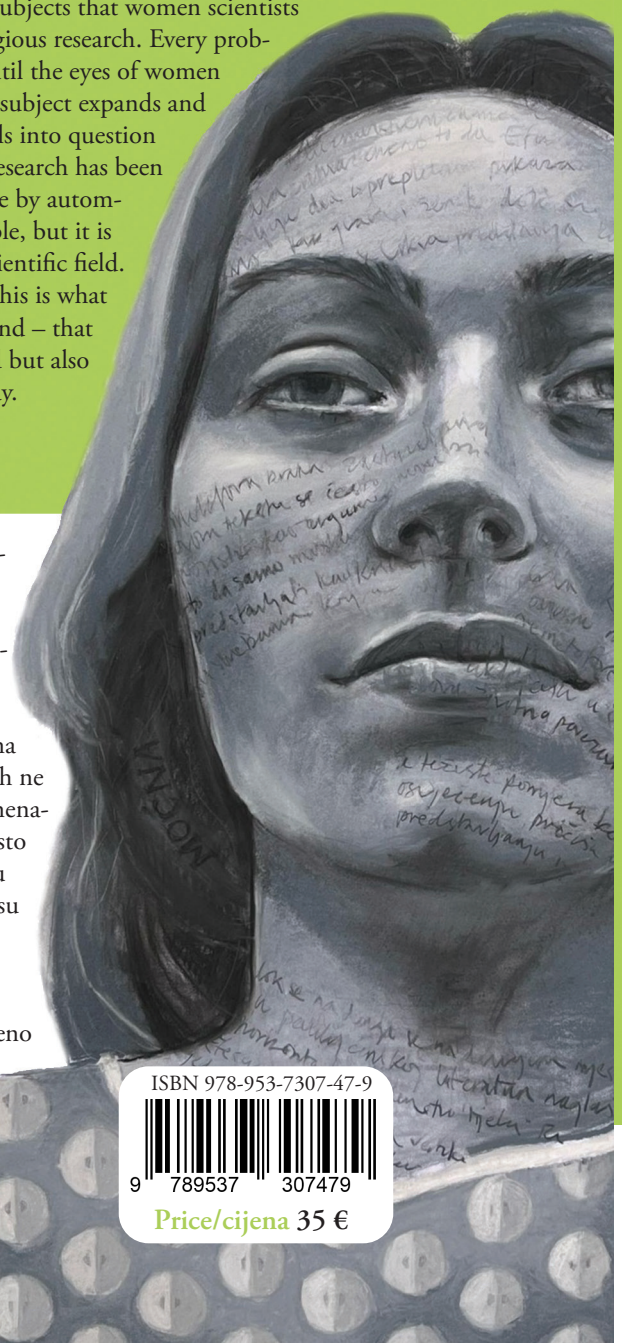


There are prejudices that feminist theology is a narrow and, in fact, unscientific field. This is why it was important to show the breadth and depth of subjects that women scientists deal with in theological and religious research. Every problem has unrecognized aspects until the eyes of women catch them. Then, suddenly the subject expands and sometimes – perhaps often – calls into question the field and the way in which research has been conducted in the past almost like by automatism. This may be uncomfortable, but it is often rewarding for the wider scientific field. By reading carefully, hopefully, this is what the readers of this volume will find – that their views have been challenged but also invigorated in an unexpected way.

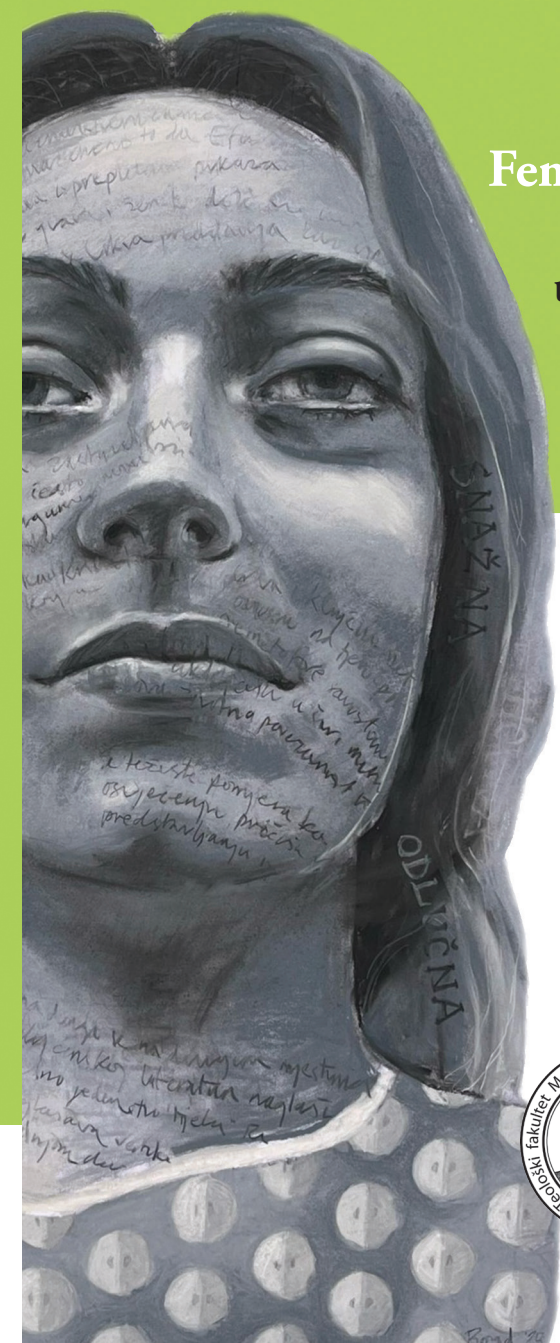
Postoje predrasude da je feministička teologija usko i, zapravo, neznanstveno područje. Zato je bilo važno pokazati širinu i dubinu tema kojima se znanstvenice bave u teološkim i religijskim istraživanjima. Svaki problem ima neprepoznate aspekte dok na njih ne padnu oči žena. Tada se tema iznenađujuće proširi i ponekad – možda često – to dovede gotovo automatski u pitanje područje i način na koji su se ranije vršila takva istraživanja. Takva dekonstrukcija može biti neugodno iskustvo, ali se često pokazalo korisno za šire znanstveno područje, a ne samo za žene. Nadamo se da će čitatelji ovog sveska otkriti upravo to – da su njihovi stavovi izazvani, ali i osnaženi na neočekivan i nov način.



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Orthodox Theologies of Women and Feminism

Aneta Jovkovska

Abstract

Regarding the issue of women in the Orthodox Church, we can talk about two traditions: a liberating and reforming tradition, where there are no differences between »male and female« and another tradition, which leads to the exclusion and subordination of women. From this perspective, the feminist movement and the modern world, with the challenges and questions they pose to the Orthodox Church, are more of an opportunity for self-criticism and introspection than a threat. Sensitivity to the question of women in Orthodoxy helps to identify and correct some hitherto »commonly accepted« interpretations, which, however, were also biased. These critical questions deserve dedicated theological research to distinguish the influences of earlier patriarchal cultures from the fundamental teaching of the Orthodox Church.

Keywords: Feminist Movement, Gender Roles, Orthodox Church, Women's Theology.

Introduction

In Orthodox countries, the development of feminist theology has historically taken place largely outside church institutions. Various political factors have influenced the trajectory and pace of Eastern Orthodox theological thought, resulting in a path that differs significantly from that of the West (Belonick, 1983, 34). However, in recent years, contemporary Orthodox female theologians have begun to engage with important questions

that resonate with the inquiries posed by their Western counterparts several decades ago. These inquiries encompass critical themes such as the biblical concepts of purity and impurity, interpretations of Pauline passages addressing silence and submission that may inadvertently marginalize women's voices and contributions within the community, and paternalistic views that have historically affected the status of women. Additionally, discussions regarding the significance of traditions – specifically, which elements are recognized as part of the Holy Tradition – are increasingly becoming focal points for Orthodox female theologians.

Considering these developments, female Orthodox theologians have actively participated in scholarly writing and global theological forums, striving to illuminate the substantial contributions of women to the life of the Church. Their efforts aim not only to highlight the historical roles women have played but also to advocate for their inclusion in contemporary theological discussions and decision-making processes within the Church.¹ By introducing fresh perspectives and insights into traditional theological frameworks, these theologians enrich the discourse surrounding gender and theologies, fostering a deeper understanding of the integral role women play in the faith community. This engagement reflects a growing recognition of the necessity for diverse voices in shaping the future of Orthodox theology, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and holistic approach to Christian thought and practice.

This paper aims to explore these emerging discussions within the context of Orthodox theologies of women and feminism, contributing to a constructive dialogue about the role and recognition of women in Orthodox thought and practice. By examining the intersection of tradition and contemporary theological inquiry, this work seeks to highlight the transformative potential of women's contributions of enriching Orthodox theology.

¹ Here I would like to mention the publication of two Orthodox magazines with women as the central theme and her place in the church: 1) *Mary-Martha* (Orthodox Women's Network. Leonie Liveris (ed.) Australia) and 2) *The St. Nina Quarterly* (a publication of the Women's Orthodox Ministries and Education Network, MA).

