

207. First Century BCE-Sixth Century CE, Summary of Female Catholic Priests and Synagogue Leaders

ReGenesis is the first open-access encyclopedia to
liberate pre-colonial research
to its rightful 3,000,000 BCE origins
- and -
liberate female spirituality.
(RGS.)

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Women Priests.

Women may not be ordained priests
since priesthood signifies
the eminence of Christ
and women do not signify
what pertains to eminence;
women should not preach
since this is an exercise
of wisdom and authority
of which they are not capable;
and so on.
(SWI: 25.)

St. Paul.

A woman should speak in the household,
but not in the assembly and she should wear veils
as a public statement of subordination to
her father, husband, or master.
He said that a woman without a veil 'would
be perceived as refusing their female role of
passivity, deference, and submission to authority.'
Men did not have the same restrictions,
'for a man ought not to cover his head,
since he is in the image and glory of God;
but woman is the glory of man.
Neither was man created for woman,
but woman for man.
(WWW: 41-42, n. 47, 145.)

Pope John Paul, 20 c.

Vatican Declaration Affirming
Prohibition on Women Priests.
1976 CE.

Pope Francis, 21 c.

The exclusion of females from the priesthood
includes the issue of the rib:
'women were taken from a rib.'
(CUW: A21.)

Catholic Church Intransigence.

The world's dominant and
most unshakable patriarchies,
with tenets that don't abet equality.
(CUW: A21.)

Thomas Berry's Call to Purpose.

The Rights of all Creatures.
The right to Be,
The right to Habitat, and
The right to fulfill its role in all existence.
Thomas Berry.
College for Ecology and Spirituality;
Port Burwell Ontario.
June 4, 2000.

Giorgio Otranto, an Italian scholar of church history and papal letters, says that women were Catholic priests from the First Century BCE to the Sixth Century CE. (WWW: 2.) Given that *aspects* of early Christianity were considered inclusive, it "attracted converts from all walks of life, large numbers of whom were women." (FS: 64; WWW: 1-7.) According to Timothy 1, 3:11, both men and women could also be admitted as deacons. Male qualifications included that there was no evidence of anything being held *against them*. "In the same way the women must be respectable, not gossips, but sober and quite reliable." Relative to Jewish communities, Bernadette Brooten notes that women held significant synagogue offices including that of both ruler and mother of synagogues. (WLA.)

The following considerations include aspects of: women's preliminary training as household managers; early synagogues and household churches; transformation

from house churches to basilicas and synagogues; introduction of monarchical bishops and rabbis; women's leadership roles contested by St. Paul and rule that women must wear veils (WWW: 145); gender ideology; Christian polemicists and a cultural system that "associated men with honor and women with shame." (WWW: 6-7.)

Beginning in the Greco-Roman First Century BCE, Jewish and Christian women began to come forward as religious organizers in their communities. Skills as household managers were applied to running Jewish Synagogues and Christian churches in their private homes. (Discussion of Greco-Roman Jewish women to follow.) (RG: Third Century CE, Women Priests and St. Paul.)

By the Third Century, female widows had become powerful church leaders (WWW: 1-5). In a study by H. Achelis, he discusses Christian women as prominent leaders and prophets (WWW: 30) ordained 'by the apostolic canons [of] the church' (WWW: 49, n. 34), but the institutionalization of basilicas and monarchical bishops in the Fourth Century, challenged home churches and female priests. Additional research from *Didascalica*, speaks to the controversy regarding female widows and priestessing and the desire of the church to bring all ministry under the control and authority of the bishop. Not only were women unable to minister or baptize, but also most all of the former priestessing activities were significantly curtailed (WWW: 147-149). (This foreshadowed centuries of fiercely contested challenges to the eligibility of women's spiritual and religious rights) (WWW: 1-5, 30-37, 49, 147-149).

As in all congregations of God's people, women 'should not address the meeting. They have no license to speak but should keep their place as the law directs. If there is something they want to know, they can ask their own husbands at home. It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation (1 Cor 14.34-35). (RG: Third Century CE, Women Priests and St. Paul.)

In the polemical writings of St. Paul, he 'instructed women to keep silent during public discussions (WWW: 6)' therefore preventing them from teaching any longer (WWW: 6). Paul believed that a woman should speak in the household, but not in the assembly and she should wear veils as a public statement of subordination to her father, husband, or master (WWW: 41-42, n. 47). He said that a woman without a veil 'would be perceived as refusing their female role of passivity, deference, and submission to authority (WWW: 145).' Men did not have the same restrictions, 'for a man ought not to cover his head, since he is in the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man (1 Ch 11:7-10) * (: 145).' It was thought necessary to control women predicated on their shame for not having been created in the image and glory of God as men were (WWW: 145).

