

# THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, RECATHOLICIZATION AND GENDER HIERARCHY

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*Abstract* Contemporary processes of social restructuring (particularly in the postsocialist societies) show the tendency of simultaneous revitalization of church activities and of repatriarchalization. Regarding the modern aims of recatholicization, the recognizing of the special role of the Catholic Church concerning gender relationships is undoubtedly justified.

*The author discusses the basic Christian and Catholic explanations of special gendered personal identity included in the postconciliar official documents. She reveals the symbolic construction of women's marginal and subordinate status. Particular attention is devoted to women's marginal and subordinate status. Particular attention is devoted to women's dignity. The author's analysis of the "Apostolic Letter on the Dignity of Woman" (Mulieris Dignitatem, 1988) by Pope John Paul II provides a basis for revealing the continuity of interpretations regarding the "proper" role of women in this contemporary document and those traditional explanations which have contributed to the petrification of androcentric culture. Finally, the author discusses the results of the latest empirical investigations into gendered secularization in contemporary Slovenian society.*

Catholic Church, religious revitalization, gender relationships, subordination of women

## 1. Introduction

In the eighties, secularization increased in all Western European countries apart from Italy. This process is indicated by the decline in church attendance and connected with increased individual autonomy and decreased social control over participation in religious activities by the church. Furthermore, regarding the content of religious beliefs, the traditional beliefs (such as the existence of hell, the Devil, heaven) weakened significantly. Although the church<sup>1</sup> no longer represents the most important and powerful total social institution providing sense and legitimation of reality, it is still worth of cognitive interest for the following reasons.

On the one hand, the tendency of revitalization of church activity in the restructuring processes is visible particularly in some Eastern and Southern European postsocialist countries. The renewal and reentrance of the church into the public sphere are often justified by its

special role in the ensuring of morality and in the reintroducing of the "proper" code of ethics. On the other hand, European culture and its patterns of behaviour are deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian religious definitions of reality. The understanding of various contemporary changes of value orientations and of practical activities is only possible by taking into account this very heritage.

In spite of cultural pluralism, a common feature still integrates the European societies - the prevalent ("traditional") androcentric culture with gender hierarchy consisting of male dominance and the subordinated social position of women.<sup>2</sup> As core institutions of social regulation, churches through the centuries have also been the key factors in the perpetuation of the sexist tradition. In these processes women (as mothers) were assigned the role of mass dissemination and religious education. Respecting the historically verified and stable misogynistic orientation of all religions and churches, the issue of women's "traditional" greater religiosity and church attendance (reaffirmed also by the newest empirical evidence) seems to be doubtlessly justified.

The aim of this article is to elucidate some key features of the symbolic construction of women's marginal status, which are contained in the basic theological explanations and interpretations of the Catholic Church. Particular cognitive interest is devoted to the newest official documents shaped by the Catholic Church. Particular attention will be directed to the definitions of the proper role of women contained in the "Apostolic Letter on the Dignity of Women". The presence of religious orientation and its interpenetration into the everyday life will be presented by the case of contemporary Slovenian society - which is faced with some important basic elements of the crumbling androcentrism.

## 2. Basic assumptions

The analysing of the principal features of defining social gender roles in the Christian and Catholic doctrine is based on the following assumptions:

a) The human need for holiness does not derive from the essence of the world per se, but is constructed and reproduced as a consequence of cultural defining and of the peculiarity of the meaning structure in the concrete diachronic social environment.

b) Religiosity is not inborn, but acquired through the process of internalization of basic values and definitions derived from religious doctrine. It is shaped by the respecting of religious rules, patterns and sanctions. In recent time, the decline of strong social control over religious orientation performed by the church in the past has been shifted from the social institutional level to the individual one.

c) Women are not by their nature inclined to religious affiliation. This characteristic can be seen as a consequence of special determinants affecting the shaping of their personal identity and as an index of their multidimensionally subordinated social position. The histori-

cally prevalent rules which constitute women's identity, determine the key female features in such a way that they necessary lead to a dependent, concentrated emotional human being performing assistant's role only; the woman is a "Ma"ngelwesen", a defective person in comparison with the concentrated rational male being. Women's identity and their social role are defined as opposed to men and expressed through the answers to the questions of their usefulness - "what are women for" (Moller Okin, 1980: 10) and their appartenance (as an object) - "whose is it" (Clough, 1987: 15).

d) The reduction of the human being to the unique and primarily moral being contained in religious doctrine diverts attention from real life circumstances and enables the shaping of a (practically) unlimited space of moral rewards and spiritual balancing. This reduction functions as an instrument for the substitution of earthly disadvantages. The gender inequality can be corrected and abolished in this way as well.

