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The Era of Crowning the Woman, as a Feminine Era

Madalina Virginia ANTONESCU¹

Abstract

The present paper starts from a “gender relations” analysis to other explorations within the theological classic discourse (marked by the patriarchal pattern and by a marginality of woman condition, both as “Creator of values and civilization, of life and education”, and also, as a “positive presence, endowed with a personal, legitimate conception and discourse about the world, the gender relations and about herself”). We bring into attention challenging paradigms as ‘Feminine Era’, ‘Eon of Holy Spirit’, ‘The Era of Crowning the Woman’ as tools for exploring modalities of surpassing the vitiated, obsolete pattern of patriarchalism and to search for real femininity, for real feminine values and ways of conceiving and transforming the world and the human being, the history, the theological discourse and the axiology. All these paradigms have as premise the woman as active, dynamic, creative, multi-dimensional, affirmative presence, capable and willing to enter into history and to shape it according to her perspectives and values. It is an Age of feminine dynamism and involvement in the private and public decisions, in the regional, national, trans-national and global decisions, in the theological, political, civilizational decisions, anywhere the patriarchal pattern exists. In this Era of the Woman, under the inspiration and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that is the Life Creating God, the feminine power is perceived as being construed in terms of love, care, protection of the underprivileged, marginalized, poor categories. Woman is taking the lead, by affirming her beauty, splendour and multi-dimensional ways of being herself, away from the limited and vitiated pattern of patriarchalism.

Keywords: *Feminine Era; patriarchal pattern; women; human rights; gender equality; human dignity; equality.*

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1. New Era, Under the Sign of the Holy Spirit, as a Feminine Era, an Era of Crowning the Woman

This Era will rebalance the relation between the masculine and the feminine; it will lead to a regaining of rights, to the initial dignity of the mocked, the aggrieved, the humble (Pope John Paul II, 2008, pp. 370-371, 374-379)² and the woman. In these particularly special times, the 21st century and following societies will pay special attention to observing, preserving, and actively promoting the rights of the woman. Moreover, this set of rights will be enriched and developed constantly, without parting from God, contesteer of life, not in a destructive, nihilistic sense, which would eventually deny the woman as a being and life (e.g. the right to abortion), but *in an elevating, constructive sense*, a sense of promoting life, encouraging the attitude of caring for children and the weak, *promoting the feminine power, seen not as domination over the weak or in need* (as power was understood and applied for millennia of Patriarchalism, *as power seen as direct means of dominating the woman and her entire life*).

In this Era of the Woman, under the inspiration and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that is the Life Creating God, the feminine power is construed in terms of love, care, protection of the underprivileged, marginalized, poor categories. Small communities will be strengthened on the basis of a rediscovery and promotion of the role of the family (which will be separated from its patriarchal conception, which entails the domination of the woman in her family relations, domination exercised by the man). The feminine power will be understood and exercised in terms of understanding, compassion, pardoning, help, care and responsibility for the weak, the oppressed, those in need, the elderly, the sick, but *it will especially envisage a rebalancing of the basic and inter-relational values, between the man and the woman, in all the aspects of life: social, political, religious, family, private*.

The Age of the Holy Spirit is not compatible with the preservation of Patriarchalism, with oppressing the woman, stifling her personality, aspirations, with a state of financial dependence to the man, depriving her of rights (Miroiu, 1996, pp. 25-29; Miroiu, 1995, pp. 25-29; Bucur & Miroiu, 2002, pp. 12-13; Gatens, 2001, pp. 132-135; Dworkin, 1979, pp. 131-135) (especially the right to property, to marry at the eligible age, to create a family, to free development of her personality, her political rights, the right

² Through the fact that deliverance and Kingdom of God are not reserved for men only; instead, they are offered to all human beings, through the sacrifice of Christ, through God's work of grace in the human being and through the mission of the Church (universal).

to shelter, education, economic freedom, the right to labour and free choice of profession or labour, the right to free opinion and expression, freedom of conscience and religion, human dignity, the right to physical and mental integrity etc.), in relation to the man (many such forms of infringement upon rights are grounded in a *restrictive, eliminating or disdaining religious perspective* on the woman and her value, on her role in the society).

