

Woman's Gifts

October 27, 2007

Confronted with the proposition that women should not step forth in public in any such way as to suggest that they have authority over men, a reader of these "Comments" of two weeks ago reasonably asked, alongside what women should not do, what should they do?

The prime principle involved is that creatures of God are created to achieve their perfection by acting in accordance with their nature: Now creatures without reason cannot choose to act otherwise, but human beings have reason, and so they must choose to act in accordance with their nature. The key question then becomes, how do the observably different and complementary natures of man and woman essentially differ?

Scripture, the Word of God, tells us that woman was created to be the helpmate of man (Genesis II,10). Commenting upon this text, St. Thomas Aquinas (Ia, 92, 1) says that she was created to help him in the engendering of children, because in any other work man could be better helped by another man. St. Paul (also the Word of God) similarly says that woman will be saved by childbearing (I Tim. II,16).

Here is the key to woman's nature as woman: she is designed to be a mother. Do we not observe, and does not St. Thomas Aquinas suggest, that in everything involved in motherhood – which is no less than the future of the human race – she is man's superior, whereas in everything else she is his inferior?

All kinds of conclusions follow, but in answer to the reader's question, surely whatever a woman may by today's circumstances be enabled or obliged to do, she must, if she wishes to be happy by living in accordance with her God-given nature, somehow, intelligently, do it in a motherly way. Teaching

within a private domestic framework, or true nursing, present in this respect no problem. On the contrary, making herself into a soldier, lawyer, pilot, politician, etc., etc., presents a serious problem.

Mother of God, we beg of you, inspire and protect womanhood!

Kyrie eleison.