### 3. The Catholic Church and gender hierarchy

The social function of the Catholic Church as a totally oriented regulative institution affecting the basic patterns of interactions was founded on the Christian religious explanations. Similar to other theological interpretations (and partially also to secularized, "scientific" interpretations), Christians are characterised by some features contributing to their powerfulness and attractiveness.

The key feature of these interpretations is the close relation between the historically testable (limited) space and the eternal (unlimited) one, though in a hierarchical way. The transcendental sphere is designated by higher value per se. An absolutely necessary interconditioning of these two spheres focuses on the demand for the respect for a two-fold hierarchy: a) hierarchy of spheres within the interpretation, and b) class and gender hierarchy within concrete everyday life. The realizations of empirically experienced deprivations (or privileges) sub specie historiae are corrected (rewarded or punished) sub specie aeternitatis by the conversion of positions: the bearers of disadvantageous positions attain privileged positions, and vice-versa.

The possibility of dynamic jumping from one level to the other, from the limited to the unlimited space, offers exceptionally attractive definitions with embedded practical potentials. The obligatory respecting of rules and patterns of gendered activity is assured by their rooting within the eternal (higher) sphere. The rejecting of this hierarchic dualistic order and the application of uniform measures for the evaluation of both spheres (either earthly or eternal) destroys the harmony of interpretations and the harmonic hierarchic division of human (gendered) duties and rights. For instance, patterns of behaviour, existing per definitionem within the eternal sphere (e.g. equality) would counterproductively affect the makers and bearers of practical regulation, if earthly people tried to realise them within attainable human relationships.<sup>3</sup>

By such interpretation the shortages regarding (limited) earthly resources can be changed into moral advantages. Since the majority is faced with (gendered) shortages (and since the bearers of privileged positions are hardly ever discontented), the role of proper (as well as gendered) ethics (rooted within the corrective sphere) is of the highest importance. The bearers of moral rewarding use the degree of instrumentalization as a measure of moral assessment, obligatory for the subordinated.

Apart from dualism, reductionism is the second feature of the theological explanations and their defining of the subordinate position of women. The reductionist capturing of empirically testable space is simultaneously connected with the extension on the level of explanation. Typical in this sense is the reduction or erasing of negative parts of activity on the one hand, and the emphasizing and enlarging of positive parts on the other. The result of such reality construction is an attractive image of everyday life, expressed through the beautification of the status of a married woman and/or of a family.

The exclusion of negative components of necessary everyday activities and the inclusion and extension of positive (nice) components was possible only by the application of a dualistic approach. Exactly this kind of interpretative construction of social reality includes the potentials of the continuous shaping of the experienced feeling of fear and imperfection by concrete people. Regarding the social position of the majority of women, this feeling has been a necessary precondition for their obedience and meekness.

This orientation is basically and extremely determined already in the very prevalent ideal image of women - the Virgin Mary.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the factual burdening of women, we can hardly be surprised by the first feature of the positive image for women's identification: love of suffering. Similarly, other characteristics of the Virgin Mary (e.g. mercy, readiness to help all in need) represent the necessary earthly features rising from the dependent basic position of women.

Connected with the notion of immaculate conception (as an expression of hostility towards sexuality, a constant orientation of the Catholic Church in general, Ranke-Heinemann, 1992), continuously evoking a feeling of imperfection, these designations have contributed to the strengthening of social regularity as well as to the devaluation of the primary proper role of women in general. The dualistic designation of the possible role of women (the Virgin Mary: sexually unbridled and untamed sinner) has served as a basic spiritual means for the ("bridling") shaping of proper patterns of women which were supported especially by the fetishization of motherhood and ("holy") marriage.

