Joys and Hopes, Griefs and Anxieties: Catholic Women Since Vatican II

by Susan A. Ross

The title I have chosen for this essay speaks for itself. The experiences of Catholic women since Vatican II, as I see it, have been a mixture of exciting new opportunities and challenges along with bitter disappointments and closed doors. The fact that so many Catholic women are now professional theologians, trained alongside their brothers in faith and teaching alongside them in seminaries and universities, is one of the most remarkable changes in the last fifty years. I think it is fair to say that the face of Catholic theology has changed in ways undreamed of fifty years ago. Yet the events of the last few years, particularly those of this past spring with the Vatican investigation of the Leadership Council of Women Religious (LCWR), have also revealed how little has changed in terms of power in the Catholic Church.

In this essay, I want to advance some interrelated theses. The first of these is that, to draw on Scholastic language, the “accidents” of magisterial Roman Catholic theology of womanhood have changed during this time but the “substance” has remained largely the same. Those of you familiar with the traditional theology of transubstantiation will recognize the categories I am using, and I will flesh these out in what follows. My point is that a careful reading of magisterial teaching will show that womanhood is still largely understood in maternal and subordinate terms, despite Vatican claims to affirming women’s full equality.

My second point is that feminist theology—a term practically unknown fifty years ago—has raised deep challenges to this same magisterial teaching on both imaginative and doctrinal levels, largely inspired by what I will call the “spirit” of Vatican II. As many of you here are well aware, the charge of “radical feminism,” leveled against not only the LCWR but other prominent theologians, raises the question whether feminist theology should be considered outside the boundaries of orthodox (small o) Catholic theology. As a Catholic feminist theologian myself, I want ultimately to argue that it should not, but it is necessary to consider how and why the movement of feminist theology is considered to be so threatening to the hierarchy.

My third point is that the work of women in the “grassroots” is central to the future of the church. In a sense, these women are caught in the middle. On the one side are the official teachings of the church, which praise the dedication of these women but are clear on their limited roles. On the other are the works and example of feminist writers and activists who challenge this picture. The joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of all women are central to understanding...
the Catholic church of the present and the future. Most of the “people in the pew” are, we need to admit, largely unaware of the complex theological issues that keep many of us so preoccupied, and it is always a good reality-check to ask someone at an after-Mass coffee hour, or one's students, what they think of the Vatican's statement on Margaret Farley or of the conflict with the LCWR. I did this recently and was greeted with a blank stare by a young mother of two toddlers, who obviously had many other very important things on her mind. But the many women—and I include here single and married women as well as women religious—who educate both children and adults, prepare the music and petitions, organize the coffee hours, arrange for adult education classes, bring Communion to the sick, and in some cases run entire parishes are central to the Catholic church in the present and will be even more so in the future. These women are not “stopgap” workers who are needed until there are more men to take their place. And while most of these women are not trained theologians, they have been profoundly affected by feminism, in both its religious and secular forms, and many are unlikely to find magisterial images of maternal and subordinate womanhood to be convincing. So my question is whether the future of the church for the majority of Catholics—women—is one of joy and hope or one of grief and anxiety?

“Substance” and “Accidents” in Magisterial Theology of Womanhood

Let me explain what I mean by these terms. In the Scholastic understanding of transubstantiation, in which bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, the “substance”—that is, the very essence of the bread and the wine—is changed, but the “accidents”—that is, the texture and flavor of bread and wine—remain unchanged. This was an ingenious medieval way of making sense of a reality that is difficult, if not impossible, to express in words: how can what looks to the eye like ordinary food and drink become Christ in our midst? By drawing on Aristotelian metaphysics, which sees reality in terms of “substances” and “accidents,” medieval theologians could practice the craft of theology, which is making sense of the church's faith in language that relates to the present time: this is the classic “faith seeking understanding.” I will just note here that transubstantiation posed challenges to Reforma-tion theologians like Martin Luther, and in the years immediately following Vatican II, a number of theologians proposed more contemporary ways of understanding the meaning of “real presence.”

I find that this somewhat archaic language is helpful in understanding magisterial teaching on womanhood. The key question is whether Catholic teaching on women has “substantially” changed since Vatican II. I argue that it has not, and that this is a key factor in the present situation of impasse. This teaching has been very richly developed, particularly in the work of John Paul II, but the substance of the church's traditional teaching on womanhood has not, in my judgment, been really altered.