1. Discussions about the Role of Women in the Orthodox Church and the Understanding of Holy Tradition

In the new reality in Christ, the Apostle Paul articulates a profound truth that transcends traditional barriers of separation or inequality: »For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus« (Gal 3:27-28). This powerful affirmation serves as a foundational principle for feminist theology, often regarded as the »magna carta« of Christian feminism due to its emphasis on equality, universality, and freedom (Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, 2004, 33-37). While this core tenet of Christianity has significantly contributed to the discourse on gender equality, it is crucial to recognize that its full realization has often been influenced by the broader societal context, particularly within historically patriarchal societies. In many instances, cultural norms and practices have shaped the roles assigned to women, leading to a marginalization of their active participation in ecclesiastical life. Consequently, women's contributions have often been highlighted within the realm of the »domestic Church« and family, reflecting the societal values of their time rather than a direct theological stance of the Church itself (Castelli, 1998, 227-253).

The journey towards achieving social equality remains an ongoing endeavour, as articulated by Saint John the Merciful in the sixth century: »for Christ we are all equal ontologically, therefore we must become equal socially« (Petrou, 2002). This insight underscores the necessity of aligning social practices with theological truths. It highlights that the path to realizing a greater visibility of women's roles in the Church goes beyond doctrinal affirmation; it requires active engagement and transformation within both the church life and the societal norms that influence daily interactions. Thus, the discourse surrounding feminist theology within the Orthodox tradition should focus on fostering an environment that recognizes and values the voices and contributions of women, not as a critique of the

Church but as a call to reflect the unity and equality inherent in the teachings of Christ. By addressing the challenges posed by historical and cultural contexts, the Church can better embody the spirit of its teachings, fostering a community that genuinely lives out the call to love and serve one another in all diversity. This approach honours the rich traditions of Orthodoxy and paves the way for a more inclusive and equitable future within the faith community. The Orthodox Church bases its teaching on Holy Tradition, which serves as the foundation for its theological framework and ecclesiastical practices. However, as tradition and modern reality intersect, there is often a tension between preserving longstanding customs and adapting to the rapidly evolving social landscape. This dynamic is particularly pronounced in discussions surrounding »the position of women in the Orthodox Church«.

1.1. Understanding of Tradition in the Orthodox Church

The question of women's participation in the Church is intricately tied to the concept of tradition. What does tradition mean, and how is its preservation understood? According to the insightful formulation of Father John, tradition represents »the history of the right choices made by people in response to the prophetic word of God, justly addressing the specific historical conditions and circumstances of their time« (Meyersdoff, 1993, 5-21). Tradition is characterized by a movement from »power« to »energy«. Whenever this occurs, tradition is true and salvific, revealing the way in which its central complementary aspects coexist: forward movement and standing before the face of Christ. In this sense, tradition cannot be understood without progress, continuous study, and a deepening of the essence of the revelation in response to the specific issues of each era. Forward movement, in order to be a true expression of God's will and to sanctify those who participate in it, must coexist with the attitude or language of the Evangelist John, marked by »remaining« in Christ. The Church is both »old« and »new«. This dialectical perception is vividly expressed in the work *The*

Shepherd of Saint Apostle Hermas, where the Church is depicted as a tall tower that is constantly built and elevated by adding brilliant stones. The old and the new complement each other, creating a »living image of eternity in time« (Bouteneff, 2006, 141-194).

The call for greater representation of women in various church roles is an essential part of this reflection. Yet, it is important to recognize that such demands arise not from a desire to undermine tradition, but rather from a commitment to living out the spirit of Christian teachings in a contemporary context. Questions regarding the inclusion of women in church governance, such as their presence on church boards and in decision-making bodies, highlight the need for an open and constructive conversation about gender roles within the Church. Moreover, the revival of the institution of deaconesses presents an opportunity to explore the historical and theological significance of women in ministry. Such considerations invite a re-evaluation of traditional views that have often positioned motherhood and family as the sole responsibilities of women. This perspective can inadvertently restrict the recognition of women's diverse talents and contributions to the life of the Church.

As we reflect on these critical questions, it becomes evident that contemporary theological thought is called to engage sincerely and honestly with the evolving role of women. By acknowledging the creative and underutilized abilities of women, the Church can fully integrate these gifts into its communal life, enriching its mission and witness in the world. This engagement does not require a departure from Holy Tradition; rather, it invites a deeper understanding of how these traditions can be lived out in a manner that reflects the values of equality and mutual respect as espoused by Christ. In doing so, the Orthodox Church can foster a more inclusive environment where the voices of women are heard and actively contribute to the Church's mission. By addressing these issues with openness and a commitment to growth, the Church can navigate the complexities of modernity while remaining faithful to its theological roots, thereby enriching its communal life, and enhancing its witness in a diverse and changing world.

Time reveals that perceptions of women are indeed evolving, prompting a reassessment of traditional concepts that may lead to stagnation or misunderstanding in contemporary discourse. As we consider the question of renewing the Orthodox tradition, it becomes evident that this tradition remains perpetually open to theological dialogue. The Orthodox Church, often characterized as the Church of tradition, sometimes appears to uphold this identity in a manner that feels almost stereotypical within the mindset of many adherents. While the terms adaptation, renewal, modernity, and change may evoke scepticism among some Orthodox theologians, it is crucial to recognize that these concepts can coexist with the essence of Orthodox faith. The call for renewal does not seek to dismantle the foundations of tradition; rather, it aims to enrich and deepen the understanding of those traditions in light of contemporary realities. It is essential for the Church to engage with the pressing questions of modernity, particularly regarding the evolving role of women, in a manner that reflects the Church's commitment to truth and love.

Although some theologians have begun to introduce fresh perspectives within Orthodox thought and practice, the broader tradition often lacks the essential signs of change necessary for authentic renewal. This absence raises significant questions: How can the Orthodox Church navigate the challenges of modernity while remaining faithful to its theological roots? In what ways can it embrace the contributions of women without compromising its core beliefs? The Church's journey toward renewal will benefit from a willingness to engage with these questions honestly and openly. By fostering an environment where diverse voices can contribute to the theological discourse, the Orthodox Church can better align itself with the principles of equality and inclusivity that are inherent in its teachings.

Furthermore, acknowledging and integrating the insights of female theologians into the broader conversation can provide valuable perspectives that enrich the Church's understanding of tradition. Such efforts can lead to a more dynamic and responsive faith community, capable of addressing the complexities of contemporary life while remaining grounded in the love and

teachings of Christ. In this light, the Orthodox Church is invited to reconsider its approach to tradition—not as a static entity, but as a living and dynamic reality that continues to speak to the hearts and minds of its faithful. Embracing this understanding can pave the way for a revitalized tradition that resonates with the needs and aspirations of today’s world, allowing the Church to fulfil its mission with renewed vigour and purpose.

1.2. Dynamic character of the Holy Tradition

In Orthodox theology, the concept of the Holy Tradition encompasses the profound indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the Church. Each member of the Body of Christ participates in this divine presence, enabling them to hear, receive, and comprehend the truth illuminated by God’s revelation rather than solely through the lens of human discourse. This perspective emphasizes the significance of true knowledge, which is derived from the divine Light. As articulated in Scripture: »For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ« (2 Cor 4:6). Such enlightenment serves as a transformative power, liberating individuals from the constraints of nature and the limitations imposed by historical circumstances. As stated, »you will know the truth and the truth will set you free« (John 8:32). This passage underscores the notion that genuine understanding, bestowed by divine revelation, empowers believers to transcend the societal norms and cultural conventions that may inhibit their spiritual growth and authenticity.

Thus, in the context of Orthodox theology, the interplay between the Holy Tradition and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit is essential for cultivating a vibrant faith community. It invites every believer to engage deeply with the teachings of the Church while remaining open to the ongoing movement of the Holy Spirit within their lives. This dynamic foster an environment where spiritual truth can flourish, leading to a deeper relationship with God and a more profound understanding of one’s place within the Church. Moreover, this engagement with

divine knowledge encourages the faithful to embody the truths revealed through Holy Tradition, actively participating in the Church's mission to bear witness to the love and grace of Christ in the world. By embracing the transformative power of this knowledge, individuals are equipped to navigate the complexities of contemporary life while remaining anchored in the rich theological heritage of Orthodoxy.

The Church serves as the guardian of Holy Tradition, which functions not merely as a static repository of beliefs but as a living expression of the Church's capacity to discern truth through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This discernment is not an automatic mechanism; rather, it represents an essential condition for the Church's ongoing formation of awareness regarding divine truth. In this sense, tradition embodies a dynamic process that engages the faithful in a continuous journey of understanding and revelation. Moreover, tradition should not be perceived as a mere habit rooted in repetitive uniformity. If it were so, we would risk characterizing the life of the Church as static, effectively stifling the potential for dynamic expression and growth. The vitality of the Church lies in its ability to interpret and apply tradition in ways that resonate with the contemporary context while remaining faithful to the core teachings of the faith. This interpretative process is vital for addressing the complexities and challenges faced by the Church in a rapidly changing world.