The sacramental nature of marriage can be seen as a corner-stone of the direct influence of Catholic Church on women, particularly associated with the social recognition of "proper" family (the only basis is marriage!). By the sacramentalization of marriage, Church control over biosocial reproduction has been shaped. This definition of marriage justifies the contemporary endeavours of the Church to participate (i.e. dominate) in the decision making

of concrete conditions of motherhood, beginning with abortion rights. The emphasis of the Church as the guardian of morality additionally strengthens the public role of the Catholic Church.

The acceptance of the role of the mother as the "Master's Maid" has been through various pre-Council interpretations the only normal and positive moral orientation of women, secured by hard negative sanctions. In spite of the change initiated by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, these traditional misogynistic attitudes prevail in the present-day official documents of the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup> The Apostolic Letter on the Dignity of Woman ("Mulieris Dignitatem") by Pope John Paul II, published at the end of Mary's Year - September 30, 1988 (1989) can be considered the newest expression of such orientation par excellence.

In the introduction, Pope John Paul II stresses that the letter represents the first document bringing the "wholistic treatment of one of the signs of the time - the dignity, position and beauties of woman" (1989: 3) being initiated by challenges resulting from the "implementation of multidimensional equality and equity of the woman in the society" and by "many wrong images which do not recognize the peculiarities of each human person, also that of the woman in the relation to man and vice-versa". According to John Paul II, this Letter should not be a narrow dealing with woman's dignity, but a broader one, oriented to the ontological question of the very essence of human being, on the "meaning of the relation between man and woman, on how to argue the dignity of human being - man and woman" (ibidem).

The woman's nature is defined by a particular mysterious connection with God ("woman - God's Mother" is in the "core of salvation history" - 1989: 8), based on the beliefs in the unalienable fact of the "God-likeness of human being, man and woman" and in the existence of human being as "a being for other". Woman enters her specific activity and special association with God as a mother (Mary), the mother of the "Son of the Highest", after her free decision expressed by "fiat".

The core of the explanation of woman's proper identity represents the designation of the primary role of women as "theotokos" (mother), acting with respect according to the pattern of a "Merciful Master's Maid" (Pope John Paul II, 1989: 10) and serving the highest purposes. Exactly this function (bearing children, caring for them and others in need) justifies the dependent position of women and the acceptance of various dominance. Mary appears as an instrument of God (of which she is obviously aware), but this very position is abolished by her participation in salvation history. Similarly, by this interpretation the dominant position of God is also erased, for he "serves" only.

The subordinated role of woman as mother is additionally justified by referring to the "original sin". "He will dominate you!" is the basic imperative in the common relationship - "entity of two", where the dignity of "man and woman as persons is expressed" (1989: 19). The domination over woman's is softened by the moral imperative evoked by the respecting of "woman's particularity" and by the repeated recommendations (Sollvorstellungen) to men con-

cerning their respect of woman's greater burdening by the "common parenthood". Finally, Pope John Paul II warns that "no plan for attainment of equality between man and woman" can be realized if the "special wealth of the woman" is not fully respected (1989: 35).

Apparently generously, John Paul II stresses the eventual negative consequences of the "masculinization" of women - "loss of essential wealth", and he offers women a compensation by stressing their "personal capacities which are certainly not smaller than those of men" (1989: 21). Constant stressing of (male-defined) peculiarities of women without any doubt can contribute to the shaping of the disequilibriated identity of contemporary woman.

Actually, by this explanation all earthly existing modes and stages of dominance are abolished, for all (empirically capturable) masters are only "servants" of the Highest Master. Women's subordinated and second-rate (factual) position becomes in this way irrelevant and abolished. Even more, through the notion of an unavoidable God-resemblance (as a key condition for the attainment of moral rewards in general), the position of women as mere assistants is additionally strengthened.

The explanations in the Apostolic Letter are not oriented towards the historical treatment of determinants of dignity. It remains on the safe level of general and universal characteristics of mysterious motherhood. To be more persuasive and attractive, the notions of individual cases and stereotypical statements are added. Historical components are, as in the past, excluded from these newest explanations. But, as earlier and always, this mode of explanation is intended for the shaping of women's proper identity within society. Regarding the Apostolic Letter on the Dignity of Woman we can consider that the exclusion of the historical component in the explanation is a necessary condition for the inclusion of these "proper" definitions into the concrete shaping of one-dimensional personal identity of the woman (the unique "wealth").

