

CCC 238 " Many religions invoke God as "Father". The deity is often considered the "father of gods and of men". In Israel, God is called "Father" inasmuch as he is Creator of the world. Even more, God is Father because of the covenant and the gift of the law to Israel, "his first-born son". God is also called the Father of the king of Israel. Most especially he is "the Father of the poor", of the orphaned and the widowed, who are under his loving protection."

CCC 239 " By calling God "Father", the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children. God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood, which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature. The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for man. But this experience also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure the face of fatherhood and motherhood. **We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God.** He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father."

CCC 240 " Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in relation to his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to his Father: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

It has also become a popular myth in certain circles to commit a major error and blasphemy by stating that God is feminine, that God has a feminine nature, or that God has both a feminine and masculine nature. God is eternal, infinite, and the alpha and omega; therefore, He existed long before the creation of man or woman. Thus, the nature of God the father is simply divine. How could a God that has always existed, long before the creation of humans, have a feminine or masculine nature? Because before humankind was created, the reality of man and woman, a masculine and feminine human nature, did not even exist.

Jesus has two natures. A fully divine and a fully human nature. His gender was that of a man. His gender was not that of a woman. Jesus is the full, total, and complete revelation of God to humankind; therefore, Jesus is everything that God wanted to reveal and nothing is missing in this revelation because Jesus is the perfect revelation. Nothing can be added or subtracted from Jesus. This is why the Catholic Catechism paragraph 65 states, "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son." Christ, the Son of God made man, is the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one. St. John of the Cross, among others, commented strikingly on Hebrews 1:1-2: In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word - and he has no more to say. . . because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son. Any person questioning God or desiring some vision or

revelation would be guilty not only of foolish behavior but also of offending him, by not fixing his eyes entirely upon Christ and by living with the desire for some other novelty."

Since Jesus is the complete and perfect revelation of God, His image as the only begotten son of God His Father is proven by his own words in John 6:27, "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him **God the Father** has placed his seal of approval." Jesus as the Son of Man calls God his Father, so the implication is very clear and does not need to be restated.

God does not obtain any type of nature from humankind. The logic that our nature flows back to God is absurd for nothing can be added to or subtracted from God. If this were the case, God would not be God, infinite, all powerful, omniscient or omnipotent.

The truth is that God created a masculine nature for man and a feminine nature for woman. Each nature was created and infused for the individual and specific roles that God had in mind and planned for each human gender and nature.

Some like to quote Genesis 1:27 as proof that God is both male and female, but St. Thomas Aquinas directly addresses this issue in his *Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* by saying, "Because man is similar to God in memory, intelligence and will, which pertain to the species of an intellectual nature and he has this from God, he is said to be God's image. For this reason he is said to be God's image. It is with respect to the intelligence, will and soul (in which there is no difference of gender), not in regards to the biological or physical body or gender, that men and women are made in the image of God."

<http://dhspriority.org/thomas/SS1Cor.htm>

Thomas refers to St. Paul in Galatians 3:28 to also prove that the image refers to the soul wherein there is no distinction of sex, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Thomas states, "Some object that because the image of God in man is regarded with respect to the spirit, in which there is no difference between male and female, as it says in Gal (3:28). Therefore, there is no more reason why man is called the image of God than a woman is."

Thomas also quotes St. Augustine by saying, "Augustine explains the above in another way. For he shows that both man and woman are made to the image of God, according to what is said in Eph (4:23): "Be renewed in the spirit of your minds and put on the new man created after the likeness of God according to the image of him who created him," where considered according to the spirit, in which there is no difference between male and female; consequently, the woman is the image of God, just as the male. For it is expressly stated in Gen (1:27) that "God created man to his own image, male and female he created them." Therefore, Augustine says that this must be understood in a spiritual union, which is in our soul." Thus St. Thomas proves that this Genesis verse is actually referring to all Christian men and women being made in the image of God

because they are all his Spiritual Children and not because of some biological or gender connection. Finally this is confirmed in 1 Corinthians 15:44-50 which states, "If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit...The first man (Adam) was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man (Jesus) is from heaven... Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven."