(WWW: 6, 41-42, n. 47, 145.) (RG: Third Century CE, Women Priests and St. Paul.)

* (Chronicles I.)

Not only were many Islamic women required to wear veils, but also the same was true for Orthodox Jewish women. Also, up until Vatican II, Catholic women were forbidden to enter a Catholic Church without head covering and forbidden to enter the altar when menstruating. (SWC: 145.) This also included nuns.

Further research about veils and women's other restrictions given that they are not in the image of god. (WOV: 73):

Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. 1973. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985. (BGTF.)

Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard, and Wendy Doniger. *Off with Her Head! The Denial of Women's Identity in Myth, Religion, and Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995. (OWH.)

Gossmann, Elisabeth. "Women's Ordination and the Vatican." *Feminist Theology: The Journal of the Britain & Ireland School of Feminist Theology* 18 (May 1998): 67-87. (WOV.)

Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1986. 134-138. (TCOP.)

For further research on women's early religious leadership:

Archer, Léonie J. "The Role of Jewish Women in the Religion, Ritual and Cult of Graeco-Roman Palestine." *Images of Women in Antiquity*. Eds. Averil Cameron, and Amélie Kuhrt. Detroit, WI: Wayne State University Press, 1983: 273-287. (RJW.)

_____. "The Virgin and the Harlot in the Writings of Formative Judaism." *History Workshop* 24 (Autumn 1987): 1-16. (VH.)

Baring, Anne, and Jules Cashford. *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image*. London, England: Viking, 1991. 283, 470, 632. (MG.)

Brooten, Bernadette J. *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982. (WLA.)

Callahan, Tim. *Secret Origins of the Bible*. Altadena, CA: Millennium Press, 2002. (SOTB.)

DeConick, A. D. *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender Conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2011. (HMW.)

Goodstein, Laurie. "A Faded Piece of Papyrus Refers to Jesus' Wife." *New York Times*, Sept. 2012, sec. A: 1, 21. (FPP.)

Madigan, Kevin and Carolyn Osiek. *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. (OW.)

Martos, Joseph, and Pierre Hégy. *Equal at the Creation: Sexism, Society, and Christian Thought*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1998. (EAC.)

Stanton, Elizabeth C. *The Woman's Bible*. Seattle, WA: Coalition Task Force

on Women and Religion, 1974. (TWB.)

Torjesen, Karen Jo. *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1993. (WWW.)

Further research on the development of Jewish and Christian priestessing: 45, Roman Prisca and Aquila, and Home Churches; 70, Destruction of Jerusalem Temple; Third Century, Women Priests and St. Paul; Third Century, Tertullian and Canaanite; Fourth Century, Basilicas and Female Subjection; 354-430, Saint Augustine; 1483-1546, Martin Luther, German Reformation; 1945, Nag Hammadi Manuscript; 1952, Women and Catholic Theology; 1972, First Woman Rabbi Ordained, United States; 1976, Vatican Declaration on Women and the Priesthood; 1992, Ordination of Women Priests; and 1999, Rebecca Cohen, Second Generation Female Minister. (RGS.)

Vatican's 1976 Declaration Affirming Prohibition of Women Priests.

In the 1976 *Declaration of the Question of Admitting Women to the Priesthood*, the Vatican officially spoke to the question of women and the priesthood. * This declaration attempted to justify the long standing position of refusing women the opportunity to serve as priests in the Catholic church on the grounds that the 'the female body does not resemble the male body of Christ. It is therefore impossible for women to perform the sacramental functions of a priest (WWW: 3).' The question that arises out of this declaration is just what is it about the 'sacramental functions of priests that would present an impossible challenge for women? What do priests do that a woman couldn't? Discussion to follow including the religious controversy around this question, the ancient and contemporary history of this question, plus previous arguments proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle and in *Genesis*. (RG: 1976 CE, Vatican Declaration Affirming Prohibition on Women Priests.)

* In 2015, Pope Francis added that the exclusion of females from the priesthood includes the issue of the rib: "women were taken from a rib." (CUW: A21.)