The Apostolic Letter contains implicit or explicit suggestions regarding the improvement of (also recognized in the Letter) worse position of women. The transition from a powerless to a powerful position comes only through the "proper explanations" of special femininity and by the support of the "proper" institution - the Catholic Church.

We can suppose that such a limitation of meaningful women's activity only to motherhood influences - at least - the growing of a feeling of guilt in the majority of women working outside their home. Doubtless, this feeling can be seen as an inner obstacle in the forming of self-confidence and women's self-image (at least more adequate to the attained degree of economic independence) as well as the readiness to transform their disagreeable experiences into explicit interests.

It spite of a decrease in religious value orientation among women in the second part of the 20th century, the attitudes of the Catholic Church are not a matter to be pushed to the outskirts of the past. The attention given the Catholic doctrine derives also from the recognition that Church

activities are in general (because of the limiting of its public activities) mainly oriented to the family - traditionally reserved for women. According to the results of various investigations, the overburdening of women with the family is exactly the key obstacle in the realization of equal opportunity's aims in present European societies.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4. Gendered secularization in Slovenia

The historical background of secularization in the second part of the 20th century presents a social community<sup>7</sup> determined mainly by the powerful Catholic Church. After the superseding of the reformation in the second part of the 16th century, the development of the Slovenian people continued under the rigorous guidance of the Catholic Church until the end of WW II. Exclusivist Catholicism has been the prevalent basic value orientation, assured by all available means of manipulation and domination. The androcentric advocating of gender hierarchy in all spheres has been an inseparable element of the "proper" Catholic regulation of life.

Challenged by various expressions of "social evil" (increased intensity of the struggle for a greater degree of social and also gender equality) particularly at the end of the 19th century, the Catholic Church empowered its activities against this social danger (from the fierce stigmatization of otherness to the strengthening of its own proper doctrine). Within the dissemination of the unique properness of social order (performed particularly by the immense activity of the Leo-Society) a restrengthening of the key definitions and rules concerning the preservation of male-dominated culture also occurred. These endeavours became especially active with the emergence of feminist organisations<sup>8</sup> and their demands for the abolition of discrimination against women.

Apart from the comprehensive direct activities of the Catholic Church, "proper" science has contributed to the acceptability of the existing world order in which the Church played a most important role. This very function was realized by the prevalent catholic sociology from the end of the 19th century to the end of WW II. Its explanations of human society were supposed to contribute to the harmonization of society in general, and to peaceful relations between genders. By these explanations, rooted in the Thomistic doctrine, the "proper" answers regarding the burning demands of equal rights (in the field of economy, politics, education) for both genders were constructed. By reason of this very pragmatic background a special treatment of women (and not "human beings" in general) in sociological disputes can be understood.

These explanations have been justifying the male authority from the family to the state and even in heaven by stressing the "natural" role of the woman as mother and housewife with specific basic personal characteristics (to be obedient, passionate, modest, suffering, awe-stricken). The constant advocacy of women's domestication also presented the basis for the evaluation of women's entrance into the public sphere. Women's public activity was allowed only if they were aware and prepared to accept their primary "natural" role. In this way, the

notion of the material and moral overburdening of women who are active also outside the home has been established as a self-evident (i.e. natural) fact (Jogan, 1990). This very notion (supported by the total organizing of everyday life) presents the basic source for the reproduction of gender inequality in contemporary society.

The past endeavours of the Catholic Church in Slovenia were directed to the shaping and preservation of the Slovenian people as Catholics. There was a tendency to equate religious orientation with the national one, in spite of a general prevalently non-national orientation of the top representatives of the Church (expressed particularly in some important moments of history, for example the collaboration of the official Church with the occupying forces during WW II).<sup>9</sup>

Religious freedom in Slovenia was first declared in the Constitution in 1946. The Factual diminution of the Church's role in the public sphere was determined by its separation from the state, by the confiscation of its (vast) properties and by the limitation of the Church's activity to the private sphere (traditionally designated as the "woman's kingdom").

Since WW II, the Catholic Church in Slovenia has never been hindered in the performance of its sacramental rites and of its religious education. In the secular public schools an atheistic, not antitheistic, orientation has been prevalent. The religious pupils have not been neglected (Kerševan, 1984: 286); according to empirical investigations in the seventies and eighties<sup>10</sup>, only a negligible portion of pupils experienced neglect.