Let me give some examples here; given the limits of this article I can only give a few. Here I draw on Pius XI’s Casti Connubii (CC), from 1930, and John Paul II’s Mulieris Dignitatem (MD), from 1988. Vatican II took place almost exactly halfway during this time period, so it serves as a convenient marker. And even though 1988 may seem to many to be a very long time ago (twenty-four years, perhaps all or more of some of your lifetimes), in the vast chronology of church teaching, it’s really about an hour ago. First, to Casti Connubii, the immediate context of CC was the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion's statement that so-called artificial contraception could be used, in serious situations, by married couples; that statement was issued in 1930. The broader context, however, was the movement for women's suffrage, greater independence for women, and the sexual revolution of the early twentieth century, inspired particularly by Freud. Perhaps familiar to those who have read the encyclical is the statement in no. 26, that there is a "primacy of the husband in regard to women and children, and the ready subjec-

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tion of the wife and her willing obedience.” If this statement is read without its immediate context in the document, it seems very much in contrast to the affirmations of equality that we see in so many post-Vatican II magisterial documents. But if one reads carefully, the statement is almost immediately qualified by Pius XI’s emphasis on the “liberty which fully belongs to the woman in view of her dignity as a human person,” and his listing of those situations in which this subjection is qualified; the woman is not to be treated as a child, and if the husband is irrational, then obedience is clearly not warranted. Pius also describes the man as the “head” and the woman as the “heart,” and if the man has the “chief place in ruling,” then the woman has the “chief place in love” (27-28).

Pius goes on to argue that there is a “false emancipation” of women’s lives that needs to be recognized as such (45). Here, one must note the context of the 1920s and the drive for women’s suffrage in the Euro-American world. Some of us know the other familiar quotation from CC that warns of the problems that will ensue if “the woman descends from her truly regal throne to which she has been raised within the walls of the home by means of the Gospel” and that if this happens, “she will soon be reduced to the old state of slavery . . . and become as amongst the pagans the mere instrument of man” (74-75). There is something to be lost if women give up the place in which God has put them, and, specifically, where Christianity sees women. Yet for all this, I must say that in reading CC again, one does still find a certain measure of wisdom in some places: sex isn’t everything, contrary to what popular culture tells us, and there is no declaration that women are actually inferior to men. Its major point is that women have a “special place” which needs to be respected.

If we move to John Paul II’s Mulieris Dignitatem, issued fifty-eight years later, we do find a much stronger affirmation of women’s equality, but there is still, I argue, an understanding of women’s “distinctiveness” that precludes leadership in the church and that continues to emphasize the maternal and “responsive” character of womanhood. The language of subordination is no longer used, but the language of responsiveness is introduced, in which the divine (and the male) initiative is always first. This is, I think, very much in continuity with what the church has taught about women throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. John Paul II’s theology is much more developed, particularly with regard to the “spousal” character of humanity and especially of women, but it does not substantially change what it has inherited from the past.

In comparison with CC, one finds in MD an argument that God’s love, as it is understood in human terms, has been revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, who is male. Humanity, which receives this love, is therefore symbolized in feminine terms—in this way, John Paul can say that men are, in a sense, also “brides of Christ.” That is, the human (male or female) takes on the role of the bride who responds to the bridegroom. “Precisely because Christ’s divine love is the love of a bridegroom, it is the model and pattern of all human love, men’s love in particular” (25). Note that the role of bride and bridegroom are not interchangeable. Like CC, MD also argues against the dangers of feminine “masculinization” that, despite the problems of sexual discrimination, must not lead women down this dangerous pathway. There is a distinctive psychological structure to womanhood that is both virginal and maternal and which is also central to the Paschal Mystery. And in a fascinating passage in the encyclical, John Paul links even the Eucharist to the spousal character of the Paschal Mystery:

Since Christ, in instituting the Eucharist, linked it in such an explicit way to the priestly service of the Apostles, it is legitimate to conclude that he thereby wished to express the relationship between man and woman, between what is “feminine” and what is “masculine” (26).