By fostering an environment that encourages theological dialogue and reflection, the Church can navigate the balance between preserving its heritage and engaging with modern realities. This approach allows for the flourishing of a robust ecclesiastical life that is responsive to the needs of its members, particularly in areas such as gender roles, social justice, and ethical considerations. As the Church addresses these challenges, it is crucial to rely on the abundant wisdom of Holy Tradition to guide its actions and decisions. In doing so, the Church not only honours its past but also cultivates a forward-looking perspective that embraces the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. This balance between tradition and innovation is crucial for ensuring that the Church remains a relevant and effective witness to the Gospel in today's world.

Ultimately, the Church's role as the guardian of tradition necessitates an openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit, which can inspire new insights and understanding within the framework of Orthodox beliefs. This commitment to both safeguarding and dynamically expressing tradition enriches the Church's mission, empowering it to respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs of its members while remaining grounded in the timeless truths of the faith.

2. Holy Tradition, Holy Scripture, and the Church Fathers

The dynamic character of the Holy Tradition, when examined through the lens of scholarly study and research – starting with the texts of the New Testament and extending through the writings of the Church Fathers – reveals that it does not present a systematic teaching regarding the participation of women in the Church. Often, references to women within these texts are occasional and contextually driven, frequently emerging amid theological controversies rather than as part of a cohesive discourse on gender roles within the ecclesial community (Topping, 1993).

Moreover, many Church Fathers and writers acknowledge that women are profoundly influenced by their social positions.² This acknowledgment suggests that the voices of women within the Church have historically been shaped by the prevailing cultural norms and societal structures of their time. Consequently, there exists a discrepancy between the liberating declaration of Galatians 3:28 which proclaims, »nor is there male and female«, and the lived experiences of women, who often find themselves constrained by the limitations imposed by their cultural environment.

² See Saint Gregory the Theologian, *Homilies*, PG: 36, 289 AB: »Men were legislators and they accused women«. In this passage, Saint Gregory the Theologian reflects his critical stance on societal and gender norms. This homily critiques the historical imbalance of power, with men establishing laws while placing restrictions on women.

This duality highlights the complexity of interpreting Holy Tradition in relation to gender issues. While the foundational Christian principle of equality in Christ affirms the inherent dignity and value of all individuals, the historical context into which this principle has been applied has often resulted in ambivalence regarding women's roles within the Church. The challenge lies in reconciling the radical inclusivity of the Gospel with the realities of patriarchal structures that have influenced ecclesial practices and attitudes over the centuries (Behr-Sigel, 1991, 103-157). As contemporary theologians and scholars engage with these texts and traditions, there is a pressing need to reexamine the implications of Holy Tradition for the current understanding of women's participation in the Church. This exploration invites a critical reflection on how the Church can honour its theological heritage while also addressing the urgent calls for greater inclusion and representation of women within its life.

Recognizing the historical context that has shaped the discourse surrounding women in the Church allows for a more nuanced approach to tradition. It encourages the faithful to seek a deeper understanding of how the teachings of the Church can be applied in ways that affirm the value and contributions of women today. By fostering a theological dialogue that embraces both tradition and the lived experiences of women, the Church can work toward a more equitable and inclusive environment that reflects the transformative message of the Gospel.

Ultimately, this journey requires a critical reassessment of past interpretations alongside a commitment to creating space for women's voices within the Church's ongoing narrative. This effort honours the fullness of Holy Tradition while aligning with the Church's mission to reflect the love, grace, and equality inherent in Christ's teachings.

2.1. Christ's attitude towards women

Christ's attitude towards women is notably transformative, standing out as a defining aspect of his ministry. His approach not only challenges the prevailing social norms of his time but

continues to resonate in contemporary discussions about gender and inclusion within the Church. By accepting women as his followers, as seen in Luke 8:1-3, he defies the cultural expectations of Jewish rabbis who typically restricted the role of women in religious education. This acceptance signifies a profound acknowledgment of women's spiritual worth and their rightful place within the community of believers. Moreover, Jesus demonstrates a willingness to transcend the ritual purity laws that often-marginalized women. In the account of the woman suffering from a haemorrhage (Luke 8:43-48), He permits her to touch him – an act considered unclean – and acknowledges her faith while restoring her dignity. Likewise, his interaction with the woman known as a sinner (Luke 7:37-50) underscores his openness to repentance and grace, as he allows her to express her love and devotion by anointing his feet. The incident involving the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) further illustrates his revolutionary stance. Instead of condemning her, Christ challenges those without sin to cast the first stone, upholding her dignity and emphasizing mercy over judgment. This act of compassion reflects his deep understanding of human frailty and serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of forgiveness.

In addition to these interactions, Jesus engages in a profound theological dialogue with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42), an act that astonishes his male contemporaries. By discussing the nature of true worship and revealing his identity as the Messiah, he breaks down barriers of ethnicity and gender, illustrating that spiritual truth transcends societal divisions. Notably, within the tradition of the early Christian Church, the Samaritan woman, often referred to by her name, Photina, is recognized as the first female missionary and the first person to proclaim the Gospel. This remarkable moment stands as a powerful testament to her role in the early spread of Jesus's message. Jesus's conversation with Photina addresses central themes of his teachings, including repentance, faith in God, and the nature of worship. Despite the social barriers that might have marginalized her, she becomes an active participant in the theological discourse. Her engagement with Jesus on these

profound topics demonstrates that women are fully capable of understanding complex spiritual truths and are vital to the mission of the Church.

This narrative reinforces the idea that women, despite societal constraints, can be conversant in theological matters, capable of leaving everything behind for the sake of the Gospel. The story resonates with other Gospel accounts, such as the resurrection narratives, where women are the first witnesses to the resurrected Christ (Matt. 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-10). The Gospel of John further elaborates on Mary Magdalene's role (John 20:11-18), highlighting that women were entrusted with the initial proclamation of the resurrection. Many biblical exegetes emphasize this fact, pointing out that the first recipients of the message of the resurrection were indeed women.³ Mary Evans aptly notes that women were not merely »witnesses to the events and recipients of the message of the Resurrection«; they were also commissioned to share this message. This highlights their active role in the early Church as the first proclaimers of the hope of Christ's resurrection, tasked with delivering this message as directed by both the angels and Christ Himself. Their significant role affirms the inherent agency of women within the Christian narrative and underscores their vital contributions to the early community of believers (Evans, 1983, 54).

By recognizing the theological significance of the Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus, the Church can draw inspiration from her example. Her transformative experience invites contemporary reflection on the role of women within the Christian community, encouraging a re-evaluation of their contributions and potential for leadership. This acknowledgment not only honours the legacy of women in Scripture but also emphasizes the inclusivity that Christ modelled throughout his ministry. As contemporary Orthodox theologians reflect on Christ's

³ See Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, »Ο ρόλος των γυναικών στη ζωή της Εκκλησίας: Από τις μαρτυρίες της Καινής Διαθήκης στο σύγχρονο οικουμενικό διάλογο« [The Role of Women in the Life of the Church: From the Testimonies of the New Testament to the Contemporary Ecumenical Dialogue]. Available at: http://cemes-en.weebly.com/uploads/2/7/8/8/27884917/4_kasselouri.pdf (Accessed 3 November 2024).

interactions with women, there is an opportunity to draw inspiration from his example. By embracing the inclusivity demonstrated by Christ, the Church can seek to create an environment where women are not only recognized for their spiritual contributions but are also encouraged to participate fully in the life and leadership of the Church. This reflection invites a re-examination of theological frameworks that have historically overlooked or minimized women's roles, allowing for a richer and more comprehensive understanding of Holy Tradition. Ultimately, Christ's transformative approach serves as a call to action for the Church today, challenging its members to embody the love and acceptance that he modelled. By honouring the legacy of women in Scripture and their contributions to the faith, the Church can foster a more inclusive and vibrant community that reflects the fullness of Christ's message.

2.2. Women in the Church

It is well-documented that the Apostle Paul collaborated with several women in the early Church, recognizing their contributions and support in various capacities (e.g., Romans 16:1-7) (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1986, 420-433). These women played vital roles in local congregations, often serving as deaconesses, patrons, and leaders within their communities. For instance, in his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul makes specific mention of Euodia and Syntyche, who »laboured side by side in the gospel« and whose names, along with Clement and others, are recorded »in the book of life« (Phil 4:2-3). The Apostle Paul's choice of the term »fellow workers« (*συνεργοί*) is deliberate, emphasizing their efforts and contributions, not only spiritual but also practical. This reference underscores the vital role these two women played in the life of the community, particularly in the context of Paul's appeal for reconciliation.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the proclamation of the Gospel in Philippi began in the company of women. »On the Sabbath, we left the city and went down along the river where we had heard there was to be a prayer meeting. We took our place with the women who had gathered there and talked with

them« (Acts 16:13). The narrative continues with the story of Lydia and her household, highlighting her hospitality and leadership within the community (Acts 16:14-15). Other women mentioned in Paul's letters include Apphia, in the house church of Philemon (Philemon 1:2), and Priscilla, who, along with Aquila, played a significant role in the early Church (Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19). Notably, many of these references appear in the final chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where ten out of twenty-two names listed are women. Among these, two figures stand out due to their significant roles in the early Christian communities: Phoebe described as a deacon (*διάκονος*) and a »benefactor« (*προστάτις*) of many, and Junia, recognized as »outstanding among the apostles« (Rom 16:7) (Whelan, 1993, 67-85). These examples demonstrate that women held important and diverse roles in the early Christian Church, serving not only as collaborators but also as leaders and active participants in the work of evangelization and community building.

