

TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY, EQUALITY, AND SOCIAL ETHICS:
A STUDY OF SAYERS AND LACUGNA

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Abstract

It is regrettable that these basic personal rights are not yet being respected everywhere, as is the case with women who are denied the chance freely to choose a husband, a state of life, or to have access to the same educational and cultural benefits as are available to men. *Gaudium et Spes* 29

The forty years since *Gaudium et Spes* have been marked by major progress by women towards the educational and cultural benefits of equality which the document recommends. The Church, however, is perceived by many not as an agent of liberation for women but as a organisation of repression which hinders the advance of women to their full flourishing as human beings.¹ This paper maintains that the tradition of the Church has sometimes been used as a tool of patriarchy in a way that led to a misunderstanding of women's equality. However, the theology of the Trinity as seen through the light of two scholars, Catherine LaCugna, a Roman Catholic and Dorothy L. Sayers, an Anglo-Catholic yields a tradition of liberation which has not been fully explored. This paper concentrates on the implications of this Trinitarian theology on the social ethics of work.

Dorothy L. Sayers

Dorothy L. Sayers is best known as one of the mystery writers who contributed to England's Golden Age of detective fiction. This grouping includes Sayers, Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Marjorie Allingham and Josephine Tey. Sayers wanted to write detective fiction as a novel of manners, as it had been done by Wilkie Collins. Many critics including Heilbrun and Kenny² think she succeeded, especially in the final novels: *The Nine Tailors*, *Gaudy Night*, and *Busman's Honeymoon*. She was invited to write a religious play for the Canterbury Festival in 1936, and to publicise the play when it moved to London's West End, she accepted commissions from *The Sunday Times* to write about Christian dogma. Her fresh presentation and clear prose style made her one of the leading lay apologists of her day. Her special concern was always work which she understood as sacramental, arising from her understanding of the doctrine of the incarnation. Sayers' theology lies within the rational tradition of catholic sacramental theology and natural law ethics³.

Sayers' theological writing was respected by the Roman Catholics of her day. In the midst of the war, in the dark days of 1940, under Cardinal Hinsley's leadership, Roman Catholics in England organised a movement known as the Sword of the Spirit directed toward planning the post-war society. The movement's recommended reading for their groups included Sayers' pamphlet *Creed or Chaos?* Sayers was invited to the movement's first major event to speak on 'Vocation in Work'. She was in distinguished company: Cosmo Lang the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Bell Anglican Bishop of Chichester, The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, the Moderator of the Free Churches, Christopher Dawson, Fr.

D'Arcy S.J., Richard Sullivan Q.C., and the Headmaster of Rugby, Hugh Lyon. Her speech was reported with acclaim in the Roman Catholic, Anglican and secular press.

Her focus on work and her work as a writer resulted in her seeing an analogy for the Trinity in the process of artistic creation. This analogy was first expressed in a speech by the Archangel Michael in her play *The Zeal of Thy House*:

God, the everlasting Wisdom, the holy, undivided and adorable Trinity.
Praise Him that He hath made man in His own image, a maker and craftsman like Himself, a little mirror of His triune majesty.
For every work of creation is threefold, an earthly trinity to match the heavenly.
First: there is the Creative Idea; passionless, timeless, beholding the whole work complete at once, the end in the beginning; and this is the image of the Father.
Second: there is the Creative Energy, begotten of that Idea, working in time from the beginning to the end, with sweat and passion, being incarnate in the bonds of matter; and this is the image of the Word.
Third: there is the Creative Power, the meaning of the work and its response in the lively soul; and this is the image of the indwelling Spirit.
And these three are one, each equally in itself the whole work, whereof none can exist without other and this is the image of the Trinity. *The Zeal of Thy House*

In *The Mind of the Maker* (1941) Sayers developed this analogy and linked it to social ethics through her Trinitarian anthropology. For Sayers there is a single human anthropology; man, (*homo*) includes the male (*vir*) and female (*femina*). Humans bear the image of God in their capacity to create. Creation, as humans experience it, is a threefold process which gives an insight into the Trinity of systematic theology. The three-fold pattern of the Trinity and of the creative process are, Sayers proposes, the 'grain of the Universe'. Her anthropology has two great strengths: it models equality in diversity and applies to men and women equally. The analogy for the Trinity is individual and social: the third person of this analogy, the Power, connects the creator and the audience, and individuals are at one and the same time creators and audience members. Sayers' analogy and her anthropology can correct a Christian tradition that is misinterpreted to deny full humanity to women; creativity is a human power, common to men and women.