There is much more that can be said about these two documents, separated by almost sixty years, with Vatican II in the middle, but, I argue, united in their understanding of womanhood. Women are created by God as essentially

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maternal and essentially receptive: these characteristics provide a basis for women’s “distinctive” role in the church. Pius does not have the extensive Marian and nuptial references that are so significant in John Paul’s work, but the potential for this development is there. My point, in this brief section here, is to say that it would be difficult to discern from these two documents that anything significant had happened in relation to church teaching related to women during those fifty-eight years. Of course, much has changed practically: women occupy significant roles in dioceses: as Chancellors, for example, and as parish associates and coordinators. Parish staffs look very different now than they did fifty years ago, when one would encounter women mainly as receptionists, cooks, and housekeepers in the rectories, as laundresses of altar linens for the churches, as teachers of children, and as organizers of sodalities and church socials. But I would argue that these are “accidental” changes, changes that do not affect substantially the theology of women. To rephrase the question of a recent book on the Council: “Did anything happen at Vatican II—with regard to women?” My answer would be, “If you read just these documents: not really.”

The Challenge of Feminist Theology

Permit me to engage in a bit of nostalgia. I was twelve years old when Vatican II began, and I still recall it vividly. During the four sessions of the Council, and in between, we prayed daily at my school and weekly at my parish for the success of the Council. My sister and I found the new openness to other Christian churches to be an inspiration for exploring previously forbidden Protestant churches, which the two of us would attend after our family went to early Sunday Mass. The nuns at my high school had us buy and assigned us to read the documents of Vatican II, and I still have my copy of the Abbott edition, priced at 95 cents. So, just nine years after the Council ended, in the fall of 1974, I applied to graduate schools in theology, inspired by the Council’s vision and hoping to be a part of the future of the church, and not just as someone in the pews. Certainly, twenty years earlier, few if any Catholics would have thought it possible that a single lay woman would consider becoming a theologian, and I must say that my parents were perplexed, although quite supportive. But I was not alone. I arrived at the University of Chicago at the same time as the first (later tenured) woman faculty member there, Anne Carr, BVM. She was Assistant Dean and Assistant Professor of Theology and I was a first year M.A. student. She had studied at the University of Chicago just after the close of the Council and was part of the first generation of women theologians, many of them Catholic, who found their calling in a similar way to me. So, something must have happened to inspire so many Catholic women (and lay men) to study theology and to think of themselves as part of the church’s teaching ministry. In this section, I want to spell out what that “something” was.

As I have reflected on the juxtaposition of magisterial writing on women and on the phenomenon of Catholic feminist theology, I have found the literature about Vatican II helpful in understanding it. John O’Malley writes, “... the radical nature of the council has never been accepted or understood.” In other words, those who argue for a “hermeneutics of continuity” with regard to the Council have plenty of material to substantiate their claim, and in this case, it would be magisterial teachings about womanhood. Josef Cardinal Ratzinger said in 1985 that “[t]his schematism of a before and after in the history of the Church, wholly unjustified by the documents of Vatican II, which do nothing but reaffirm the continuity of Catholicism, must be decidedly opposed. There is no ‘pre-’ or ‘post- conciliar church.” Since then, the now Pope Benedict XVI has used the language of a “hermeneutics of reform” rather than of “rupture” or “continuity,” but his rejection of the idea that Vatican II represented a real change in the Church remains clear. My argument here is that much did change, and those who argue for a “hermeneutics of rupture,” who see how much actually did change, have plenty of material as well. For this, I will draw on feminist theology as an example.

5 Faggioli, 110.
When I arrived at Swift Hall in the fall of 1975, everyone was talking about the new book that had just been published by a young Catholic theologian and member of the faculty, David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*. In that book, Tracy argued for a method of “mutually critical correlation” between what he called “the Christian fact” and “common human experience.” One of the more significant issues in that book and its focus on method was how it highlighted human experience. And while his understanding of that category has undergone both criticism and revision, “experience” entered the realm of theology in a way not explicitly made before.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, women were just beginning to reflect on their own experience as women's experiences, and this was also true of women studying theology. I can still recall the moments of insight as I realized that what I had chalked up as “just me” or “life” were experiences that were shared by many other women and that had potential theological significance: some of these included the psychological impact on women of overwhelmingly male images of God, the role of gendered experience in developing theological categories of sin and grace, and attitudes toward the body and sexuality. As I read theories of religious language, I also began to think about how gendered language exercises power over our imaginations. These, I think, are really radical changes in theology “as usual” and continue to be controversial in the present: just read the US Bishops’ Committee on Doctrine's critique of Elizabeth Johnson's book *Quest for the Living God* to see what I mean. Feminist theology has taken quite seriously the challenges of newer methods in theology.