Being placed under the sign of the Holy Spirit, Who is The Life-Creating God, this Age will be one of *promoting life, love for life, from the love for the unborn child* (banning abortion), *to the love for the sick or the aggrieved* (ban on euthanasia of human beings, of assisted suicide – a few self-destructive tendencies of the 21st century civilization, which, in the name of a destructive freedom, oriented towards the split between the human being and God, the Supreme Being and Life-giving Spring (*Credința Ortodoxă*, 2007, pp. 114-115), takes shape in the postmodern era, proving a crisis of values, a decline of the Occidental world) (Pope John Paul II, 2008, pp. 115-116, 125)³. In the world governed by the sign, under the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, there are no anti-values and no such anti-values are promoted, anti-values underlying today's postmodern materialistic (Pope John Paul II, 2008, pp. 115-116, 125-128) or globalist society (the world without God is a cold world, from which the feelings, attention for the human soul and for its alleviation are contemptuously removed (Evdokimov, 1995, pp. 48-51); the nihilistic world that turned its back on God, where soul does not exist, the human being is a robot, a consumer, commodity). *In the world of the Holy Spirit that will govern the human societies of the 3rd millennium anti-values expressing the contempt for life, exploitation and deceit of the human being, pride, break-away from God, the Spring of Life.*

Because the Holy Spirit is:

- *The Spirit of Truth and That Which grants dignity and sacredness to the human being, holder of the Earth, that which is the face and likeness of God⁴* (*Credința Ortodoxă*, 2007, p. 64), *not a being of any kind* (which means that the 3rd millennium world, under His sign, will be a world in which the manipulations of the human beings, aimed at perpetuating the exploitation of other human beings, generating inertia, turning human beings into robots, the new forms of slavery, annulment of human personality or reduction of

³ Also see Pope Paul II, emphasizing “the priority of the human being in relation to things” “pre-eminence of the human being, in the production process” and the fact that “the human being, as a subject of labour, irrespective of the labour provided, he/she and only he/she is a person”.

⁴ The human being is the “crown of the entire structure”, “a micro-world”, “the human being was made to be a chosen being of the Grace of God”.

the human being, face and likeness of God, to a consumer or object of a certain value will be forbidden).

- *The Comforter* (the 3rd millennium world will inaugurate an Age of attention to the soul, an Age of the human in the spirit of God, not of the non-human or sub-human, as proposed by the postmodern or globalist nihilistic age). *An Age of encouraging the attitude of hope, optimism, belief in God, faith, care for and devotion to other human beings, with different needs* (His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 2008, pp. 245-246.)⁵. These attitudes will be encouraged *from the highest political levels of leading the human societies (by moving on from the stage of "Machiavellian" politics, a stage of detachment from morality, and by reconnecting the politics and governing to the ethical and ecological dimensions).*

- *The Holy Dove, Messenger and Bringer of Peace, symbol of peace.* An Age under the symbol of the Holy Spirit cannot be conceived if the nations, ethnic groups, communities tear each other apart, spend their time on war strategies, dichotomist visions (dividing the world between us/them, enemies/friends) or consider that the war is a natural occurrence, which brings prestige, wealth, glory, expanded governing (over the conquered territories), visions considered important and applied for a Long Line of Dark Ages, under the patriarchal-warfare view of the world. *The Age of the Holy Spirit is not compatible with the warlike vision of the world.* An Age under the sign of This Hypostasis of God is marked by *the development of the irenological science (a great development of the peace law), of the preventive diplomacy, of the international and national regimes and legal norms for the consolidation of the relations of solidarity, peace and cooperation, of identifying the common grounds for dialogue among various civilizations and cultures, of relations of peace, cooperation, tolerance and mutual respect among people, nations and ethnic groups.* Human beings will have to learn and constantly apply the values of tolerance for the other, of respect, cooperation; they will have to develop methods to identify and promote the aspects *which bring and maintain peace, which develop cooperation relations* (from the workplace environment, to the cooperation among the state institutions or bilateral/multilateral agreements among the states of the world). They will all have to learn how to enforce these values, how to maintain them, not allowing their infringement or questioning by primitive elements, with

⁵ Certain theological studies identify for our century three flames of the Holy Spirit, inspiring those who seek the unity of the Christian world: the spirit of repentance (assuming the past), passion for the Truth of the Gospel, the love for the entire humanity, called upon to meet and share the divine Truth. These three pillars are considered fundamental for the promotion of reconciliation and communion between the churches (cults) and nations.

destructive aspirations and plan; they will all have to develop and enforce these values continuously.

