

REVISITING FEMININITY IN THE CARING ROLE OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

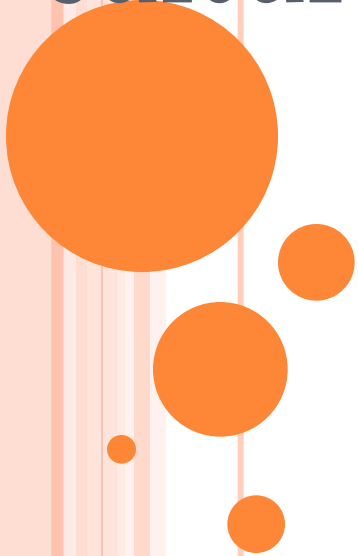
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Prevalence of contemporary
culture eroding our society



THE CURRENT SITUATION IN HEALTH CARE

- Medical technology bringing in a lot of ethical issues into health care:
 - Right to birth choices: abortion and contraception
 - Right to life choices: euthanasia
 - Tempering with life and creation: genetic engineering and cloning, embryo experimentations

Are we, as , health care professionals, aware of them?

- Benedict XVI is calling for a type of health care reform that brings medical professionals to lovingly focus on patients as persons in all their integrity.
- The Holy Father encouraged the health care providers to "lovingly serve the sick in their bodies, their souls and their spirits."
- (World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations, 23rd World Congress, Lourdes, 12-15/5/2010)



OUR CHALLENGE

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THE CARNEGIE FOUNDATION'S "EDUCATING NURSES: A CALL FOR RADICAL TRANSFORMATION"

- **Providing a More Rigorous Education**
 - **Improve the integration of classroom learning into clinical practice.**
 - **Broaden students' modes of thinking.**
 - Ethical standards
 - Professional identity

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New_Study_Proposes_Sweeping_Overhaul_of_Nursing_Educ
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A call to the
understanding of **who**
we are and **what we**
are.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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WHAT IS NURSING? WHAT IS A NURSE?

- International Council of Nurses:
"Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative **care** of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings..."
- A nurse is a highly skilled health care professional who **combines the art of caring with scientific knowledge and skills** developed through their education and career.

IN THE CORE OF NURSING/
A NURSE, THERE IS **“CARE”**

ESSENCE OF CARE

- concern and consideration for the whole person,
- commitment to the common good,
- outreach to those who are vulnerable
- person-centered approach,
- ability to understand the needs of others

(From The National League for Nursing)

**ARE THESE
QUALITIES NOT THE
INNATE
CHARACTERISTICS OF
THE FEMALE?**

Interview With Director of Newman Institute (Zenit 31/08/2010)

- College life can be such a testing ground -- a time either for students to grow in their faith, or possibly to abandon it altogether.
- Unfortunately, college life **reflects the standard of our contemporary culture**, with all of its lures of self-indulgence found in consumerism, **individualism** and hedonism. The work of the Church is to provide a counter-culture.
- The standard of Christ contradicts these influences, challenging the faithful to embrace charity, community and self-control.

NURSING CURRICULUM

- The nursing curriculum is no exception to this norm
- There have been an introduction of a feministic approach in the higher education setting, with the ideal of giving more “rights to the female”

**FEMINISM =
FEMININITY?**

FEMINISM

- Aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality.
- Focuses on the promotion of women's rights and interests.
- Themes explored in feminist theory include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy.

<<FIGHT FOR EQUAL PAR WITH MAN>>

FEMININITY

- **Femininity** refers to female qualities attributed specifically to women and girls.
- Often associated with life-giving and nurturing qualities of motherhood, birth, intuition, creativity.
- There is a general misunderstanding that femininity means weakness, apathy, relinquishing one's right.

BUT WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY?

*HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY T
THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 1995*

- Among the pressing issues facing the People of God in Australia there is the need for an understanding of the dignity and mission of women, in the family, in society and in the Church, which is faithful to "the truth of the Gospel"
(Gal. 2: 14).

*HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY
THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 1995*

- It must be clear that the Church stands firmly against every form of discrimination which in any way compromises the equal dignity of women and men.
- The complete equality of persons is however accompanied by a *marvellous complementarity*.
- This complementarity concerns not only the roles of men and women but also, and more deeply, their make-up and meaning as persons (Cf. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 50).

*HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY
THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 1995*

- For that reason I am convinced that *a mistaken anthropology is at the root of the failure of society to understand Church teaching on the true role of women.*
- That role is in no way diminished but is in fact enhanced by being related in a special way to motherhood – the source of new life – both physical and spiritual.

*HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN
PAUL II*

*ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY
THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 1995*

- The Church therefore faces the challenge of finding *fresh and creative ways of recognizing and integrating the specific charisms of women*, which are essential to building up the Body of Christ in unity and love.

*HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL, SYDNEY
THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 1995*

- Women who seek a true Christian concept of femininity can look to the free and active role assumed by Mary of Nazareth, the Virgin-Mother of the Lord.
- In her, all women can discover "the secret of living their femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 46).

THIRD WORLD MEETING OF THE HOLY FATHER WITH FAMILIES – JUBILEE OF FAMILIES

(VATICAN, OCTOBER 11-13, 2000)

CHILDREN: SPRINGTIME OF THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY

- the new feminism asks for recognition of women's own importance in society.
- “The personal resources of femininity are certainly no less than the resources of masculinity: they are merely different.
- Hence a woman, as well as a man, must understand her ‘fulfillment’ as a person, her dignity and vocation, ...according to the riches of femininity which she received on the day of creation ...[in the]‘image and likeness of God’ that is specifically hers”.

*LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO MRS.
GERTRUDE MONGELLA
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOURTH WORLD
CONFERENCE
ON WOMEN OF THE UNITED NATIONS 26 MAY 1995.*

- As most women themselves point out, *equality of dignity* does not mean "sameness with men". This would only impoverish women and all of society, by *deforming or losing the unique richness and the inherent value of femininity*.



OUR SOLUTION:

Learning from Mary

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LEARNING FROM MARY

- Mary as a mother
- Mary as a nurturer
- Mary as a carer
- Mary as an advocate
- Mary as an intercessor
- Mary as a disciple
- Mary as a woman of faith
- Mary as one dignified and glorified by God

MARY: OUR MOTHER

- Mary encompasses qualities that are generally referred to as “nurturing”
- These qualities include patience, caring, healing, serving, comforting, consoling and sympathizing.
- Mary as a Mother focuses on individual needs and qualities and makes the object of her attention feel special.

- “We are probably not called to martyrdom, but none of us is excluded from the divine call to holiness... All of us, especially in our time in which egoism and individualism seem to prevail, must assume as a first and fundamental commitment that of growing every day in greater love of God and of neighbor to transform our lives and thus also to transform the world... let us ask the Lord to inflame our hearts to be able to love as he has loved each one of us.”
- (Benedict XVI, Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2010, General Wednesday Audience at the summer papal residence in Castel Gandolfo)

People listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and when people do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.

It is therefore primarily by the conduct, that the Church [and its people] will evangelize the world. —

POPE PAUL VI, *Evangelization in the Modern World*, n. 41

**EVANGELIZATION, THE
ENDURING MISSION OF THE
CHURCH, IS A WITNESS IN
AND OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST.**

**What happens when faith is not
the source of evangelization?**

WITHOUT FAITH, EVANGELIZATION AND ITS COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION ARE REDUCED TO A MERE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, WHICH MAY BE GOOD IN ITS INTENTION AND CONTENT, BUT WHICH DOES NOT FULLY QUALIFY AS CHRISTIAN EVANGELIZATION [WORK].

(BISHOP TAGLE, BILA II, TAIWAN, 5/5/10)

A time for re-examination of
what we teach...



O Mary conceived without sin,
Pray for us who have recourse to Thee!!



**MAY THE LORD BLESS AND
GUIDE US; AND
ALL THOSE WHO SEEK
HIM...**

In the company of Mary



AMEN