

1. **The Church does not ordain women because *Jesus chose no women to be apostles*:**

- Jesus, one **person** who is *both* true GOD and true man, **knew what he was doing**.
- He was supremely **free from cultural conditioning**; there are no circumstances under which He allowed other people's opinions to sway Him from his purposes.
- He was **sinless** (Heb 4:15). He was completely free from "male chauvinism."
- If He had wanted **women apostles** (the predecessors of today's **bishops**), He would have chosen women to be among the twelve.
- **He did not chose women to be apostles, therefore we cannot choose women to be bishops** (CCC, 1577; *priesthood* and *diaconate* are later developments of the gift of apostleship). This fact is part of the **deposit of faith** (*the body of revelation given to the apostles*) and cannot be altered.

2. **Understanding why this makes sense is a separate, and speculative issue.** There are no sayings of Jesus associated with this question; there is just **the fact that all 12 apostles were men**. He may have chosen males to **represent His own masculine humanity** and/or to **symbolize in a special way a particular aspect of the Trinity**. My guess is that God loves the differences between men and women as much as we do and that the differences are spiritual as well as psychic and physical. It is a form of **Manichaeism** (a third-century, **Gnostic** heresy) to say that **the body makes no difference to the soul**.

3. **Women are not harmed by a male priesthood.** I am *not* denying that priests have, like Judas, betrayed Jesus in every age and have sinned against Him and against His People. That is a sad, and quite separate fact. Priests are not automatically holy; priests are not automatically holier than laity; priests are not first-class citizens of the Kingdom to the detriment of everyone else. Priests are commissioned to **play a special role** so that everyone, priest and laity alike, can **receive the sacraments instituted by Jesus**.

The *special role* priests play is a gift from Jesus to the whole body of believers. The crucial question for each believer is whether we use that gift to grow in love for GOD and for each other. **Love is what makes the difference between first-class citizens in the Kingdom and everyone else**. Not all priests are loving; not all loving people are priests. **All Christians** are called to love God and love their neighbor.

4. **"Equal" does not mean "identical."** Equality is a *term of measurement*, and **all measurements require specification of units**. A pound of feathers is equal to a pound of gold in *weight*, but not identical in *value*--the pound of gold would be useless as pillow and the feathers would be useless for making rings. I am Serena William's equal in the eyes of the law--we have exactly the same civil rights--but I am not fit to tie her Nikes. All men and women, ordained or not, born or unborn, are of **equal worth** to God. God creates each person in their mother's womb. God, the Son, died for all (Rom 5:18). We all have an **equal opportunity to love** God in return, for love is measured not by our public roles but by the **gift of self**: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ... Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22:37-39). **We exercise our common priesthood through self-sacrifice**, imitating Jesus, our only High Priest, Who sacrificed Himself for love of us.

Just as a male and female play different roles in bringing a child into being, so the ordained and unordained play different *roles* in rendering Jesus present in the Eucharist. Father and mother are **equally, but not identically**, parents of the child. The ordained and unordained are **equally, but not identically**, recipients of the love of GOD made present in the Eucharist--we all receive Jesus. **The ordained do NOT receive more of Jesus than the unordained**.

This does not mean that priests are unimportant. **If we do not honor men for laying down their lives for the service of Jesus and His Body, we will not have many men willing to make the sacrifice**. St. Paul says that the apostle has a right to expect support from the ministry (I Cor 9:3-12). To motivate men to serve in this role, we must make it a rewarding way of life. **(The very same principles apply to religious life: monks, nuns, brothers, sisters, etc.)** Giving honor to priests and religious does not rob anyone else of the honor which they deserve for following the vocation GOD has given them. We must also honor all who use their sexual powers appropriately before, during and after married life, all who serve the poor, all who suffer innocently, and all who lead others to GOD through their faith, hope and love.

As Paul says, there are many different parts in the body (I Cor 12:14-26). The eye does not rob the hand of glory, nor do priests rob the laity of glory. **We are all one in Jesus, even though we are not the same**.

5. **No one has a right to be ordained a deacon, a priest, or a bishop** (CCC, 1578). The priesthood is not a piece of property, nor is it designed to benefit the person who receives this commission. **The powers of the priesthood come from Jesus and belong to His Body**, not to the individuals who act as "outward signs" of His invisible presence. A priest who exercises the priesthood so as to build himself up at the expense of the Body will be treated as he deserves: "it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be cast into a lake of burning fire" (Mt 18:6). **To ordain women on a theory of "property rights" would be to ordain a mistake**. If the theory were true, ordination of women would simply expand the "propertied class," not eliminate it.