- *Artistic inspiration* (therefore, we will see this Age placed under the sign of the Holy Spirit as *an age of promoting and flourishing of arts – from poetry, music, visual arts, costumes, dance, architecture, literature, to interior design, furniture or manner of reordering and conceiving cities or public institutions – everything will change in the sense of detaching from rigid, mediocre, homogenized, minimalist vision, of the bureaucratic type, emptied of sensitivity, personality and originality, applied until now*).

- *Scientific and technical inspiration* (the Age of the Holy Spirit, Giver of inspiration and wisdom, was *an age of flourishing new sciences and technologies, through which the human being is able to perceive a multitude of aspects concerning the Divine Creation, which he/she ignored or disdained in the materialistic ages, thus drastically limiting his/her horizons*), *non-polluting sciences and technologies, through which the human being can perceive and become aware of the destructive aspects over humanity, over the planet, caused by a consumerist, egoist model based on profit and extravagance, not on solidarity*, as well as the respect owed for his/her planet, as well as the danger in which he/she lives⁶ (by exacerbating the logic of war and conflicts and insisting on the development of military technologies and destructive aspects of the sciences) (Pope John Paul II, 2008b, pp. 31-38)⁷. From “ceaseless defence” (the age of threat), the human being must learn to orient towards the age of divine blessing (age of silence, self-reconciliation, age of relaxation, release of tension, search for peace, harmony, state of balance). This is the true maturity of the human civilization, which cannot be touched by perpetuating the current model of corporate-consuming global society (Korten, 2007, pp. 114-121). In addition, *the existing sciences will acknowledge their limits, they will no longer pretend to replace God and His Infinite wisdom with their theories or with their limited instruments and they will stop opposing God* (i.e. imagining roads that deny the Creator and that explain the world with His exclusion). The existing sciences *will reorient*

⁶ The postmodern human being, estranged from God and His entire civilization, is a human being in permanent state of alert, tension, under permanent threat. Therefore, the civilization created under this pattern of threats will be one based on a dichotomised model, of permanent defensive, which heads for the pre-emptive strike, at the end of this perverted logic, i.e. towards the exacerbation of the state of unilateral perception of danger and towards the military attack with the purpose of prevention. This perverted logic leads to an increase in the arming of nations and to a climate of permanent tension among nations, which proves that a road without God, as Maker and Herald of Peace, leads only destruction.

⁷ About the human being in a state of threat, see Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Redemptor hominis*, in the *Enciclice Anthology*, quoted op. pp. 31-38

towards seeking and understanding God, His will in the Divine Creation and all these will be possible *when the savant and the artist will learn again the lesson of humility, kind-hearted and meek search for God, but also when the savant and artist will abandon the nihilistic attitude ab initio*, which makes him/her search for the meaning of the world and life before God the Creator, All-powerful, Giver of Life. The people (scientists, artists, in this case) will work on *understanding* God's work, on understanding the Divine Creation as it is, *not by banishing God from it*, they will concern themselves with *saluting God, working with Him by developing new sciences and technologies, which improve and elevate the life standard of the human being, make the human being happier, call him/her to the ceaseless discovery of the Divine Work, which allows itself to be explored by all people interested. Science and technology will be reconnected to the ethical and ecological dimensions, redirecting the human being to the creating axis, that of cooperation with God (the human being, as a sacred being, face and likeness to God, participating freely and in full awareness to the great adventure of understanding and discovering the Divine Creation and his/her place in it).*

- The Holy Spirit is *the Key to the human soul* (emphasis placed by the human civilization on the soul dimension, on happiness, the joy of life, on the harmonious development of the human personality and on the peaceful development of the human civilization, overall).