Now, by this I do not mean that feminist, womanist, *mujerista*, and other women-centered forms of theology have just borrowed Tracy's method. I think Tracy was identifying something that others at the same time were also recognizing; the most significant among them would include black theologian James Cone and Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez. But what was crucial here was the experience of the theologian and his or her social location, a topic that Tracy took up in his next book, *The Analogical Imagination*. Who you are, where you are from, how you have been formed intellectually and culturally—all these experiences will inevitably shape how you understand your theology. Moreover, one is obligated to make sense of the Christian “fact” in language that is adequate to these experiences.

Thus, a related development in theology has been a more self-conscious awareness of how context plays a role in theological development. Bernard Lonergan's famous distinction between “classicist” and “historical mindedness” in theological statements found its counterpart in feminist biblical and historical scholarship. In the groundbreaking work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, we find that questions about the New Testament's social location and the mores of the time have a great deal to contribute to our understanding of how biblical and historical sources need to be interpreted. Both experience and context have played very important roles in the development of contextual theologies. Latin American, black, womanist, Asian, and African scholars have challenged the ways that certain ways of seeing humanity have been understood to have a timeless, a-historical nature, and this criticism has been leveled against white feminist theology as well, since white feminist theologians then and now have tended to universalize their own experience as that of women everywhere. The distinctiveness of these experiences has a

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theological significance, for example in the idea that we are to see ourselves as “humble servants” of God—a point that womanist theologian Jacqueline Grant made. How is it that those who have never had to actually be “humble servants” can say that this is what God calls all people to do?11

A third point, related to the first two, is the explicit recognition of theology as a constructive enterprise. This again is something that is not unique to feminist theology, but it has a particular relevance as it highlights the nature of theology as a human endeavor, not as something handed down from heaven that can only be passed on and not questioned. (I sometimes refer to this as the “hot potato” theory of Tradition: pass it on very quickly without touching it!) My point here is that feminist theology, very much in line with other theological movements of the last fifty years, has made these methodological shifts much more visible simply because of the fact that it includes women as subjects instead of objects of theology. In its self-conscious understanding of who does theology and what sources one draws upon, feminist theology challenges the theology of womanhood that magisterial Roman Catholicism has maintained at least over the last century and indeed all of theological anthropology – the theological topic that used to be called “the doctrine of man.”

In this sense at least, then, feminist theology is a prime example of how one can very definitely argue for a “hermeneutics of rupture,” or in plainer language, that something really did change at Vatican II. The question is whether or not women-centered theologies constitute part of the ongoing tradition of Roman Catholic theology. Before I attempt to argue this point, let me now turn to the “women in the pews,” those for whom the changes of Vatican II and feminism have unquestionably made an impact, producing both joys and hopes as well as griefs and anxieties.

Catholic Women Since Vatican II

One of the pleasures of working on this essay has been the opportunity to read material about women and Vatican II. Carmel McEnroy’s Guests in Their Own House gives a vivid sense of the “atmosphere” for women at the Council. McEnroy describes the experiences of the women “auditors” (“hearers,” in English)—who included both lay women and consecrated religious—who were invited to come to the council to “listen,” similar to the Protestant auditors who were also invited. Although Pope Paul VI was very open to women’s participation, the same could not be said for everyone who participated in the Council. In one instance, a couple of Swiss Guards physically prevented one woman journalist from receiving Communion at the ecumenical liturgy to which journalists were invited (she was the only woman);12 and in another, the French theologian Henri de Lubac commented “Mon Dieu! Have we come to this? Letting in women?”13 Despite these indignities, the women who participated in the Council, particularly the women religious, took the Council very seriously.

Yet, as McEnroy notes, in Walter Abbott’s list of “Important Dates of Vatican II,” the arrival of Protestant auditors is noted, but “the historical event of women coming for the first time ever to a council” is not even mentioned.14 The voices of women religious were not included in the writing of Perfectae Caritatis, the document on the updating of religious communities, and while women were eventually included in the commissions for drafting some of the important documents, such as Gaudium et Spes, they were not allowed to speak publicly.