Nevertheless, certain passages attributed to Paul have been interpreted in ways that seem to reflect the prevailing societal norms of his time, particularly regarding gender roles within the Church (1 Cor 14:34; Eph 5:22; Col 3:18). In these contexts, Paul appears to echo the domestic codes of behaviour common in his culture, which has led some scholars to argue that he did not actively challenge the socio-political structures that marginalized women.

In the subsequent history of the Church, these views have been interpreted and adapted in various ways across different Christian communities. For instance, certain passages, such as 1 Timothy 2:11-15, have been foundational in shaping the understanding of women's roles within Orthodox theology. This text states:

»A woman must learn quietly with all submissiveness. But I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control«.

This passage has historically influenced the canon law of the Church. It is important to recognize that these interpretations reflect the cultural and historical context in which they were written. Many early Church Fathers upheld these views, which shaped the normative understanding of women's roles in the Church, emphasizing marriage and motherhood as the primary vocations for women. While monasticism offered an alternative path, it often reinforced the idea that celibacy was the only justifiable exception to the traditional roles assigned to women. However, contemporary theological discussions are increasingly recognizing the need to engage critically with these texts, considering the transformative message of the Gospel that underscores the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals. This reflection calls for a nuanced understanding of the scriptural texts, acknowledging that the essence of Christ's message is one of inclusivity and redemption.

As the Orthodox Church continues to engage in theological dialogue, there is a growing recognition of the importance of women's voices and contributions within the faith community. This ongoing conversation seeks to honour the rich heritage of women in the Church while also addressing the challenges posed by historical interpretations that may have unintentionally limited their roles. In doing so, the Church can strive for a more comprehensive understanding of the Holy Tradition, one that embraces the gifts and talents of all its members and reflects the true nature of the Body of Christ. The teachings of the Holy Fathers, shaped by their historical and cultural contexts, often grappled with balancing the realities of their time with the eschatological vision of the Church. In this ongoing dialogue, certain attitudes emerged that appeared to impose strict limitations on women's roles within the Church. As noted by theologian Paul Evdokimov, »Some theologians have constructed an entire hierarchy built on "submission" and "authority," endlessly debating whether the man is the leader or the head« (Evdokimov, 1994, 147). Such discussions have inadvertently perpetuated an ominous call for silence directed toward women, suggesting that their voices and contributions should be muted in the ecclesiastical sphere.

However, to interpret this demand for silence literally poses a significant challenge to the rich tapestry of Christian history. The Church has long honoured numerous women – whose lives and contributions are celebrated in the liturgical texts – as saints and even apostles. These women embody the essence of discipleship and faith, showing that the spirit of the Gospel transcends gender distinctions. Their presence in the historical narrative of the Church highlights the vital roles women have played in advancing the message of Christ and nurturing the community of believers. Furthermore, the acknowledgment of these holy women serves as a powerful counter-narrative to the notion of enforced silence. By recognizing their significant contributions, the Church underscores that women are integral to its mission and vitality. This historical recognition encourages a re-evaluation of the theological frameworks that have shaped perceptions of women's roles in the ecclesiastical community.

All of the above raises the critical question of whether the perception of women's inferiority is intrinsic to their nature or a reflection of sociological conditions that have persisted for millennia. The juxtaposition between the Virgin Mary, revered as the »crown of humanity« and »more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim«, and the perception of women as incomplete or subservient to men reveals a stark tension that demands reflection (Evdokimov, 1994, 156). Historically, the patriarchal structures that have influenced societal norms often obscured the fundamental equality that is present in the teachings of the New Testament. As the Apostle Paul asserts, »In the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman« (1 Cor 11:11). Similarly, the Apostle Peter emphasizes the dignity and honour due to woman, stating, »Show her honour as a fellow heir of the grace of life« (1 Pet 3:7). These scriptural affirmations challenge the narrative of inferiority and highlight the mutual interdependence that exists within the Christian community. Moreover, it is essential to recognize that the estrangement observed in human history, particularly during the dominance of patriarchal systems, has often been misrepresented as a natural order. This misunderstanding not only undermines the intrinsic value of women but also detracts from

the holistic view of humanity that the Gospel promotes. The challenge remains for the Church to reconcile these historical perceptions with the transformative teachings of Christ, who welcomed and affirmed women as vital members of His ministry. In light of this, contemporary theological discourse is called to critically examine these long-held beliefs and practices. Acknowledging the sociological influences that have shaped these perceptions allows for a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics in the context of faith. It also opens the door for meaningful dialogue that honours the contributions of women throughout Christian history while reimagining their roles in the present and future. This reflection not only honours the scriptural foundations of equality and honour but also serves as a reminder of the Church's ongoing journey toward embodying the inclusivity modelled by Christ. By fostering an environment that recognizes and values the diverse gifts and insights of all its members, the Church can more fully reflect the unity and love at the heart of its mission.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of Christian thought through the lens of female theologians represents a significant and transformative movement within contemporary theological discourse. Their diligent investigation of the sources of Christianity not only enriches our understanding of faith but also challenges long-standing perceptions and practices. By engaging with Scripture, tradition, and the historical context of women's roles, these theologians illuminate the complexities of gender dynamics in a way that promotes inclusivity and mutual respect.

The dialogue fostered by these scholarly efforts serves as a vital pathway toward deeper mutual understanding within the Church and society at large. By acknowledging and valuing the diverse experiences and insights of women, we can cultivate a richer theological tapestry that reflects the fullness of the Christian community. Ultimately, the contributions of female theologians will enhance the Church's mission, enabling it to

embrace the inclusivity exemplified by Christ, and fostering an environment where all voices are heard and valued.

As we move forward, it is imperative that we remain open to the ongoing dialogue about the position of women within the Church, recognizing that their diverse gifts, insights and experiences are essential for a holistic understanding of the faith. Through this collaborative endeavour, we not only honour the legacy of the women who have shaped our spiritual heritage but also pave the way for a more vibrant and dynamic future for the Church, one that embodies the principles of equality, love, and grace at its core.

Pravoslavne teologije žena i feminizam

Aneta Jovkowska

Sažetak

Uloga žena u Pravoslavnoj Crkvi odražava dinamičnu međuigru dviju tradicija: one koja naglašava oslobođenje i jednakost, što je izraženo u biblijskoj tvrdnji da »nema više: muško – žensko« (Gal 3,28), i one koja je, u određenim povijesnim razdobljima, dovela do ograničenja sudjelovanja žena u crkvenom životu. Iz te perspektive, izazovi i pitanja, koje postavlja feministička teologija, nude priliku za unutarcrkvenu teološku refleksiju. Senzibilno suočavanje s tim temama omogućuje preispitati određena tumačenja oblikovana patrijarhalnim kulturama prošlosti, više negoli temeljnim učenjima pravoslavne vjere. Takvo kritičko propitivanje ima za cilj produbiti razumijevanje doprinosa žena i potvrditi njihovu ključnu ulogu u životu Crkve.

Ključne riječi: žene u pravoslavlju, feministička teologija, patrijarhalni utjecaj, povijesne perspektive, doprinos žena, suvremena pravoslavna misao, zajednica vjernika.

Uvod

U pravoslavnim se zemljama razvoj feminističke teologije povijesno najvećim dijelom odvijao izvan crkvenih institucija. Na smjer i dinamiku istočno-pravoslavne teološke misli utjecali su razni politički čimbenici, što je rezultiralo putanjom koja se značajno razlikuje od one na Zapadu (Belonick, 1983, 34). Međutim, suvremene pravoslavne teologinje posljednjih su se godina počele baviti važnim pitanjima kojima odzvanjaju upiti što su ih njihove zapadne kolegice postavljale prije nekoliko desetljeća. Ta pitanja obuhvaćaju ključne teme poput biblijskih

konceptata čistoće i nečistoće, tumačenja Pavlovih odlomaka o šutnji i pokornosti (koji su možda nenamjerno marginalizirali ženske glasove i doprinose unutar zajednice) te patrijarhalnih pogleda koji su povijesno utjecali na status žena. Osim toga, sve su češće rasprave o značenju Predaje – posebice o tome koji se elementi priznaju kao dio Svete predaje – što postaje jedno od središnjih pitanja pravoslavnih teologinja.

U svjetlu tog razvoja, pravoslavne teologinje aktivno sudjeluju u znanstvenom pisanju i globalnim teološkim forumima, nastojeći osvijetliti značajan doprinos žena životu Crkve. Njihovi naponi nisu usmjereni samo na isticanje povijesnih uloga koje su žene imale, već i na zagovaranje njihove uključenosti u suvremene teološke rasprave i procese donošenja odluka unutar Crkve.¹ Unošenjem svježih perspektiva i uvida u tradicionalne teološke okvire, teologinje obogaćuju diskurs o rodu i teologiji, potičući dublje razumijevanje ključne uloge žena u vjerničkoj zajednici. Njihov angažman odražava rastuće priznavanje nužnosti raznolikih glasova u oblikovanju budućnosti pravoslavne teologije i pridonosi uključivijem i cjelovitijem pristupu kršćanskoj misli i praksi.

