueri, ut quae pro timore tuo continentiae pudicitiam novit, tuo auxilio conservet, et sexagesimum fructum continentiae... percipiat.

«ὦ Θεέ, Σὺ, Ὅστις ἀγαπᾷ τὴν ἀγνείαν καὶ διαφυλάττει τὴν ἐγκράτειαν, εἰσάκουσον εὐμενῶς τῆς δεήσεως ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπίβλεψον εὐμενῶς ἐπὶ τὴν δούλην Σου ταύτην, ἵνα (αὕτη) δυναθῇ διὰ τῆς σῆς βοήθειας νὰ ἐκπληρώσῃ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν τῆς ἐγκρατείας, ἣν ἔδωκεν ἐν τῷ πρὸς σέ φόβῳ καὶ λάβῃ τὸν ἐξηκονταπλάσιον καρπὸν τῆς ἐγκρατείας...».

Εἶτα, μετά τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τῆς Ἀποστολικῆς περικοπῆς

prostrata illa ante altare, imponatur (= intonatur) litania. Qua finita dicat episcopus super illam hanc orationem:

προσπεποῦσης ἐκείνης πρό τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, γίνεται λιτανεία, μετὰ τὸ πέρας τῆς ὁποίας ὁ ἐπίσκοπος λέγει ἐπ' αὐτὴν τὴν ἐξῆς προσευχήν:

Exaudi, Domine, preces nostras, et super hanc famulam tuam spiritum tuae benedictionis emitte, ut caelesti munere ditata, et tuae gratiam possit maiestatis acquirere, et bene vivendi aliis exemplum praebere.

«Ἐπάκουσον, Κύριε, τῶν προσευχῶν ἡμῶν καὶ πέμψον ἐπὶ τὴν δούλην Σου ταύτην τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς εὐλογίας Σου, ἵνα αὕτη, πλουτισθεῖσα διὰ τῆς οὐρανίας δωρεᾶς, δυναθῇ νὰ ἀποκτήσῃ τὴν χάριν τῆς θείας Σου μεγαλειότητος καὶ παράσχῃ πᾶσι τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦ καλῶς (= ὑποδειγματικῶς) ζῆν.».

Ἀκολουθεῖ ἡ καθιέρωσις διὰ τῆς προσευχῆς:

Deus, qui Annam filiam Phanaelis... in sancta et intemerata v-  
iduitate servasti..., da... huic famulae tuae... sexagesimum fructum.  
Sit in ea cum misericordia districtio, cum humilitate largitas, cum li-  
bertate honestas, cum humanitate sobrietas. Opus tuum die ac nocte  
meditetur...

«ὦ Θεέ, Ὅστις τὴν Ἄνναν, θυγατέρα τοῦ Φανουήλ... διεφύλαξας ἐν ἀγία καὶ ἀμιάντῳ χηρείᾳ..., δός... τῇ δούλῃ Σου ταύτῃ... ἐξηκονταπλάσιον καρπὸν... Ἔστω ἐν αὐτῇ, μετὰ τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας ἢ αὐστηρότης, μετὰ τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης ἢ μεγαλοδωρία (φιλοδωρία), μετὰ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἢ ἐντιμότητος, μετὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπιστικῆς διαθέσεως ἢ σωφροσύνης. Ἄς μελετᾷ (σκέπτεται) ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός τὸ ἔργον Σου...».

Tunc ponat episcopus orarium in collo eius, dicens: Stola iu-  
cunditatis induat te Dominus. Ipsa autem imponat velamen capiti  
suo palam omnibus de altari acceptum.

Τότε ὁ ἐπίσκοπος τίθησι τό ὠράριον εἰς τόν τράχηλον αὐ-  
τῆς, λέγων: «Ὁ Κύριος ἐνδύει σε διά στολῆς εὐφροσύνης». Ἐ-  
κείνη δέ τίθησι κάλυμμα εἰς τήν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς, λαμβανόμε-  
νον ἐκ τῆς Ἀγ. Τραπεζῆς.

## THE MISSION OF WOMEN IN THE MODERN WORLD

### Woman in Contemporary Secularized Society

*Prof. (Ms) Frieda Haddad*

A few images by way of an introduction to our subject matter:  
The *first image* is taken from the theory of tension of opposites  
advocated by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus: it is his well-known  
image of the arc and the lyre. Paradoxically speaking, says  
Heraclitus, the same Greek word is used to mean both life, as well as  
the arc, which triggers off arrows, carriers of death. But the arc  
derives its power from a stretched string and an arc with a number  
of stretched strings becomes a lyre. Instead of bearing arrows, car-  
riers of death, an arc with a number of strings, a lyre, bears music,  
poetry, harmony and beauty. The arc, symbol of destruction and  
war, can become a lyre, can be tuned and transformed into a symbol  
of life. Thus the masculine instinct of war and death, says  
Heraclitus, bears in it the potential of its opposite, the feminine in-  
stinct of life, of positive contribution to culture.

Our first point then is this: in the midst of the shuttering up of  
any worldview in contemporary secularized society due to the  
overspecialisation of science and technology, which drives man to  
be blind to the wood because of the trees, it is the special task of  
womanhood to stop man in his ruthless pursuit of technology and  
put him face to face with his own dignity.

Peter the apostle touches upon this specific task of woman in  
his first epistle when he admonishes women to adorn themselves