Since Vatican II, women have become the backbone of the church: in the US, 80% of lay ecclesial ministers are women. And while some scholars argue that feminism is only a North American phenomenon, as does Massimo

13 McEnroy, 100.
Faggioli in his otherwise insightful book on Vatican II, the concerns of women all over the world for a voice in the church counter this observation to indicate that feminism is indeed an international phenomenon. In this last section, I want to identify two issues that I see as central for women in both the last fifty years and in the future: the need to include women's voices as equal participants in the church and a deeper concern for the lived experiences of all women, especially those on the margins of society, which is occupied overwhelmingly by women and children. These issues are at the heart of whether the future holds joy and hope or grief and anxiety.

First is women's voices. As I note above, women's voices were not heard publicly at Vatican II, despite the efforts of the women auditors. Women were seen in St. Peter's, in the third and fourth sessions, but they lacked a say. In the fifty years since the Council, this situation has unfortunately continued. Women are described in official church documents by men—in this sense, women are “seen”—but women ultimately are represented in church governance only by men. This is also the case for women's liturgical voices. Women's voices can be heard in choirs, but women's voices are not officially permitted from pulpits, except as readers, and in this, only in an “extraordinary” capacity—that is to say, women are not admitted even to the minor order of lector. Where the Council called for the full participation of women and men in the church, women have joyfully accepted participation in parishes, seminars, and universities and hoped that their voices would be heard and taken seriously. In many cases, this has happened, which gives life to this hope and joy. Yet women's inability to have a real voice in governance even at the local level, where a pastoral associate can be hired or fired at will, or to have a voice in breaking open the scriptural readings by preaching has led to grief and anxiety. In these ways, the promise of women's full participation in the church has not been fulfilled.

The situation of the Vatican investigation of the LCWR is a case in point. One of the main concerns of the Vatican statement was that women religious were not, in the Vatican's view, fully supportive of the bishops who, the document notes, “are the Church's authentic teachers of faith and morals.” Women religious, the document argued, did not promote the Church's “biblical view of family life and human sexuality . . . in a way that promoted Church teaching.” This is a very strong statement and needs to be taken quite seriously. But, as a number of women religious commented, the approach that they have taken is not presenting themselves as “official teachers” but rather as those who minister to those in need of care and support, such as women facing crisis pregnancies, those in same-sex relationships who feel alienated from the church, street children, immigrants, and migrant workers. When women religious went on record as supporting the Affordable Care Act, they were speaking in their own voices, from their own perspectives: they saw in the legislation the potential for caring for many more people than current insurance practices permit. This was not well-received by the US Catholic bishops, who opposed the legislation. So the issue of women's voices raises the question whether all must speak with the same voice or whether Catholic teaching might even be a chorus, with many different voices coming together.

My second point is a deeper concern for the lived experiences of all women, especially those on the margins. As I noted earlier, it is sometimes said that “feminist” concerns are mostly the concerns of first-world, white, and privileged women. I think this can be a fair criticism: a focus on women's ordination, for example, may not be at the top of the list for women worldwide. But the concerns of poor women and children, as we witnessed this summer with the “Nuns on the Bus” and their critique of the proposed Ryan budget, are also not confined to the United States alone! As my friend and colleague Anne Patrick put it in an article about Gaudium et Spes nearly twenty-five years ago, the fact that GS “failed to mention rape or domestic violence, both of which are suffered frequently by women worldwide, in its list of crimes against life and human integrity and dignity,” is sadly not surprising, given

15 Faggioli, 59.
17 “Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Council of Women Religious.”
the document’s somewhat unrealistic view of women as having achieved “equity with men before the law and in
fact.”18 (This in 1965!) My point is that the maternal and subordinate view of women that continues to predominate
in church teaching is also genuinely harmful to women, especially for those women who live in contexts where
their full human dignity is not honored. Let me be clear: I do note, and applaud, the church’s continued insistence
on women’s full humanity and equality before God. I am not questioning this and wish that it were taken more
seriously by churches, governments, and societies. It is rather that the concrete conditions of women’s lives and,
in some cases, the surrounding cultures make following church teachings on artificial contraception, for example,
actually dangerous to women’s lives. Melissa Browning points out in her dissertation that married Tanzanian
women are at a much higher risk for contracting HIV than their single women counterparts since single women
are not caught up in the social roles expected of married couples.19 Emphasizing women’s maternal roles and their
fundamentally “responsive” relationship with men can be dangerous for women because this fails to embody a
corresponding critique of men’s roles and a realistic assessment of the lived conditions of people's lives. Thus there
is a rhetoric of equality and of human dignity that is qualified by the church’s emphasis on women’s maternal and
responsive natures.