The official leadership of the Catholic Church has changed its attitude towards the secular state (headed by the Communist Party) from open hostility (soon after WW II) to the acceptance of a "new reality". In spite of this turn, the following continuous tendencies have been obvious in the Church's activities, especially in their mass media (print): uninterrupted stigmatization of unbeliever (as factually defective human beings), the dissemination of images that believers represent a special moral elite, the advocacy of pronatalistic policy performed particularly by the defamation and rejection of opportunities (guaranteed by the Constitution) for the free decision to bear children. The key characteristic of the latter has been a continuous reduction of all contraceptive practices, solely to abortion. In this way, the basis for the accusations (as deviant and criminal) of various secular endeavours and measures that provided woman greater autonomy and control over their reproductive behaviour has been (re)established.

In the sixties, Church activity was directed primarily towards young people; in the seventies the emphasis was shifted to the parents as well. In the eighties, the (indirect) stimulation for the organizing of believers to take part in the public (policy) sphere were strengthened, particularly by the stressing of the special role of "believers as believers" in public life (Kerševan, 1984: 312).

In the last few years, connected with the reestablishment of a multiparty system, the Catholic Church has been trying to occupy an important position in public life. The newest endeav-



ours are usually justified by an unavoidable role of the Church in the "returning" of proper morality into public and private life: the Church is supposed to be a unique source and pledge for the reestablishment of morality. The "morality vacuum" pointed to by the Church in the last half-century in the need to return to morality could be attractive at least for the people "who are in search of their path".

Since 1945, equal rights for women and men have been assured in all fields of public and private spheres by the legal order. Apart from this necessary condition for the attainment of equal opportunities various institutional means (particularly services) have been constructed. In this way, factual circumstances advantageous to greater freedom in general and stimulating the beginning of gender equalization have gradually increased. Within this social context the indices of (gendered) secularization can be understood.

The degree of secularization - including sensitivity to gender differences - will be measured with the indicators used in the latest research in the EC (Halman and Ester, 1992): religiosity, church involvement, confidence in the church and religious orthodoxy. The following presentation is based on the results of longitudinal investigations on a representative sample<sup>11</sup> of the adult Slovenian population (Roter, 1982: 52; Toš, 1992; Toš, 1993).

a) From the end of the sixties to the beginning of the eighties, the religiosity of adult Slovenian people on average decreased, but in the eighties and at the beginning of the nineties (up to 1993) it increased again. Since the Catholic religious orientation is the prevalent one this means the revitalization of Catholic religiosity. Measured by self-definition, the share designated as "being religious" (from consistent religious devoutness to non-devoutness) decreased from 67.8% (in 1968) to 45.3% (in 1978) and then it increased again to 60.8% (in 1993).

The religious orientation is obviously unequally distributed by gender in spite of the general decline and the newest revitalization of religiosity. Up to now, women have continuously been more religious than men. For example, in 1978 39% of men and 52% of women reported themselves as being religious; in 1993 the respective shares are 57.6% and 63.7%. The greater religiosity of women can doubtlessly be explained by the relatively high degree of religious education: in 1991 81.4% of all adult persons had Catholic education. Research at the beginning of the eighties (Jogan, 1986) shows a greater educational compulsion over girls particularly in the families of believers. Since public education has not been religiously oriented, gendered intragenerational secularization occurred. Because the gender differences at the level of education are not significant (both girls and boys were equally exposed to religious education), the greater religiosity of adult women can be explained by more rigorous family sanctions and lower degree of freedom permitted to girls (very well known features of gendered education in general).

According to the 1993 data, women represent an evident majority (56.4%) of the total group of religious population; within the subgroup of core believers (the share of this category amounts to 13% of all adult respondents) they represent as much as 71.1% of the total. In

the category of unbelievers (who represent 23.2% of all respondents) there are no significant differences as regards gender.