Ovaj rad nastoji istražiti spomenute rasprave nastale unutar pravoslavlja u kontekstu teologija žena i feminizma, a koje doprinose konstruktivnom dijalogu o ulozi i prepoznavanju žena u pravoslavnoj misli i praksi. Proučavajući sjecište tradicije i suvremenih teoloških istraživanja, ovaj rad želi naglasiti transformacijski potencijal ženskih doprinosa u obogaćivanju pravoslavne teologije.

¹ Ovdje bih spomenula dva pravoslavna časopisa koji se bave ženama i njihovu mjestu u Crkvi: *Mary-Martha* (Orthodox Women's Network, Leonie Liveris (ur.), Australija) i *The St. Nina Quarterly* (Women's Orthodox Ministries and Education Network, MA).

1. Rasprave o položaju žena u Pravoslavnoj crkvi i shvaćanje Svete predaje

U novoj stvarnosti u Kristu, apostol Pavao izriče duboku istinu koja nadilazi tradicionalne barijere podjele i nejednakosti: »Doista, koji ste god u Krista kršteni, Kristom se zaodjenuste. Nema više: Židov – Grk! Nema više: rob – slobodnjak! Nema više: muško – žensko! Svi ste vi Jedan u Kristu Isusu« (Gal 3,27-28). Ta snažna afirmacija služi kao temeljno načelo feminističke teologije te je često smatrano *magnum cartom* kršćanskog feminizma zbog naglaska na jednakosti, univerzalnosti i slobodi (Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, 2004, 33-37). Dok je taj temeljni postulat kršćanstva značajno pridonio raspravi o rodnoj ravnopravnosti, ključno je prepoznati da je njegovo potpuno ostvarenje često bilo pod utjecajem šireg društvenog konteksta, osobito unutar povijesno patrijarhalnih društava. U mnogim su slučajevima uloge dodijeljene ženama oblikovale kulturne norme i prakse, što je dovelo do marginalizacije aktivnog sudjelovanja žena u crkvenom životu. Posljedično, doprinos žena često je naglašavan u okviru »kućne Crkve« i obitelji, odražavajući društvene vrijednosti određenog vremena, a ne izravno teološko stajalište same Crkve (Castelli, 1998, 227-253).

Kako je još u šestom stoljeću istaknuo sveti Ivan Milostivi, put prema postizanju društvene ravnopravnosti ostaje trajni poduhvat: »U Kristu smo ontološki svi jednaki, stoga moramo postati i društveno jednaki« (Petrou, 2001, 253-263). Ta spoznaja naglašava nužnost usklađivanja društvenih praksi s teološkim istinama. Ističe da put ostvarenja veće vidljivosti uloga žena u Crkvi nadilazi doktrinarno priznanje i zahtijeva aktivno sudjelovanje te transformaciju kako unutar crkvenog života, tako i društvenih normi koje oblikuju svakodnevne interakcije. Stoga bi rasprava o feminističkoj teologiji unutar pravoslavne tradicije trebala biti usmjerena na stvaranje okruženja koje prepoznaje i cijeni glasove i doprinose žena, ne kao kritika Crkve, već kao poziv na odražavanje jedinstva i jednakosti sadržanih u Kristovom učenju. Suočavajući se s izazovima koje postavljaju povijesni i kulturni konteksti, Crkva ima priliku bolje utjeloviti duh svojih učenja, njegujući zajednicu koja istinski živi poziv na ljubav

i služenje bližnjima u svoj njihovoj raznolikosti. Takav pristup odaje počast bogatoj tradiciji pravoslavlja i otvara put prema uključivijoj i pravednijoj budućnosti unutar vjerske zajednice.

Pravoslavna Crkva temelji svoje učenje na Svetoj predaji, koja služi kao temelj njezina teološkog okvira i crkvenih praksi. Međutim, kako se tradicija i suvremena stvarnost isprepliću, često dolazi do napetosti između očuvanja dugotrajnih običaja i prilagodbe brzo mijenjajućem društvenom okruženju. Ta je dinamika posebno izražena u raspravama o »položaju žena u Pravoslavnoj Crkvi«.

1.1. Shvaćanje tradicije u pravoslavlju

Pitanje sudjelovanja žena u Crkvi usko je povezano s konceptom tradicije. Što znači tradicija i kako se razumije njezino očuvanje? Prema pronicljivoj formulaciji oca Ivana, tradicija »predstavlja povijest ispravnih izbora koje su donijeli ljudi kao odgovor na proročku Božju riječ, pravedno se obraćajući specifičnim povijesnim uvjetima i okolnostima svoga vremena« (Meyendorff, 1993, 5-21). Tradiciju karakterizira kretanje od »moći« prema »energiji«. Kad god se to dogodi, tradicija je istinita i spasonosna, otkrivajući način na koji supostoje njezini ključni komplementarni aspekti: kretanje naprijed i istodobno stajanje pred Kristovim licem. U tom smislu, tradicija se ne može razumjeti bez napretka, kontinuiranog proučavanja i produbljivanja biti objave dok se odgovara na specifična pitanja svake epohe. Kako bi bio istinski izraz Božje volje i posvećivao one koji u njemu sudjeluju, napredak mora istovremeno supostojati sa stavom ili jezikom evanđelista Ivana, odnosno s »ostajanjem« u Kristu. Crkva je istovremeno i »stara« i »nova«. Ta dijalektička percepcija živopisno je opisana u djelu *Hermin Pastir*, gdje je Crkva prikazana kao visoka kula koja se neprestano gradi i uzdiže dodavanjem »sjajnih kamenova«. Staro i novo međusobno se nadopunjuju, stvarajući »živu sliku vječnosti u vremenu« (Bouteneff, 2006, 141-194).

Poziv na veću zastupljenost žena u raznim crkvenim ulogama ključan je dio ove refleksije. Ipak, važno je prepoznati da takvi zahtjevi ne proizlaze iz želje da se tradicija potkopa, već iz nasto-

janja da duh kršćanskog učenja zaživi u suvremenom kontekstu. Pitanja uključenja žena u crkvenu upravu, poput njihove prisutnosti u crkvenim odborima i tijelima koja donose odluke, ukazuju na potrebu za otvorenim i konstruktivnim razgovorom o rodnim ulogama unutar Crkve. Štoviše, obnova instituta đakonisa pruža priliku za istraživanje povijesnog i teološkog značaja žena u službi. Takva razmatranja pozivaju na preispitivanje tradicionalnih stavova koji su često postavljali majčinstvo i obitelj kao jedine odgovornosti žena. Ta perspektiva može nenamjerno ograničiti prepoznavanje raznolikih talenata i doprinosa žena u životu Crkve.

Razmišljajući o tim ključnim pitanjima, očigledno je da je suvremena teološka misao pozvana iskreno se i otvoreno suočiti s razvojem uloge žena. Priznajući kreativne i nedovoljno iskorištene sposobnosti žena, Crkva te darove može u potpunosti integrirati u zajednički život, obogaćujući vlastito poslanje i svjedočanstvo u svijetu. Ta uključenost ne zahtijeva napuštanje Svete predaje, naprotiv, poziva na dublje razumijevanje načina kako živjeti tradiciju, a da odražava vrijednosti jednakosti i međusobnog poštovanja koje je propovijedao Krist. Pravoslavna Crkva može tako potaknuti inkluzivnije okruženje u kojem se glasovi žena čuju i aktivno doprinose misiji Crkve. Otvoreno pristupajući tim pitanjima i posvećenošću rastu, Crkva može ploviti složenostima suvremenog doba, a da pritom ostane vjerna svojim teološkim korijenima, obogaćujući tako svoj zajedničarski život i jačajući svoje svjedočanstvo u raznolikom i promjenjivom svijetu.

Vrijeme pokazuje da se percepcije žena mijenjaju, što potiče preispitivanje tradicionalnih koncepata koji u suvremenom diskursu mogu dovesti do stagnacije ili nesporazuma. Kad razmatramo pitanje obnove pravoslavne tradicije, postaje očito da ona ostaje trajno otvorena za teološki dijalog. Pravoslavna Crkva, često opisana kao Crkva Predaje, ponekad taj identitet održava na način koji mnogim vjernicima može djelovati gotovo stereotipno. Iako pojmovi poput »prilagodba«, »obnova«, »suvremenost« i »promjena« mogu izazvati skepticizam kod nekih pravoslavnih teologa, ključno je prepoznati da ti koncepti mogu supostojati s esencijom pravoslavne vjere. Poziv na obnovu ne nastoji srušiti temelje tradicije, već ih obogatiti i produbiti njihovo

vo razumijevanje u svjetlu suvremenih stvarnosti. Nužno je da se Crkva suoči s gorućim pitanjima modernog doba, posebno u vezi s ulogom žena koja se razvija, na način koji odražava njezinu predanost istini i ljubavi.