This fundamental equality of men and women in their nature as humans is confirmed by St. Thomas in his discussions of the image of God, which is in all men. The image of God chiefly consists in intellectual nature: it is with respect to the soul of man (in which there is no difference of sex), not with respect to his body, that he is made in the image of God.<sup>5</sup> Since all men, both males and females, are formed by a rational soul, they all have the image of God by reason of their intellectual nature.<sup>6</sup>

The image of God in man, Thomas explains, consists in the ability of man's intellectual nature to imitate God precisely in God's understanding and loving of Himself. There are three degrees of this imitation: all men are the image of God by possession of their intellectual nature; further, the just men imitate God to a greater degree through grace; and lastly, in the state of glory the blessed imitate God's love and knowledge of Himself perfectly.<sup>7</sup> It is clear that women are excluded from none of these three degrees of imitating God: they share the same intellectual nature as man, they can benefit from the same grace, and through it, attain the state of the blessed.<sup>8</sup>

To the objection that not all men have the image of God since woman, who "is an individual of the human species" is said by St. Paul to be the image not of God but only of man, St. Thomas answers that the intellectual nature which is the "principle signification" of the image, and the cause or condition of all three ways of being in the image of God, is found both in men and in women.<sup>9</sup>

**Only when "the image of God" is defined in a secondary or accidental way can it be seen to be participated more perfectly by men than by women. Since God is the beginning and end of every creature, and man is the beginning and end of woman (who is made of him and for him), there is seen in this analogy an accidental way in which man is the image of God and woman is not.**<sup>10</sup> But since here the image of God does not refer to the essence of men and women, but to some accidental characteristic of men, its being denied of women does not signify an essential but merely an accidental difference between men and women.

In his *Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians*, in direct answer to Paul's saying that while man is the image and glory of God, woman is the glory of man, Thomas refers to Galatians 3:28 in his assertion that the image refers to the soul wherein there is no distinction of sex, and hence that the image cannot be applied to men more than to women.

**Here again Aquinas admits that man alone and not woman can be said to be the image of God as long as the image refers to some accidental characteristic of man and not to his nature, as for example his being the principle of his species as God is the principle of all being, or his possession of stronger rational faculties than woman ("in eo ratio magis viget").<sup>12</sup>** But he is careful to reaffirm immediately that the image, which principally refers to the intellectual nature of man, is had by both men and women. He cleverly distinguishes between image and glory, noting that while Paul said that woman is the *glory* of man, he did not say that she is the *image* of man: this shows that Paul is not denying that both are the image of God.

St. Thomas' judgment that the image of God is equally seen in men and women shows more than just the fact that for him they are equal in this honor; it also confirms that they do not differ specifically but rather have the same nature. The image of God is equally predicated of men and of women because of their intellectual nature or their souls: they have the same intellectual nature or essence conferred by the same substantial soul as form. That this is so for St. Thomas is especially apparent when he attempts to "save" the teachings of St. Paul which appear to deny the image of God to women: Thomas must redefine the image of God to refer to some accidental characteristic in order to avoid either contradicting St. Paul or denying the essential equality of men and women.

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=2793>

- 1) John 6:27
  - a. "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the **Son of Man** will give you. For on **him God the Father** has placed **his** seal of approval."
- 2) 2 Corinthians 4:4
  - a. "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays **the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**"
- 3) Colossians 1:15
  - a. "**The Son is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over all creation."
- 4) 1 Corinthians 11:7
  - a. " A **man** ought not to cover his head, since **he is the image and glory of God**; but **woman is the glory of man.**"
- 5) Ephesians 4:23
  - a. "Be renewed in the spirit of your minds and put on **the new man** created after the **likeness of God** according to **the image** of him who created him."
- 6) 1 Corinthians 15:44-50
  - a. "If there is a physical body, **there is also a spiritual body**. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; **the last Adam became a life-giving spirit**. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; **the second man is from heaven**. As was the man of dust,

so are those who are of the dust; **and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.** Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, **we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.** I tell you this, brethren: **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.**"

7) Galatians 3:28

a. "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, **nor is there male and female,** for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

8) 1 Corinthians 8:6

a. "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father".

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