Further research on the 1976 *Declaration of the Question of Admitting Women to the Priesthood*:

Condren, Mary T. "The Theology of Sacrifice and the Non-Ordination of Women." *Concilium: the Non-Ordination of Women and the Politics of Power*. Volume 3. Eds. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, and Hermann Häring. London, England: S.C.M. Press, 1999. 50-57. (TOS.)

DeConick, A. D. *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender Conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter*. New York, NY: Continuum, 2011. (HMW.)

Goldenberg, Naomi. *Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions*. Boston, MA: Beacon, 1979. 6. (COTG.)

IMAGE: GIORGIO OTRANTO, CLASSICAL STUDIES: UNIVERSITY OF BARI, ITALY.
IMAGE TBD © GSA. DESCRIPTION GIORGIO OTRANTO, CLASSICAL STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF BARI, ITALY.

SLIDE LOCATION , SHEET , ROW , SLEEVE , SLIDE # , BCE.

ON LOCATION: ILLUSTRATION/IMAGE IN PROCESS.

NOTE 1: GIORGIO OTRANTO, AN ITALIAN SCHOLAR OF CHURCH HISTORY AND
PAPAL LETTERS, SAYS THAT WOMEN WERE CATHOLIC PRIESTS FROM THE FIRST
CENTURY BCE TO THE SIXTH CENTURY CE. (WWW: 2; RGS.)

NOTE 2 : FIELDWORK PROJECT.

PHOTO NOTE: ILLUSTRATOR, CHRISI KARVONIDES.

IMAGE: VEILED WOMAN AT ULU CAMI MOSQUE: BURSA, (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION, VEILED WOMAN AT ULU CAMI MOSQUE, BURSA,
(ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

SLIDE LOCATION TURKEY, SHEET 118, ROW 2, SLEEVE 5, SLIDE #Bm370, BCE.

CO_TUR_S118_R2_SL5_SBm370

SHOT ON LOCATION: BURSA, (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

NOTE 1: BRIEF 20th CENTURY OVERVIEW RE. FEMALE REQUIREMENT TO WEAR
VEILS.

NOT ONLY WERE MANY ISLAMIC WOMEN REQUIRED TO WEAR VEILS, BUT
THE SAME WAS TRUE FOR ORTHODOX JEWISH WOMEN. ALSO NOTE THAT
UP UNTIL VATICAN II, CATHOLIC WOMEN WERE FORBIDDEN TO ENTER A
CATHOLIC CHURCH WITHOUT HEAD COVERING AND FORBIDDEN TO
ENTER THE ALTAR WHEN MENSTRUATING (SWC: 145; RGS). (SOURCE: SEE
ABOVE.)

NOTE 2: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1986.

IMAGE: VEILED WOMAN AT PARADE: ANTALYA, (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION, VEILED WOMAN AT PARADE, ANTALYA (ANATOLIA)
TURKEY.

SLIDE LOCATION TURKEY, SHEET 88, ROW 1, SLEEVE 3, SLIDE #Bd82, BCE.

CO_TUR_S88_R1_SL3_SBd82

SHOT ON LOCATION: ANTALYA: (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

NOTE 1: BRIEF 20th CENTURY OVERVIEW OF FEMALE REQUIREMENT TO COVER
HEADS / WEAR VEILS.

NOT ONLY WERE MANY ISLAMIC WOMEN REQUIRED TO WEAR VEILS, BUT
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ALTAR WHEN MENSTRUATING (SWC: 145; RGS). (SOURCE: SEE ABOVE.)

NOTE 2: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1986.

IMAGE: WOMAN WITH HEAD COVERED: ISTANBUL (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION, WOMAN WITH HEAD COVERED WASHING CARPETS,
ISTANBUL, (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

SLIDE LOCATION TURKEY, SHEET 121, ROW 3, SLEEVE 5, SLIDE #534, BCE.

CO_TUR_S121_R3_SL5_S534

SHOT ON LOCATION: ISTANBUL: (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

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ALTAR WHEN MENSTRUATING (SWC: 145; RGS). (SOURCE: SEE ABOVE.)

NOTE 2: FIELDWORK PROJECT 1986.

IMAGE: WOMAN WITH HEAD COVERED: MARMARIS, (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.
PHOTO: © GSA. DESCRIPTION, WOMAN WITH HEAD COVERED, MARMARIS,
(ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

SLIDE LOCATION TURKEY, SHEET 121, ROW 4, SLEEVE 3, SLIDE #535, BCE.
CO_TUR_S121_R4_SL3_S535

SHOT ON LOCATION: MARMARIS, (ANATOLIA) TURKEY.

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