



Ordination of Catholic Women

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From: Marie Louise Uhr

Re: Papal Obituary

Comments I might make:

All deaths bring mixed feelings, and this one probably no exception, but I would have to admit that the basic feeling would be one of relief. This long and complex papacy has not, I believe, been good for women.

John Paul II's attitude to women is basically patriarchal; through all his praise of women and his dissertations on women's dignity and full humanity, I still hear a biological determinism that says that women are principally mothers (a sub-set of being human, even if divided into biological and spiritual mothers). This, as I understand him, limits us in a way that being fathers does not limit men.

The women he upheld is the Mother Teresa (who serves) and not the Teresa Kane (who challenges). All this is supported by a no-doubt deeply held but to me quite scary devotion to his image of Mary.

Secondly, I find it scary that he seemed to believe that alone and unaided he could decide issues of great importance to us all, and ignore his own biblical scholars, and the most renowned of theologians. Collegiality of bishops was obliterated effectively; theologians were silenced; freedom of expression banished. Effectively it has been something close to a totalitarian regime. And all to bring about his vision of heaven on earth - which for many came close to hell on earth.

I would hope that the next papacy would allow the church to look openly at the question of the ordination of women, and of course at other critical questions such as the questions of contraception, of married priests (male and female); hope too for renewed expression of open theology and scriptural studies. Hope, above all perhaps, for what Rahner describes as a pope who could say 'I made a mistake; we were wrong about that; let's try it this way for a while etc'.

We need, I believe, another John XXIII, someone who trusts humanity and believes in basic goodness.