Iako su neki teolozi počeli uvoditi svježije perspektive u pravoslavnu misao i praksu, šira tradicija često pokazuje manjak ključnih znakova promjena potrebnih za autentičnu obnovu. Taj nedostatak otvara značajna pitanja: kako Pravoslavna crkva može odgovoriti na izazove modernog doba, a da ostane vjerna svojim teološkim korijenima? Na koji način može prihvatiti doprinos žena, a da ne ugrozi svoja temeljna uvjerenja? Spremnost da se ta pitanja razmotre iskreno i otvoreno, bit će od koristi putu Crkve prema obnovi. Poticanjem okruženja u kojem teološkom diskursu mogu pridonijeti različiti glasovi, Pravoslavna se crkva može bolje uskladiti s načelima jednakosti i inkluzivnosti koji su svojstveni njezinom učenju.

Nadalje, priznavanje i integriranje uvida teologinja u širi razgovor može donijeti vrijedne perspektive koje obogaćuju unutarcrkveno razumijevanje Predaje. Takvi naponi mogu dovesti do dinamičnije i osjetljivije vjerske zajednice, sposobne suočiti se sa složenostima suvremenog života, dok ostaje ukorijenjena u Kristovoj ljubavi i učenju. U tom svjetlu, Pravoslavna je crkva pozvana preispitati svoj pristup tradiciji – ne kao statičnom entitetu, već kao živoj i dinamičnoj stvarnosti koja nastavlja progovarati srcima i umovima vjernika. Prihvatanje takvog shvaćanja može otvoriti put revitaliziranoj tradiciji koja odražava potrebe i težnje današnjeg svijeta, omogućujući Crkvi da vrši svoje poslanje s obnovljenom snagom i svrhom.

1.2. Dinamičan karakter Svete predaje

U pravoslavnoj teologiji, pojam Svete predaje obuhvaća duboko prebivanje Duha Svetoga u Crkvi. U toj božanskoj prisutnosti sudjeluje svaki član Tijela Kristova, što im omogućuje da čuju, prime i razumiju istinu osvjetljenu Božjom Objavom, a ne isključivo kroz ljudski diskurs. Ta perspektiva naglašava važnost istinskog znanja, koje proizlazi iz božanske svjetlosti. Kao

što Sveto pismo kaže: »Ta Bog koji reče: 'Neka iz tame svjetlost zasine!' on zasvijetli u srcima našim da nam spoznanje slave Božje zasvijetli na licu Kristovu« (2 Kor 4,6). Takvo prosvjetljenje djeluje kao preobražavajuća sila, oslobađajući pojedince od stega naravi i ograničenja povijesnih okolnosti. Kao što je rečeno: »Upoznat ćete istinu i istina će vas osloboditi« (Iv 8,32). Taj odlomak naglašava ideju da istinsko razumijevanje, darovano božanskom objavom, osnažuje vjernike da nadvladaju društvene norme i kulturne konvencije koje mogu sputavati njihov duhovni rast i autentičnost.

Stoga je, u kontekstu pravoslavne teologije, međudjelovanje Svete predaje i preobražavajućeg djelovanja Duha Svetoga ključno za njegovanje vitalne vjerničke zajednice. Ono poziva svakog vjernika na duboko uranjanje u crkveni nauk, dok istovremeno ostaju otvoreni za neprestano djelovanje Duha Svetoga u njihovim životima. Ta dinamika stvara okruženje u kojem duhovna istina može cvjetati, vodeći prema dubljem odnosu s Bogom i jasnijem razumijevanju vlastitog mjesta unutar Crkve. Štoviše, to bavljenje božanskim znanjem potiče vjernike da istine objavljene kroz Svetu predaju utjelovljuju na način aktivnog sudjelovanja u poslanju Crkve da svjedoči Kristovu ljubav i milost u svijetu. Prihvatanjem preobražavajuće moći tog znanja, pojedinci postaju osposobljeni nositi se sa složenostima suvremenog života, a da pritom ostanu ukorijenjeni u bogatom teološkom nasljeđu pravoslavlja.

Crkva je čuvarica Svete predaje, koja ne djeluje samo kao statični spremnik vjerovanja, već i kao živi izraz sposobnosti Crkve da pod vodstvom Duha Svetoga prepozna istinu. To prepoznavanje nije automatski proces, već predstavlja temeljni uvjet za trajno oblikovanje svijesti Crkve o božanskoj istini. U tom smislu, Predaja utjelovljuje dinamičan proces koji vjernike uključuje u neprekidan hod prema razumijevanju i objavi. Osim toga, Predaju ne treba promatrati kao puku naviku ukorijenjenu u ponavljajućoj uniformnosti. Kad bismo je tako shvaćali, riskirali bismo život Crkve promatrati kao statičan, gušeći njezin potencijal za dinamičan izražaj i rast. Vitalnost Crkve leži u njezinoj sposobnosti da Predaju tumači i primjenjuje na način koji odjekuje u suvremenom kontekstu, a da pritom ostane vjerna temeljnim učenjima vjere. Za suočavanje Crkve s izazovima i

složenostima svijeta koji se brzo mijenja, taj je interpretativni proces ključan.

Ravnotežu između očuvanja svoje baštine i suočavanja sa suvremenim stvarnostima, Crkva može pronaći poticanjem okruženja koje ohrabruje teološki dijalog i refleksiju. Takav pristup omogućuje procvat snažnog crkvenog života koji odgovara na potrebe svojih članova, posebno u područjima poput rodni uloga, društvene pravde i etičkih pitanja. Dok se Crkva suočava s tim izazovima, ključno je da se u odlukama i djelovanju oslanja na obilnu mudrost Svete predaje. Na taj način, ne samo da odaje počast svojoj prošlosti, već i razvija perspektivu koja je usmjerena prema budućnosti i prihvaća preobražavajuću moć Duha Svetoga. Ta je ravnoteža između tradicije i inovacije ključna kako bi Crkva ostala relevantan i učinkovit svjedok evanđelja u današnjem svijetu.

Naposljetku, uloga Crkve, kao čuvarice Predaje, zahtijeva otvorenost prema djelovanju Duha Svetoga koji, unutar okvira pravoslavnih vjerovanja, može nadahnuti nove uvide i shvaćanja. Ta predanost istovremenom očuvanju i dinamičnom izražavanju Predaje obogaćuje poslanje Crkve, osnažujući je da – dok ostaje ukorijenjena u vječnim istinama vjere – odgovori na duhovne i pastoralne potrebe svojih članova.

2. Sveta predaja, Sveto pismo i crkveni oci

Kroz prizmu znanstvenog proučavanja i istraživanja, počevši od novozavjetnih tekstova pa sve do spisa crkvenih otaca, dolazi do izražaja dinamični karakter Svete predaje koja o sudjelovanju žena u Crkvi ne nudi sustavno učenje. Reference na žene u tim su tekstovima uglavnom rijetke i uvjetovane kontekstom te se najčešće pojavljuju u teološkim raspravama, a ne kao dio dosljednog diskursa o rodni ulogama unutar crkvene zajednice (Topping, 1993). Štoviše, mnogi crkveni oci i pisci priznaju da žene uvelike ovise o svojim društvenim pozicijama.² To prizna-

² Vidi Sv. Grgur teolog, *Homilije*, PG: 36, 289 AB: »Muškarci su bili zakonodavci i optuživali su žene.« U tom tekstu, sv. Grgur teolog pokazuje svoj kritički stav prema društvenim i rodni normama. Ta homilija kritizira

nje upućuje na to da su kroz povijest glasovi žena unutar Crkve bili oblikovani prevladavajućim kulturnim normama i društvenim strukturama pojedinih razdoblja. Posljedično, postoji nesklad između oslobađajuće izjave iz Poslanice Galaćanima 3, 28, koja proglašava: »nema više: muško – žensko«, i životnog iskustva žena, koje su nerijetko bile ograničene pravilima svog kulturnog okruženja.

Ta dvojnost naglašava složenost tumačenja Svete predaje u odnosu na rodna pitanja. Dok temeljno kršćansko načelo jednakosti u Kristu potvrđuje urođeno dostojanstvo i vrijednost svih pojedinaca, povijesni kontekst njegove primjene često je rezultirao neodređenošću u pogledu uloge žena unutar Crkve. Izazov leži u usklađivanju radikalne uključivosti evanđelja sa stvarnošću patrijarhalnih struktura koje su stoljećima oblikovale crkvene prakse i stavove (Behr-Sigel, 1991, 103-157). Kako se suvremeni teolozi i znanstvenici bave tim tekstovima i tradicijama, postoji hitna potreba za ponovnim ispitivanjem implikacija Svete predaje za razumijevanje sudjelovanja žena u Crkvi danas. Ovo istraživanje poziva na kritičku refleksiju o tome kako Crkva može odati počast svojoj teološkoj baštini, dok istovremeno odgovara na hitne pozive za većom uključenošću i zastupljenošću žena u njezinom životu.