Sayers' analogy was received with interest by Roman Catholics of her day. Fr. Vann OP was disappointed that, in his view, the book as a whole did not work: the connection between the analogy and the ethics of work was obscured by the chapters comparing literary creation of characters with human beings' free will and the author's obligation to the plot and the likelihood of miracles⁴. The reviewer in the *Downside Review* was more enthusiastic and, with reservations about her failures to express her theology within the conventions of the Roman Catholic systematic theology of the day, recommended her social criticism as fully congruent with Roman Catholic Social Teaching.

Sayers analogy works well with the understanding of the human person presented in *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* which presents Trinitarian love as the origin and goal of the human person, and says

man and woman, because they are free and intelligent, represent the "thou" created by God and that only in relationship with him can they discover and fulfil the authentic and complete meaning of their personal and social lives; that in their

complementarities and reciprocity they are the image of Trinitarian Love in the created universe;’ (§ 36).

Sayers’ analogy of creating a book enhances our understanding of ourselves as bearing the image of the Trinitarian God, in that it enables us to understand three-in-oneness is a way which is neither a mathematical paradox or unexplained mystery. At the same time, it is a limited analogy and protects us from claiming that we now understand the Trinity. What we gain from Sayers is a helpful example of three-in-oneness.

Catherine LaCugna

Catherine LaCugna was a systematic theologian who work was cut short by her death from cancer in 1997. Her major work on Trinitarian theology is *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (1991). She proposed that we re-examine Trinitarian theology, guided by Karl Rahner who remarked that one could claim that the doctrine of the Trinity was false and the major part of religious literature could remain virtually unchanged. Her larger constructive systematic project arises from Rahner’s claim that the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity and she proceeds through a historical study of the doctrine. Unlike rejectionist feminist theologians, LaCugna retains ‘Father’ saying,

It remains disputed whether calling God ‘Father’ is always patriarchial. I think it need not be the case, ...My agenda is to engage the tradition on its own terms, and to come to a fresh and more adequate doctrine of the Trinity. In my opinion, the fact that the issue of God’s Fatherhood has become so confused and divisive points all the more to the need for a radically revised and revitalised Trinitarian theology of God. (p 18)

The anthropological starting point is a valid point of entry into salvation history, and LaCugna writes:

Trinitarian theology could be described as par excellence a theology of relationship, which explores the mysteries of love, relationship, personhood and communion within the framework of God’s self-revelation in the person of Christ and the activity of the Spirit. (p 1)

Indeed, if humanity is created in the image of God, it seems natural to look for the image of God in our humanity.(p 103)

...Sexuality broadly defined is the capacity for relationship for ecstasies, and for self-transcendence. Sexuality lies at the heart of all creation and is an icon of who God is, the God in whose image we were created male and female.

Sexuality is a clue that our existence is grounded in a being whose To-Be is To-Be-For. (p 407)

Her goal is to recover Trinitarian theology as a lived reality in the Church in theology, liturgy and ethics. When we examine the Trinity, we find a radical equality of all believers grounded in the equality of the Holy Trinity. She wrote:

The Trinitarian *archē* of God emerges as the basis for mutuality among persons: rather than the sexist theology of complementarity or the racist theology of superiority, or the clerical theology of privilege, or the political theology of exploitation, or the patriarchial theology of male dominance and control, the reign of God promises the life of true communion among all human beings and

all creatures. ...Mutuality rooted in communion among persons is a non-negotiable truth about our existence, the highest value and ideal of the Christian life, because for God mutual love among persons is supreme. (p 399)

From this theology she grounds social ethics:

Everything that reduces persons to the conditions of impersonal existence—a cog in the machine; the annihilation of uniqueness; confinement by conditions of need—impedes moral life. In short, ethical life means walking in the ways of God, walking with God in the ever new economy of redemption. (p 408)

Implications for social ethics

Combining the insights of these two theologians we find an image of the Trinity that is accessible, related to our existence as sexual/gendered humans and to our call to live out a life that fulfils the image of God we bear. The radical equality of Trinitarian theology, which LaCugna highlights, helps us to understand the Fatherhood of God as the source for human fatherhood *and* human motherhood in a relationship of mutuality and not of patriarchy.