- The Holy Spirit is *the Key to Christ* (Credința ortodoxă, 2007, p. 116). One cannot acquire the knowledge of Christ, without the Holy Spirit and its Grace, or if denying the Holy Spirit, including Its feminine aspect (Evdokimov, 1995, pp. 225-226)⁸.

- The Holy Spirit is the *Accomplisher of the work of Christ* (Credința Ortodoxă, 2007, p. 115-116), the One That operates the great balancing of feminine and masculine energies in this plane of existence, is the One That reveals before the human beings the divine principle of equality, complementariness and harmony between the masculine and feminine (the human being as a divine and complete being, working together with God, free and aware, not as a "servant"). In terms of political-social and cultural organization systems, this is translated as going for post-patriarchal, post-conflict forms of organization.

⁸ There is a deep connection among the Holy Spirit, Sophia, the Virgin and femininity. In Semite, the Spirit has two genders. It can be feminine; Syrian texts about the Comforter refer to it using the feminine gender. The gospel of Jews attributes the phrase "My Mother the Holy Spirit" to Jesus. The Holy Spirit, according to Bulgakov, is the Hypostasis of Eternal Maternity (in the work Heads about the Holy Trinity).

- *The Holy Spirit is the One that shows the men that they have to honour the woman as they would an empress (the feminine aspect of the Holy Spirit⁹; archetype of the Virgin Mary)* (Evdokimov, 1995, pp. 225-230), *with the woman becoming again a positive symbol (empress of the world, the light which cannot be placed in a hierarchy, divided, transformed into schizoid, dichotomist aspects (sun/moon); instead, she is the pure, perfect, unique light). Uncreated, the light cannot be covered in darkness¹⁰, it illuminates forever, over everyone, as a form of the divine splendour. The Being of God, with no hierarchy, no dichotomy, but only love, is the annulment of any dividing state. The Divine wedding* (Credința Ortodoxă, 2007, pp. 130-131) *also signifies the will to show the people that the woman is actually what Patriarchalism refused to acknowledge, i.e. an empress and, even more, an empress of the light, through her very being (due to the feminine aspect of the Holy Spirit), blessing and giving (of life, light, grace). In the sacred and apocalyptic event that is the Cosmic Wedding, the two Hypostases of God (Christ and the Holy Spirit as Anima of His Church) are united as Bride and Groom* (Evdokimov, 1995, pp. 265-266)¹¹, raising the feminine and masculine energies at the same blessing level, of honour and grace, throughout the entire Divine Creation (Evdokimov, 1995, p. 259)¹² (and, through the divine nature of the Bride and Groom, *beyond the Divine Creation, into eternity*, because both the Bride and the Groom are God, while the Sacredness of the cosmic Wedding exceeds the human understanding, limited and biased by pride).

- The Holy Spirit is *the Life-giving Lord* (Credința Ortodoxă, 2007, pp. 114-115): thus, this Age will be *one of promoting the sciences about life, of finding ways and manners of protecting life, instead of destroying or denying it* (as it happens in the materialistic societies). For example, the woman's right to make choices

⁹ For example, the Holy Trinity icon in Bavaria, Urschalling Church, Berger Chiemsee, 9th century, where the Holy Spirit is represented as a feminine character, crowned by the Father and the Son.

¹⁰ John, chapter 1:4-5, 9. chapter.12:46.

¹¹ The New Age is the call of each soul to accomplishment through love, love belongs not to the present time (Postmodern age), maculated and perverted, but to the Age to come, the New Age calling the human being to acknowledging love as a manner of existing.

