

'To what extent are men and women equal in Christianity

^{of these series}
Equality¹ is defined as giving men and women equal opportunities and treatment in the work place, in the home and social spheres. Equality is not the same as equity, which translates as 'sameness', Catholics would argue that men and women are equal but not the same. Pope John Paul II wrote to his ~~letter~~ ^{letter} to women: 'men and women have their own unique Greatness given to them by God'. This is not to say that the role of women is any less than that of men, in fact the great Pope writes that women have been given the gift of being able to freely give of themselves, especially in prayer, so they are able to access a special part of God's heart that men might struggle to open up to.

Some of the most radical feminist theologians were raised in the Catholic Church, in particular Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Daley. These two women varied in their theology, Ruether being a reformist and Daley believing that women must 'Go Beyond God' and reject the Church. ^{However,} they both agreed that Christianity has been a major contributing factor to encouraging sexist beliefs and actually carrying out discrimination towards women in teaching and practices.

the father



Rosemary Radford Ruether would most certainly conclude that there is a great lack of equality between men and women in the Church, in ideology, language, teaching, practices and throughout its history. She uses the example of: 'God the Father; this is how ^{most} Christians are taught to see and address God. Ruether believes that not only does this

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analogy create a false image of God as being human, but it ~~se~~ places men in a position of authority over women. If the Son of God, Jesus, was male then

essentially she would say that Christianity has innate doctrine that gives a superiorⁱⁿ complex to men.

Alongside the issues of Language, Ruether argues that reform is needed in the practices of the Church.

She doesn't agree with Daley that Christianity is un-scrutable, instead she argues that there is ~~a~~ firm historical evidence of rebellion against these sexist ideology which has bled into the Church. She

states that ^{the} Quakers have many practices ~~and~~ that should be adopted into all forms of Christianity, freedom of ideology and liberation from hierarchal roles and the suppression of women through male authority.

As well as Marxists, who Ruether admires for their strict equality and effort to unite as like minded individuals. Ruether seems to believe firmly that

reform is necessary in Christianity, as the extent to which men and women are equal is ~~about~~ discarded as irrelevant by authority figures who refuse to

change their doctrine to adjust to the modern way of thinking. If men and women are being given the

same roles in the workplace and in the family, then why is the Church stagnant and in denial.

believes in

Mary Daley 'going beyond the God of Christianity' as she shares in her book. By this she means that everything about Christianity is firmly rooted in

sexist doctrine, discrimination and lies. In fact, she creates an unholy Trinity: rape, genocide and ^{slavery} ~~poverty~~

are, according to Daley, all a result of men's lust and greed that has driven them to abhorrent acts of injustice

and the constant oppression of women through history. She also claims that in order to destroy this foundation Christianity would have to be uprooted completely, it would be necessary to 'Castrate God' as she puts it. Her beliefs are that Christianity is based upon obsession and fixation on male genitalia and that is why men and priests and authoritarian figures. It is to her, all about dominance and control over women's sexuality. She strongly supports radical sexual freedom, liberation to be promiscuous without shame or judgement. As a lesbian theologian herself, she made the controversial decision to refuse entrance to her seminars and course on women's liberation. ^{This is to} This is because she insists that women should reject Christianity, as she did, and create a safe all-female group where they can liberate themselves from male oppression.

Catholics look to the Old Testament to challenge the belief of feminist theologians, such as Daley, who are convinced of Biblical inequality of sex. Feminists point out that Eve is painted as a temptress who forced Adam to eat the forbidden fruit and brought the damnation of the world, or in other words women are to blame and so this ideology has corrupted teaching and practices. The Catholic Church disagrees, they highlight Mary the Mother of God as the example for all ^{the role of} human beings to follow, the greatest saint 'humble and meek' and that is why She is the Queen of Heaven. It is not just her feminine qualities that earn her this title, but her complete surrender to God. Therefore Daley is mistaken as labelling her as weak as

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there are her greatest strengths by recognising her own insignificance before God. Modern theologian, Peter Kreeft, expands upon the Catholic Church's love for Mary who intercedes for all God's children men and women. This is a great example of equality in the Church. In Genesis 1, it ~~et~~ reads: 'Man and women He created them, in His image: if both man ^{and} woman reflect the Glory of God like a mirror, then both have equal opportunity to grow in his likeness.

Furthermore, Pope John Paul II addresses the sufferings and failures of the Church. He apologises for ^{of women in history} the sexual exploitation of women in sex trafficking, rape and inequality in marriage^{ful} unions in the past where ~~the~~ women were beaten and had no voice. This acknowledgement of how far the Church has to go is ~~so~~ saddening, but also encouraging as it strives to unite both men and women for the glory of God. Pope John Paul II also points ^{out} that ~~this~~ the position on the Church on male ordination only will never change, as this role was set aside by God for men as ~~totally~~ directly by Jesus when handing out the ^{given} priestly ministry to his disciples.

In conclusion, the extent to which men and women are equal in Christianity is dependent on whether one sees sameness ^{or equality as necessarily} as equality. Men and women are not the same, they have different roles in the Church, but they are ~~treated~~ equal ^{in dignity} with different gifts and talents to offer in their service to God ^{work}.

Band 5

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I really can't expect better than this for A level



la Vinci