Prepoznavanje povijesnog konteksta, koji je oblikovao rasprave o ženama u Crkvi, omogućuje nijansirani pristup Predaji i potiče vjernike na dublje razumijevanje načina kako se crkvena učenja mogu primijeniti, a da potvrđuju vrijednost i doprinos žena danas. Njegovanjem teološkog dijaloga koji obuhvaća i Predaju i životna iskustva žena, crkva može raditi na stvaranju pravednijeg i uključivijeg okruženja koje odražava preobražavajuću poruku evanđelja. U konačnici, ovo putovanje zahtijeva kritičko preispitivanje prošlih tumačenja, uz istodobnu predanost stvaranju prostora za ženske glasove unutar crkvenog narativa. Taj napor poštuje puninu Svete predaje, dok se usklađuje s misijom Crkve da odražava ljubav, milost i jednakost sadržanu u Kristovom učenju.

povijesnu neravnotežu moći, gdje su muškarci donosili zakone i postavljali ograničenja ženama.

1.2. Kristov odnos prema ženama

Kristov odnos prema ženama izuzetno je preobražavajući te se ističe kao jedno od ključnih obilježja njegova poslanja. Njegov pristup ne samo da izaziva tadašnje društvene norme, već i danas snažno odjekuje u unutarcrkvenim raspravama o rodnim pitanjima i inkluziji. Prihvaćajući žene kao svoje sljedbenice, kao što vidimo u Luki 8,1-3, on prkosi kulturnim očekivanjima židovskih rabina koji su ulogu žena u vjerskom obrazovanju obično ograničavali. To prihvaćanje označava duboko priznanje duhovne vrijednosti žena i njihova legitimnog mjesta u zajednici vjernika. Štoviše, Isus pokazuje volju za nadilaženjem obrednih propisa o čistoći, koji su često žene marginalizirali. U pripovijesti o ženi koja boluje od krvarenja (Lk 8,43-48), on joj dopušta da ga dotakne – čin koji se smatrao »nečistim« – i priznaje njezinu vjeru dok joj vraća dostojanstvo. Slično, Isusova interakcija sa ženom koja je bila poznata kao grešnica (Lk 7,37-50) naglašava njegovu otvorenost prema pokajanju i milosti, dok joj dopušta da izrazi svoju ljubav i odanost pomazivanjem njegovih nogu. Događaj sa ženom uhvaćenom u preljubu (Iv 8,1-11) dodatno ilustrira njegov revolucionarni stav. Umjesto da je osudi, Krist izaziva one koji su bez grijeha da prvi bace kamen, čime štiti njezino dostojanstvo i stavlja milosrđe ispred osude. Taj čin suosjećanja odražava njegovo duboko razumijevanje ljudske slabosti i služi kao snažan podsjetnik na preobražavajuću moć oprost.

Uz te interakcije, Isus vodi duboki teološki dijalog sa Samarijankom (Iv 4,1-42), što iznenađuje njegove muške suvremenike. Raspravljajući o naravi istinskog bogoštovlja i otkrivajući svoj mesijanski identitet, Isus ruši etničke i rodne barijere, pokazujući da duhovna istina nadilazi društvene podjele. Posebno, unutar tradicije rane kršćanske Crkve, Samarijanka, često poznata po imenu Fotina, prepoznata je kao prva žena misionarka i prva osoba koja je navijestila evanđelje. Taj izvanredan trenutak stoji kao snažan dokaz njezine uloge u ranom širenju Isusove poruke. Isusov razgovor s Fotinom dotiče se temeljnih tema njegova učenja, uključujući pokajanje, vjeru u Boga i narav bogoštovlja. Unatoč društvenim barijerama koje su je mogle marginalizirati, ona postaje aktivna sudionica u teološkoj raspravi. Njezino su-

djelovanje u tim dubokim temama pokazuje da su žene u potpunosti sposobne razumjeti složene duhovne istine i da su ključne za misiju Crkve.

Ta pripovijest jača ideju da žene, unatoč društvenim ograničenjima, mogu biti sugovornice u teološkim raspravama, sposobne ostaviti sve iza sebe poradi evanđelja. Pripovijest odjekuje drugim evanđeoskim izvještajima, poput onih o uskrsnuću, gdje su žene prve svjedokinje uskrslog Krista (Mt 28,1-8; Mk 16,1-8; Lk 24,1-8; Iv 20,1-10). Evanđelje po Ivanu dodatno razrađuje ulogu Marije Magdalene (Iv 20,11-18), ističući da je početni navještaj uskrsnuća bio povjeren upravo ženama. Mnogi biblijski egzegeti naglašavaju tu činjenicu, ističući da su upravo žene bile prve koje su primile poruku o uskrsnuću.³ Mary Evans prikladno primjećuje da žene nisu bile samo »svjedokinje događaja i primateljice poruke o uskrsnuću«, već su, također, bile poslone dijeliti tu poruku. To naglašava njihovu aktivnu ulogu u ranoj Crkvi kao prvih navjestiteljica nade Kristova uskrsnuća, kojima je ta zadaća povjerena i od anđela i od samog Krista. Njihova značajna uloga potvrđuje inherentnu aktivnu prisutnost žena u kršćanskom narativu i naglašava njihov ključni doprinos ranoj zajednici vjernika (Evans, 1983, 54).

Prepoznajući teološki značaj Samarijankina susreta s Isusom, Crkva iz njezina primjera može crpiti nadahnuće. Njezino preobražavajuće iskustvo poziva na suvremeno promišljanje o ulozi žena u kršćanskoj zajednici, potičući ponovno vrednovanje njihova doprinosa i potencijala za vodstvo. To priznanje ne samo da odaje počast nasljeđu žena u Svetom pismu, već, naglašava i uključivost koju je Krist pokazivao tijekom svoga djelovanja. Dok suvremeni pravoslavni teolozi promišljaju o Kristovim susretima sa ženama, pruža se prilika za nadahnuće njegovim primjerom. Prihvatanjem uključivosti koju je Krist demonstrirao, Crkva može nastojati stvoriti okruženje u kojem žene nisu prepoznate samo zbog svojih duhovnih doprinosa, već su i

³ Vidi Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi, »Ο ρόλος των γυναικών στη ζωή της Εκκλησίας: Από τις μαρτυρίες της Καινής Διαθήκης στο σύγχρονο οικουμενικό διάλογο« (The Role of Women in the Life of the Church: From the Testimonies of the New Testament to the Contemporary Ecumenical Dialogue), dostupno na: http://cemes-en.weebly.com/uploads/2/7/8/8/27884917/4_kasselouri.pdf (pristupljeno 3. XI. 2024.).

potaknute na puno sudjelovanje u životu i vodstvu Crkve. Ovo promišljanje poziva na preispitivanje teoloških okvira koji su ulogu žena povijesno zanemarivali ili umanjivali, omogućujući tako bogatije i cjelovitije razumijevanje Svete predaje. U konačnici, Kristov preobražavajući pristup današnjoj Crkvi služi kao poziv na djelovanje i potiče njezine članove da utjelove ljubav i prihvaćanje koje je on pokazivao. Poštovanjem nasljeđa žena u Svetom pismu i njihova doprinosa vjeri, Crkva može njegovati inkluzivniju i dinamičniju zajednicu koja odražava puninu Kristove poruke.

2.2. *Žene u Crkvi*

Suradnja apostola Pavla s mnogim ženama u ranoj Crkvi te priznanje njihova doprinosa i podrške u različitim ulogama, dobro je dokumentirana (npr. Rim 16,1-7) (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1986, 420-433). Te su žene imale ključne uloge u lokalnim zajednicama i često su služile kao đakonise, pokroviteljice, dobrotvorke i vođe unutar svojih zajednica. Primjerice, u poslanici Filipljanima, sveti Pavao posebno spominje Evodiju i Sintihu, koje su se, kako kaže, »u evanđelju borile zajedno sa mnom«, i čija su imena, zajedno s Klementom i drugim suradnicima, zapisana »u knjizi Života« (Fil 4,2-3). Pavao namjerno koristi izraz »suradnici« (συνεργοί), naglašavajući njihov trud i doprinos, ne samo duhovni, nego i praktični. To spominjanje potvrđuje ključnu ulogu koju su te dvije žene imale u životu zajednice, osobito u kontekstu Pavlova poziva na pomirenje.

Prema Djelima apostolskim, navještaj evanđelja u Filipima započeo je u društvu žena: »U dan subotnji izidosmo izvan gradskih vrata k rijeci, gdje smo mislili da će biti bogomolja. Sjedosmo i stadosmo govoriti okupljenim ženama« (Dj 16,13). Pripovijest se nastavlja pričom o Lidiji i njezinu domu, ističući njezinu gostoljubivost i vodstvo unutar zajednice (Dj 16,14-15).

Druga spominjanja žena u Pavlovim poslanicama uključuju Apiju, koja je bila dio Filemonove kućne Crkve (Fil 1,2), i Prisku, koja je zajedno s Akvilom imala važnu ulogu u ranoj Crkvi (Rim 16,3-5; 1 Kor 16,19). Značajno je da se mnoge od tih referenci pojavljuju u završnom poglavlju Poslanice Rimljanima, gdje je

od dvadeset i dva navedena imena deset ženskih. Među njima se, zbog važne uloge u ranim kršćanskim zajednicama, ističu dvije ličnosti: Feba, opisana kao »đakon« (διάκονος) i »zaštitnica« (προστάτις) mnogih, te Junija, priznata kao »ugledna među apostolima« (Rim 16,7) (Whelan, 1993, 67-85). Ti primjeri pokazuju da su žene u ranoj kršćanskoj Crkvi imale značajne i raznolike uloge, ne samo kao suradnice, već i kao vođe i aktivne sudionice u evangelizaciji i izgradnji zajednice.