The higher degree of religiosity among women can also be seen from other indicators. For example, according to 1991 data, women make up 59.4% of the category of those who believe in God without any doubt (the share of this category amounts to 20.9% of the total number of adult respondents). The same gender distribution is also shown in the category of those who feel themselves very near to God. Similarly, the higher degree of religiosity among women is expressed by the statements on the importance of God in one's life: in 1992 for 38.1% of all women and for 30% of all men God is important in their life. The differences between gender in the last indicator are seen particularly at the extremes: only 9.9% of all men answered that God is very important, while for 30.8% of men God is "not at all important"; the respective shares for women are 16.4% and 22.6%. More women than men get strength and a sense of order in life from God (religion) as well (the agreement with the statement "only the existence of God makes life sense is expressed by 61.6% of all women and only by 38.4% of all men in the 1992 survey).

b) Regarding the data on Church involvement in 1992, a decline with regard to religiosity can be seen. Differences between genders are lower, though women represent the majority of churchgoing people. For example, in the category of those who attend regular Church activities more than once a month (22.7% of all respondents) in 1992, the share of women amounts to 60%. A comparison of the portion of regularly active Church members in Slovenia (1992) as a whole with those of other European societies enables the conclusion that Slovenian people are not very far from the countries with the lowest degree of regular Church attendance (e.g. Denmark and France with respective shares of 11% and 17% in 1990 - Halman and Ester, 1992: 22).

The participation in other Church activities is relatively low (in 1991 64% of respondents declared that they never participate and the differences between gender are low: 61.1% of female and 67.1% of male respondents) and limited to the slight category of core members with an obvious majority of woman (the share of those who participate in other activities more than once a month amounts to 4.4% of all respondents).

c) Respecting the statements on the Church's public role, the majority of Slovenian adults reject the possibility of its strengthening. For example, in 1991 the share of those who did not support Church's involvement into politic, amounted to 76.6% of all respondents and is balanced by gender. Confidence in the Church as the highest judge in moral issues was low: only one - gender balanced - fifth (21.9%) of all respondents in 1991 considered God's plan as the source of morality. On the other hand, 61.4% of all respondents (without significant gender differences) thought that they ought to respect societally produced ethical principles.

d) Finally, some key elements of contents of beliefs can be elucidated. Are Slovenian people prevalently traditionally oriented? Or, what is the degree of acceptance of traditional Catholic beliefs?

In 1991 10% of all respondents still believe in the certain existence of life after death (almost balanced by gender), and 18.7% (with an obvious majority of women) believe that this type of life is likely to exist. The certain existence of the Devil is believed by 5.7% (with nearly equal distribution by gender) and the probable existence by 12.7% (with an apparent majority of women) of all respondents. Similar distribution by gender is obvious in the categories of those who believe in the certain (8.0%) or probable (19.4%) existence of heaven as well as hell (6.9% and 16.6%). On the basis of these data, the conclusion that the traditional set of beliefs has been exposed to erosion seems to be justified. This process has been stronger in men.

## 5. Concluding remarks

According to the available empirical evidence, in Slovenia secularization has doubtlessly become an unseparable ingredient of everyday life.<sup>12</sup> In spite of a greater degree of religiosity, Church attendance and traditional beliefs among women, they mostly accept secular patterns of behaviour as a basis for their own activities (e.g. religiosity does not significantly hinder women's decisions for divorce). This means that the fragmentation, the selecting of moral values and norms *a la carte* from religious and secular spheres has become the usual way of life.

With regard to this social context, the effects of the endeavours of recatholicization (expressed in a traditional way) could lead also to the strengthening of secularization. This is only one alternative for future development. It has been tested, for example, through the participation of women in the struggle for the acquired social rights - extremely so in the defence of the (Constitutional) right of free choice in bearing children, including free choice of contraception and abortion in 1991.

## NOTES

1. In spite of the increased pluralism of churches in Europe, caused also by the international migrations after the World War II, the Catholic Church remains the most important church. In the last few years, the endeavours of the strengthening of its key role are obvious, especially by the repeated advocacy of the need of the recatholicization. The realization of this aim should be assisted also by the European travels of Pope John Paul II (e.g. Scandinavian tour in 1989).

2. Whereas in the societies within the EC and in Scandinavian countries serious endeavours of depatriarchalization in all social spheres have been initiated, supported and controlled by the most influential social bodies, in Eastern postsocialist societies the tendency of repatriarchalization is strongly expressed. In the latter societies two parallel tendencies can be observed: repatriarchalization and revitalization of church activity in the public sphere. These tendencies are neither weak nor passing. In some countries, they have been extremely clearly expressed, in the abortion disputes for example.