Sayers' idea of our power of creativity as the image of God we bear will frame a re-examination of work for men and for women. If human nature is creative and to be fulfilled must express that creativity in work and in recreation, then the economic system, whether capitalist or socialist, which condemns the worker to hours of drudgery in large impersonal organisations and to a leisure time of passive consumption of goods through shopping or mass entertainment is deeply flawed. Problem-solving about unemployment, women's education, or workers' rights fails to address the heart of a problem which is a faulty anthropology which reduces the human being to a cog, however well supplied with goods, in a machine.

The concrete situation

The documents of Roman Catholic Social Thought always take account of the changed and changing situation in the world. *Gaudium et spes* noted women's inequality in political, social and economic life as something to be remedied not accepted. That inequality must be examined in its concrete situation in the economies which take different forms. In an agricultural society, men and women were and are tied to the land to survive. Industrialisation produced new social problems and required new analysis. *Rerum Novarum* and the documents which followed grapple with a new social reality. Sayers experienced first hand the second stage of the industrial revolution, the creation of the mass market. She saw the industrial economy as a new social pattern which distorted men's and women's lives. In her 1938 address, *Are Women Human?* she highlighted some of these changes and their impact on women; first, the creation of the wife as a status symbol:

There has never been any question but that the women of the poor should toil alongside their men. No angry, no compassionate, voice has been raised to say that women should not break their backs with harvest work, or soil their hands with blacking grates and peeling potatoes. The objection is only to work that is pleasant, exciting, or profitable – the work that any human being might think it worth while to do. The boast, 'my wife doesn't need to soil her hands with work,' first became general when

the commercial middle classes acquired the plutocratic and aristocratic notion that the keeping of an idle woman was a badge of superior social status. Man must work, and woman must exploit his labour. What else are they there for? And if the woman submits, she can be cursed for her exploitation; and if she rebels, she can be cursed for competing with the male; whatever she does will be wrong. (1947: p 119-20)

Women's work has been taken from them. To the accusation made in her day that women are trying to 'ape the men' unlike men 'who aren't trying to force their way into the household and turn women out of their rightful occupations', she replies by turning to the Middle Ages. What work was done in the household:

the whole of the spinning industry, the whole of the dyeing industry, the whole of the weaving industry. The whole catering industry and ...the whole of the nation's brewing and distilling. All the preserving, pickling, and bottling industry, all the bacon curing. ...It is all very well to say that woman's place is the home—but modern civilisation has taken all these pleasant and profitable activities out of the home,...It is perfectly idiotic to take away women's traditional occupations and then complain because she looks for new ones. (ibid. p 109)

In her play, *Love All*, a light romantic comedy, the women enter the workforce, not because they reject homemaking and childrearing, but because they can do that and still have time to realise how underused their talents are. For many women of Sayers' day, the industrial economy had freed them from a great deal of time-consuming toil in caring for the family.

This trend has continued as mass production and consumption of consumer goods such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners, mundane as they are, mean that doing the household's laundry is no longer a full day of back-breaking labour; keeping the home clean is less time-consuming. Today women are entering the paid workforce for a variety of reasons, including one that is often: that under the conditions that prevail in modern economies the home has become a much less rewarding place to work and an isolating social environment.

Sayers' was opposed to restricting women to housework and childrearing as their only work. Her comments give clarity to the frustration many women have experienced at being stereotyped:

What is repugnant to every human being is to be reckoned always as a member of a class and not as an individual person. . . . There is no harm in saying that women, as a class, have smaller bones than men, wear lighter clothing, have more hair on their heads and less on their faces, go more pertinaciously to church or the cinema, or have more patience with small and noisy babies. . . . What is unreasonable and irritating is to assume that ALL one's tastes and preferences have to be conditioned by the class to which one belongs.