¹² Also see Paul Evdokimov, quoted op., pp. 258-259. The author considers that "the masculine and feminine are antinomies, that is, in the natural order of things, they are incompatible and they only become complementary in the order of grace, in Christ, which explains the sacredness of marriage." The divine wedding is precisely the coming of the Kingdom, since "the Kingdom shall come when two become one". The conjugal union, according to the patristic thinking, becomes a prophetic face of the future age, an age of uniting the entire humanity (in statu naturae integrae).

for her own body¹³ will no longer be construed as being allowed to have an abortion, since *the state and the society will be focusing on promoting life and creating opportunities to provide care for the new lives, not on encouraging infantile death or abandonment of children*. The care for the woman and for her concrete material situation will lead to *the creation and encouragement of the social and political conditions in which the women receive help and various facilities to give birth to children, care for them, educate them* (not the other way around, as it happens in the materialistic states, which are more and more detached from the life-protecting perspective). In addition, deeds such as the following will be banned and severely penalized: trafficking in organs, trafficking in children, trafficking in weapons, providing weapons to children.

- *God is Forever Working and All-Working* (Credința Ortodoxă, 2007, pp. 369-370)¹⁴: the Age of the Holy Spirit will focus on *encouraging labour, on the pleasure of working*¹⁵ and *diversification of work*. In this age, the states and societies will discourage and ban forced, dehumanizing labour or exhausting labour and labour created with the purpose of exterminating entire categories of population (as history has shown us, in the Dark Long Line of Patriarchal Ages, in the totalitarian governing systems, focused on terrorizing, exploiting and eliminating the human being)

¹³ Which must be construed as a right of the woman to conceive and give birth to life, the woman as “a face-to-face responsible”, aware of the value and uniqueness of life, co-creator with the man, when conceiving a new life. The patriarchal vitiated conception of using the woman as instrument of reproduction (millenary practice, which has led until our time to radical forms of feminism, such as the right to abortion, i.e. the right to respond with dead, through refusal of co-creation, in the condition of humiliating the woman) is abandoned. This vicious circle must be interrupted, since it alienates the human being from his/her true nature, that of co-creator with God and set on the axis of the joy of living, as God’s hypostases are eternally joyful in Their co-work. Labour and happiness combine seamlessly, with each work as a source of happiness, as profound understanding of the human existence and its setting on the coordinates of existence in the spirit of God.

¹⁴ John, chapter.5:17. Lucas, chapter 10:7.

¹⁵ Labour is a human right (including the freedom of the human being to choose a dignified profession, according to the gifts and skills received from God), not an obligation; labour is noble and sacred, because God is always working. *Credința ortodoxă*, quoted op., pp. 369-370. Moreover labour is regarded in Christianity as participation in the work of God, as a personal contribution to God’s plan in history. Through labour, the human being is not a servant, instead he/she mimics the Creator, Who is always working, because the human being was made with the face and in the likeness of God. Labour is also the fulfilment of the message of Christ (various parables told by Christ, about the spiritual value of the labour of the human being), as well as the development of the Kingdom of God. See the Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, dated September 14th 1981, of Pope John Paul II, in the Pope John Paul II Anthology, *Enciclice*, quoted op. 146-153.

- The Holy Spirit is *the Comforter of human pains, The One Who wipes away the tear*¹⁶: thus, we will see an Age in which the organization of the society and of the state will oppose *the humiliation of women* (acknowledging the feminine values and the unique role of the woman in a society; organizing a cultural system, a system of mentalities, education, a legal and social system of effective protection of women against domestic violence, as well as in the workplace; severe penalization of all the types of deeds against women, against the public image of women, against the dignity, life, physical and mental integrity of the women, and their freedom; severe penalization of other criminal offences against the woman, such as: rape, seduction of minors, sexual perversions, production and distribution of obscene materials or with degrading or humiliating content about women in general, violence in the family, blackmail, threat of depriving the woman of means of sustenance – as a form of economic aggression – pandering, prostitution, trafficking in human beings, exploitation of the woman as cheap labour force, forced labour, including the exploitation of children, hitting or harming the body or spirit of the woman, depriving the woman of freedom, trafficking in ovules, sale and abandonment of children etc.)