3. Similarly the earthly unavoidable inequality, settled into the eternal sphere, would also be destructive to earthly regulation and could initiate certain endeavours leading to changes. This transfer would decompose the effects of dualistic defining, i.e. the creation of hope. However, it is exactly the

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production of hope that necessarily needs the dualism of spheres and their mutual connection. The production of hope contributes to the correction and/or abolition of deficits, and in this way produces confidence in the existing multiple hierarchic order.

4. The ideal image of the Virgin Mary has been emphasised by the Catholic Church especially since the 16th century (after the Concilium Tridentinum of 1545-1563). The beginning of a stronger worshipping of the Virgin Mary coincided with the serious and institutionally totally supported processes of domestication of women, extremely fiercely expressed in witchhunting (Heinsohn and Steiger, 1985). Through the centuries this ideal image of woman has been strengthened by the Catholic Church according to the pragmatic earthly needs and particularly in the second part of the 19th century.

5. For example: Pope Paul VI - *Encyclica Humanae vitae* (1968); Pope John Paul II - *Encyclica on Human Labour* (1981) and the *Apostolic Letter on Family* (1982).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (issued on October 11th, 1992) contains the same traditional attitudes, particularly paragrahs: 144-149; 369-373; 488-511; 963-975; 1601-1666.

6. For example, according to research on unequal gender positions in the labour market, the disadvantageous position of the majority of women (seen in horizontal and vertical segregation, income inequalities, underrepresentation in the highest posts, etc.) appears as a consequence of women's (factual or expected) overburdening by family duties. The improvements in the position of women on the labour market (as a basis for their greater economic independence in the family household, which influences their opportunities on the labour market - Hobson, 1991) depend from the orientation of the total state policy and activity regarding the family and the labour market. In European countries, the complete institutional regulation and organization of everyday life are mostly based on the "one-bread-winner-ideology" and around the presumption that each family has a full-time homemaker (Buchmann, Charles, 1992). In this way the differences in the field of factual equal opportunities for both genders (and the creation of friendly living conditions for women) among some countries (performing various types of welfare system) are understandable (Ostner, 1991; Lane, 1992).

7. For a better understanding of the topic it is helpful to add some information about Slovenian society. According to the 1991 census Slovenia has 1,965,986 inhabitants, 1,013,375 of whom are women (and 952,611 men). One household has on average 3.2 persons, half of all people lives in urban areas. In 1991 746,041 persons were employed, 46.9% of all employed were women (nearly all women were employed full-time). 50% of all preschool children were in kindergarten. The total amounts of years of education in 1990 come to 10.8 on average for men and to 9.9 on average for women. The percentage of women students in the total student enrolment in 1990/91 was 55.6% (of 33,565 students).

8. First Slovenian woman's organization was constituted in 1887 as a section of the "Saint Cyril and Metod Workers Association (in Trieste). In 1898 The Association of Slovenian Women Teacher was established and in 1901 a General Woman's Association.

9. The clergy in the Eastern (Štajerska) and Western (Primorska) regions of Slovenia has not accepted this collaboration and remained true to the majority of the Slovenian people in the National Struggle for Liberation against the occupying forces with all consequences (for example, more than 200 priests from the Eastern part of Slovenia were expelled to concentration or compulsory work camps in Germany).

10. In 1981 comprehensive empirical research ("Pupils in Secondary Schools and Religion", headed by Spomenka Hribar, collaborators: Marko Kerševan and Maca Jogan) on a sample of 1,576 pupils was conducted (similar research was conducted in 1970) at the Faculty of Sociology, Political Science and Journalism (Centre of Religion and Church Research) in Ljubljana.

11. The empirical investigation of Slovenian Public Opinion (Toš, 1991) in 1991 captured through the representative sample of 2,075 adults in Slovenia; the International Investigation of Values in 1992 (Toš, 1992) was conducted on a representative of 1,035 adults in Slovenia and the empirical investigation of public opinion in 1993 (Toš, 1993) was conducted (in October and November) on a representative sample of 1,043 adults.

12. See also N. Toš (1993a) or Z. Roter (1992:44,46) who finds low confidence in the Church and clergy and speaks about the "end of the myth of Catholic Slovenia" at the beginning of the nineties.

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