Earlier this year, one of my former students, now a faculty member at another Catholic university, gave a presenta-
tion at the CTSA Annual Convention at a panel discussion I had arranged called “Generations Reflect on Sacro-
sanctum concilium,” the Vatican constitution on the Liturgy. In her remarks, she shared her agonizing over whether
or not she should baptize her daughter into the Catholic Church. As a Catholic and as a feminist, she was critical
of the emphasis on obedience that she found predominant in official discourse on Catholic life and mission and
how, as she put it, the “powers of the imagination are usurped” by the hegemonic power of the hierarchy.20 It was a
powerful presentation that left the audience initially speechless. And in her February article in America
color=000000>magazine, Sister Patricia Wittberg, a sociologist at Indiana University, notes that young women are “opting out” of the church
and that “[n]one of the millennial Catholic women in the survey expressed complete confidence in churches and
religious organizations.”21 In short, the promises of Vatican II have borne fruit in many ways, but some have also
withered on the vine as the “true meaning” of the Council continues to be a topic of debate.

Conclusion

I have suggested here that while there has been much progress for women in the Catholic Church since the opening
of the Second Vatican Council fifty years ago, the official Roman Catholic theology of womanhood has remained
remarkably unchanged. It has been developed into a theology of complementarity, particularly in Pope John Paul
II’s “Theology of the Body,” but this theology still sees women primarily as mothers and as partners who respond to
the leadership and initiative of God and of men. While there is an admirable concern for human dignity and
equality before God, this theology has taken little account of women’s own understandings of their experiences
and is remarkably uncomfortable with women’s voices, especially when they are not in unison with the hierarchy.
When women’s own efforts to articulate a vision of God, humanity, and the world are critical of traditional formu-
lations and open up new ways of talking about God, they are labeled as “radical feminists” and sometimes subject
to disciplinary action. The “women in the pews” who are dedicated to the church, its sacramental approach to life,

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19 Melissa D. Browning, Patriarchy, Christianity and the HIV/AIDS African Epidemic: Rethinking Christian Marriage in Light of the Expe-
20 For a summary of this session, see Patricia Beattie Jung, “Generations Respond to Sacrosanctum Concilium 50 Years Later,” CTSA
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its social teaching, and its rich history find themselves drawn both by this rich tradition as well as by the compelling vision of women that feminist theologies offer. Granted, there are those who find the maternal and receptive picture of womanhood to be compelling; I think it is clear that I do not count myself among these, and my experience lecturing in parishes and teaching young women and men for over thirty years is that most of these women do not either.

The women who have become theologians over the last fifty years were and are inspired by the vision of Vatican II and, I argue, are practicing their craft very much in accord with the spirit of Vatican II. These theologies are inspired by a love of God and of the church. They are a vision of a more just and spirit-filled world that hears the griefs and anxieties of women, as well as men, with deep concern and seeks to act in ways that will bring them joy and hope.

Toward the end of the Pastoral Constitution, whose words inspired the title of this essay, there is a wonderful section that sums up what I understand that Council Spirit to embody:

Such a mission requires in the first place that we foster within the Church herself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, through the full recognition of lawful diversity. Thus all those who compose the one People of God, both pastors and the general faithful, can engage in dialogue with ever abounding fruitfulness. For the bonds which unite the faithful are mightier than anything dividing them. Hence, let there be unity in what is necessary; freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case (GS 92).

The theologies articulated by women over the past fifty years have contributed immensely to the ever-increasing diversity of the Church and have, I would argue, expanded our vision of the beauty and mystery of our faith. My hope is that in another fifty years, when others will celebrate the centenary of this Council, that its vision will be celebrated by women and men who share power and service, engage in fruitful dialogue, and attend courageously to the griefs and anxieties of all of those who need joy and hope.