- The Holy Spirit is the *Comforter of human pains*¹⁷ (encouraging at state level a just and open attitude towards protection, care, support for those homeless, defenceless and in need – from the category of unborn children or new-borns, to the people with disabilities, the lonely, without material support, the abandoned, the elderly, the oppressed, the mocked, those facing situations of lack of support of various types). Therefore, *strong charity organizations will be organized both at social level* (neighbourhood, commune, city) and at national, regional and international level and such organizations will receive the support of the state, in order to function efficiently and justly; *an attitude* of volunteer donation of a certain quota will be encouraged, for the benefit of those in need, donations made by the rich people; *an attitude* of mutual support within the society will be encouraged, among the poor, but also among the various layers of society, in order to avoid a separation of the aforementioned society into two distinct universes, causing riots and hatred.

- The Holy Spirit is *Peace, understanding among the people and nations* (Pope John Paul II, 2008c, p. 374; Credința Ortodoxă, 2007, pp. 408-409)¹⁸:

¹⁶ “Come, Endless Joy, and transient sadness shall be forgotten!” “Come, sweet Coolness of the tired and burdened!” “Come and comfort our sadness, with the hope of eternal joy!” Akathist to the Holy Spirit, quoted op.

¹⁷ Lucas, chapter. 4:18-19. John, chapter 14:16-17, 26-27, chapter 15:26, chapter 16:7-8

¹⁸ The Holy Spirit brings the humankind the Kingdom of God, which transforms relations among the human beings, on the principles of love, forgiveness, communion of all human beings, among each other and with God.

replacing forms of government and international attitudes based on the Machiavellian principles of promoting the breaking apart, suspicion, constant manipulation of the various social categories, in order to be controlled by the rulers; *penalizing the challenges faced by peace and understanding among people and nations*, the attitudes instigating to hatred, discrimination and war, using force and the threat of force among people and peoples, of using unjustified or abusive force. *Promoting certain types of governing, which encourage attitudes of loyalty from the government representatives towards the governed people and attitudes of mutual respect, applying in good faith laws that promote a society built on the love for the fellow human being and God*. Always regarded as an “utopia”, this factor essential for the construction and maintenance of a type of *viable political system*, up to a *viable type of international political regime* (“*the house built on the rock*” – i.e. based on the values of peace, equality in rights, respect and understanding among people and nations – from the parable of Christ¹⁹) has always been disdained, removed, minimized by the elites in underdeveloped systems of Patriarchal type (turned against the human being and God, destructive, degrading, enslaving for the human being).

- The Holy Spirit is *Knowledge, Discovery, Revelation, Innovation*²⁰: the New Age will thus encourage *a time of great technical and scientific discoveries, of great explorations* (including the Cosmos or the in-depth of the Earth), a time of moving on from the model of the polluting industrial economy, to the *green economy of non-polluting technologies and industries, protective of the environment*, an economy based on the concept of “*durable development*” (*solidarity with future generations*), *an economy of knowledge* (Toffler, 1995, p. 28)²¹, *of intensifying the know-how exchanges among nations and international cooperation for development* (based on the global momentum in scientific research, in various areas).

- The Holy Spirit is *the High Diplomacy focusing on peace and understanding among the peoples* (“*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*”, according to the Beatitudes²²). The Holy Spirit calls the people and the new political leaders of His Age to a high understanding of the international

¹⁹ Matthew, chapter 7:24-27.

²⁰ *Faptele Sfinților Apostoli*, chapter 2:17-18. John, chapter 16:13-15.

²¹ This tendency towards the economy of knowledge has already been captured by authors such as Alvin Toffler, *Power shift. Puterea în mișcare*, Antet Publishing House, translated by Mihnea Columbeanu, 1995, Prahova, p. 28, although the author also sees in this revolutionary model of society a framework for the battles and conflicts among the nations, for domination, not for cooperation and harmonious coexistence (remains of the realist politics of the 21st century).

²² Matthew, chapter 5: 9.

problems, a repudiation of the political and geopolitical concepts based on practices of exploitation, plunder, war, destruction (which were greatly honoured and considered to be the “true politics”, in the Patriarchal millennia) and neo-colonialism. *The international law of peace, the international law of environment, theology with moral and ecological dimension, consolidation and extension of human rights, social responsibility of the corporations for the problems of the human civilization, as well as the ethical dimension of the new technologies* will be aspects shaping the New Age.

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