Ipak, određeni odlomci pripisani Pavlu tumačeni su na način koji odražava tadašnje društvene norme, osobito u pogledu rodnih uloga unutar crkvene zajednice (1 Kor 14,34; Ef 5,22; Kol 3,18). Čini se da, u tim kontekstima, Pavao odražava obiteljske kodekse ponašanja uobičajene u njegovoj kulturi, što je neke istraživače navelo na zaključak da nije aktivno osporavao društveno-političke strukture koje su žene marginalizirale. U kasnijoj povijesti Crkve, ta su stajališta tumačena i prilagođavana na različite načine u različitim kršćanskim zajednicama. Na primjer, određeni odlomci, poput 1 Tim 2,11-15, postali su temeljni u oblikovanju razumijevanja uloga žena u pravoslavnoj teologiji. Taj tekst kaže:

»Žena neka u miru prima pouku sa svom podložnošću. Poučavati pak ženi ne dopuštam, ni vladati nad mužem, nego – neka bude na miru. Jer prvi je oblikovan Adam, onda Eva; i Adam nije zaveden, a žena je zavedena, učinila prekršaj. A spasit će se rađanjem djece ako ustraje u vjeri, ljubavi i posvećivanju, s razborom.«

Povijesno gledano, taj je ulomak utjecao na kanonsko pravo. Važno je prepoznati da ta tumačenja odražavaju kulturni i povijesni kontekst u kojem su nastala. Mnogi su rani crkveni oci podržavali takva gledišta i ona su oblikovala normativno razumijevanje ženskih uloga u Crkvi, pri čemu su brak i majčinstvo često naglašavani kao primarna ženska zvanja. Iako je monaštvo nudilo alternativni put, često se smatralo da je celibat jedini opravdani izuzetak od tradicionalnih uloga dodijeljenih ženama. Međutim, suvremene teološke rasprave sve više prepoznaju potrebu za kritičkim pristupom tim tekstovima, uzimajući u obzir transformativnu poruku evanđelja koja naglašava dostojanstvo i vrijednost svake osobe. Ova refleksija poziva na

nijansirano razumijevanje biblijskih tekstova, uz priznanje da su bit Kristove poruke uključivost i otkupljenje.

Dok Pravoslavna Crkva nastavlja teološki dijalog, raste svijest o važnosti ženskih glasova i doprinosa unutar vjerske zajednice. Taj dijalog nastoji odati priznanje bogatom nasljeđu žena u Crkvi, dok istovremeno razmatra izazove povijesnih tumačenja koja su možda nenamjerno ograničila njihove uloge. U tom nastojanju Crkva može težiti sveobuhvatnijem razumijevanju Svete predaje, onom koje prihvaća darove i talente svih svojih članova te odražava istinsku narav Tijela Kristova. Učenja svetih otaca, oblikovana njihovim povijesnim i kulturnim kontekstima, često su nastojala uskladiti stvarnosti njihova vremena s eshatološkom vizijom Crkve. U tom su se dijalogu pojavili određeni stavovi koji su uloge žena u Crkvi, naizgled, strogo ograničili. Kako primjećuje teolog Paul Evdokimov, »Neki su teolozi izgradili čitavu hijerarhiju temeljenu na 'podložnosti' i 'autoritetu', beskonačno raspravljajući o tome je li muškarac vođa ili glava« (Evdokimov, 1994, 147). Takve su rasprave nesvjesno perpetuirale poziv na šutnju upućen ženama, sugerirajući da njihovi glasovi i doprinosi u crkvenoj sferi trebaju biti ušutkani.

Međutim, doslovno tumačenje tog zahtjeva za šutnjom predstavlja značajan izazov bogatoj tapiseriji kršćanske povijesti. Crkva je kroz stoljeća častila brojne žene – čiji se životi i doprinosi slave u liturgijskim tekstovima – kao svete, pa čak i apostolke. Te žene utjelovljuju bit učenja i vjere, pokazujući da duh evanđelja nadilazi rodne razlike. Njihova prisutnost u povijesnom narativu Crkve naglašava vitalnu ulogu žena u širenju Kristove poruke i izgradnji zajednice vjernika. Štoviše, priznavanje tih svetih žena služi kao snažan protunativ ideji nametnute šutnje. Time što prepoznaje značaj njihovih doprinosa, Crkva naglašava da su žene sastavni dio njezine misije i vitalnosti. To povijesno priznanje potiče na preispitivanje teoloških okvira koji su oblikovali percepciju uloga žena u crkvenoj zajednici.

Sve navedeno postavlja ključno pitanje: je li percepcija inferiornosti žena svojstvena njihovoj prirodi ili je odraz socioloških uvjeta koji su opstajali tisućljećima? Suprotstavljanje slike Djevice Marije – koja se štuje kao »kruna čovječanstva« i »slavnija od

serafina« – ideji žene kao »nepotpune« ili podređene muškarcu, otkriva duboku napetost koja zahtijeva promišljanje (Evdokimov, 1994, 156). Povijesno gledano, patrijarhalne strukture koje su utjecale na društvene norme često su zamagljivale temeljnu jednakost prisutnu u učenju Novog zavjeta. Apostol Pavao jasno ističe: »ipak, u Gospodinu – ni žena bez muža, ni muž bez žene« (1 Kor 11,11). Slično tome, apostol Petar naglašava dostojanstvo i čast koje žene zaslužuju: »iskazujte im čast kao subaštinicima milosti Života« (1 Pt 3,7). Te biblijske tvrdnje suprotstavljaju se narativu inferiornosti i naglašavaju međuovisnost koja postoji unutar kršćanske zajednice.

Nadalje, važno je prepoznati da je otuđenje, primijećeno u povijesti čovječanstva – osobito pod dominacijom patrijarhalnih sustava – često pogrešno predstavljano kao prirodni poređak. To pogrešno shvaćanje ne samo da umanjuje inherentnu vrijednost žena, već i narušava cjelovitu sliku čovječanstva koju promiče evanđelje. Pred Crkvom ostaje izazov da te povijesne percepcije pomiri transformativnim učenjem Krista, koji je žene prihvaćao i afirmirao kao ključne članice svog poslanja. U tom svjetlu, suvremeni je teološki diskurs pozvan kritički preispitati ta dugotrajna uvjerenja i prakse. Priznavanje socioloških utjecaja, koji su oblikovali navedene percepcije, omogućuje nijansiranije razumijevanje rodne dinamike u kontekstu vjere te otvara prostor za smisleni dijalog koji odaje priznanje doprinosima žena kroz kršćansku povijest, istovremeno osmišljavajući njihovu ulogu u sadašnjosti i budućnosti. To promišljanje ne samo da potvrđuje biblijske temelje jednakosti i časti, već služi i kao podsjetnik na trajno putovanje Crkve prema utjelovljenju uključivosti kakvu je živio Krist. Njegujući okruženje koje prepoznaje i vrednuje raznolike darove i uvide svih svojih članova, Crkva može potpunije odražavati jedinstvo i ljubav koji su središtu njezina poslanja.

Zaključak

Zaključno, istraživanje kršćanske misli kroz perspektivu teologinja predstavlja značajan i transformativan pokret unutar

suvremenog teološkog diskursa. Njihovo pomno proučavanje kršćanskih izvora, ne samo da obogaćuje naše razumijevanje vjere, već i predstavlja izazov ustaljenim percepcijama i praksama. Kroz angažman sa Svetim pismom, tradicijom i povijesnim kontekstom uloga žena, te teologinje rasvjetljavaju složenosti rodniha dinamika na način koji promiče uključivost i međusobno poštovanje.

Dijalog koji proizlazi iz tih akademskih nastojanja predstavlja ključan put prema dubljem međusobnom razumijevanju unutar crkvene i šire društvene zajednice. Priznavanjem i vrednovanjem raznolikih iskustava i uvida žena, možemo oblikovati bogatiju teološku tapiseriju koja odražava puninu kršćanske zajednice. U konačnici, doprinosi teologinja dodatno će osnažiti poslanje Crkve, omogućujući joj da prihvati uključivost koju je svjedočio Krist te potičući okruženje u kojem se sluša i cijeni sve glasove.

Dok kročimo naprijed, nužno je ostati otvorenima za kontinuirani dijalog o položaju žena unutar Crkve, prepoznajući da su njihovi raznoliki darovi, uvidi i iskustva neophodni za cjelovito razumijevanje vjere. Kroz taj zajednički pothvat ne samo da odajemo počast nasljeđu žena koje su oblikovale našu duhovnu baštinu, već i utiremo put prema življoj i dinamičnijoj budućnosti Crkve, onoj koja u svojoj biti utjelovljuje načela jednakosti, ljubavi i milosti.

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