When the pioneers of university training for women demanded that women should be admitted to the universities, the cry went up at once, 'Why should women want to know about Aristotle?' The answer is NOT that ALL women would be the better for knowing about Aristotle, still

less, as Lord Tennyson seemed to think, that they would be more companionable wives for their husbands if they did know about Aristotle – but simply: ‘What women want as a class is irrelevant. I want to know about Aristotle. It is true that most women care nothing about him, and a great many male undergraduates turn pale and faint at the thought of him – but I, eccentric individual that I am, do want to know about Aristotle, and I submit there is nothing in my shape or my bodily functions which need prevent my knowing about him. (*ibid.*: p 106-108)

For Sayers the first question to ask about any job is not is it a man’s job or a woman’s job, as defined by the existing social understandings of gender, but what qualities are needed in a person to perform this job well. She goes further, and sets out a standard to evaluate what jobs fit our nature as creators which she derived from her contrast of the artist with the average man:

The Artist uses excess remuneration for ‘my own work’ and 9 times out of 10 it is the same work (the exercise of his art) that he does for money. For the Average Man, profit . . . is desired because it offers an escape from work. (1941, p 177)

She confirmed this in the experience of writers in wartime Britain. Writers were expected to take lower royalties so the printers could get a pay rise. The true reason for this, she said, is that the writer is known to live by a set of values which are not purely economic; he beholds the end of his work. The artist and the average man can say “my hat” meaning “I own it.” The artist can say “my work” about his creation no matter who owns it.

Sayers’ standard thus underpinned her criticism of the consumer society. Work that is fit for humans to do must be work that results in a good product: well made and fit for its purpose. The shoddy, the gimcrack, the flotsam and jetsam of the consumer society fail this standard. Not everyone can work as an artist, and some production lines are necessary and beneficial. Sayers, unlike the Distributivists or the Christendom Group, did not recommend a return to the Middle Ages, or a recreation of the small agrarian economy. She was not dismissive of the traditional female role of caring for the household and children, only of the assumption that that is the first choice of all women simply because they are women, and that the desire for other work marks a woman as deviant.

She found the mass production of her time directed to the production of goods not worth having; and the desire for those goods created by advertising which played on the worst aspects of the human character. The industrial revolution had produced the consumer society:

We need not remind ourselves of the furious barrage of advertisement by which people are flattered and frightened out of a reasonable contentment into a greedy hankering after goods which they do not really need; nor point out for the thousandth time how every evil passion—snobbery, laziness, vanity, concupiscence, ignorance, greed—is appealed to in these campaigns. (1947: p 71)

Sayers would expect men and women, human beings, to question what work they do, and to discipline their desires – as she makes clear in an essay called ‘The other six deadly sins’. The whole system, she wrote, would come crashing down in a day if every consumer were voluntarily to restrict purchases to the things really needed, and were to practice generosity and humility.

Care

Sayers' analogy offers an insightful critique of the consumer society. It is strengthened when we add LaCugna's understanding of the human being's To-Be as To-Be-For. Their vision can be read as congruent with the anthropology proposed by Pope John Paul II in the letter *On the Dignity and Vocation of Women* (1988).

For every individual is made in the image of God, insofar as he or she is a rational and free creature capable of knowing God and loving him. Moreover, we read that man cannot exist "alone" (cf Gen 2:18); he can exist only as a "unity of the two," and therefore in relation to another human person. It is a question here of a mutual relationship: man to woman and woman to man. Being a person in the image and likeness of God thus also involves existing in a relationship, in relation to the other "I." This is a prelude to the definitive self-revelation of the Triune God: a living unity in the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (§7)

This anthropology undercuts the modern vision of the human as the autonomous individual, untrammelled by any duties to others, who is to find fulfilment through purchasing power: accessories, houses, cars, clothes, children. Relationships are temporary and non-obligatory. When the going gets tough, the tough get out. In this society caring for the vulnerable, whether the young, the aged, the handicapped or the sick, becomes an intolerable obligation.

The flash-point of modern feminism has been the rejection of the circumscription of women's working lives and opportunity by motherhood. In secular feminist analysis, patriarchy uses pregnancy and child-rearing to control women's lives. Consequently many secular feminists saw reproductive freedom understood as access to contraception and abortion as the first requirement of women's liberation. This must be rejected in any Catholic ethic. Our rejection then requires that we re-examine two questions: first, how can we reconcile the radical equality of the theology of the Trinity and the biological human condition; and second, can we theologically ground an ethic of caring in the Trinity so that both men and women will be called to caring for the young, the weak and the old in a way that does not rely on gender stereotypes.

Catholic Social Thought has always recognized the vocation of motherhood as vital to the good of society, a teaching which Pope John Paul II has reiterated:

Experience confirms that there must be social re-evaluation of the mother's role, of the toil connected with it and of the need that children have for care, love and affection in order that they may develop into responsible, morally and religiously mature and psychologically stable persons. It will redound to the credit of society to make it possible for a mother—without inhibiting her freedom, without psychological or practical discrimination, and without penalizing her as compared with other women—to devote herself to taking care of her children and educating them in accordance with their needs, which vary with age. ...The true advancement of women requires that labor should be structured in such a way that women do not have to pay for their advancement by abandoning what is specific to them and at the expense of the family, in which women as mothers have an irreplaceable role. *On Human Work* §19

He cites this teaching with in a anthropology with embraces both the male and the female (emphasis in the original):

The eternal mystery of generation, which is in God himself, the one and Triune God, (cf Eph 3:14-15) is reflected in the woman's motherhood and the man's fatherhood. ... Although both of them together are parents of their child, *the woman's motherhood constitutes a special "part" in this shared parenthood*, and the most demanding part. Parenthood—even though it belongs to both—is realised much more fully in the woman, especially in the prenatal period. It is the woman who "pays" directly for this shared generation, which literally absorbs the energies of her body and soul. It is therefore necessary that *the man* be fully aware that in their shared parenthood he owes *a special debt to the woman*. No program of "equal rights" between women and men is valid unless it takes this fact fully into account. *On the dignity and vocation of women* §18

It is a fact that most women do assume the primary responsibility for care. As Laurence Summers noted in his (now infamous) speech:

the Israeli kibbutz movement, which, according to Summers, "started with an absolute commitment ... that everybody was going to do the same jobs: Sometimes the women were going to fix the tractors, and the men were going to work in the nurseries." Despite this sex-neutral commitment, he said, individual choices "in a hundred different kibbutzes ... all moved in the same direction"—toward traditional gender roles. Summers' point wasn't that nature accounted for everything, but that attempts to erase it as a factor had failed. (Saletan)

Sayers' analogy may be helpful here in explaining women's choice: it might be the creativity involved in caring for others, as well as the communion with the other and particularly the social approval of that role that provides a satisfaction which is an acceptable trade-off to an purely economic advantage when one chooses the traditional gender role.

The *Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* reminds us that men and women were created for one another in a relationship of communion of persons; original sin led to domination, rivalry, violence and enmity between the sexes which can only be overcome in Christ. It goes on to say

Among the fundamental values linked to women's actual lives is what has been called a "capacity for the other"... This intuition is linked to women's physical capacity to give life. Whether lived out or remaining potential this capacity is a reality that structures the female personality in a profound way. ...one understands the irreplaceable role of women in all aspects of family and social life involving human relationships and caring for others.

This analysis seems to overlook the structures of masculine personality in their capacity and desire to be fathers and to perpetuate the idea that women's motherhood must be determinative of all their vocational choices, but men's fatherhood had little or no relevance in evaluating their choices of work. It is this that seems to fail to recognise women and men as mutually called to living for the other.

The *Letter* finishes with a reminder that ‘the feminine values mentioned here are above all human values: the human condition of man and woman created in the image of God is one and indivisible.’ Living for the other is the vocation of the man as much as the woman; if we take equality and mutuality seriously. If we accept an anthropology of a single human nature in two genders, and if we accept that the physical capacity to be mother structures the female personality then it follows that the physical capacity to be father structures the male personality.

The tradition as cited recognises equality, and closely examines mothering. Fatherhood seems to receive scant attention.⁵ The experience of carrying the child throughout the pregnancy, birthing and nursing means that motherhood is biologically easier to understand. Fatherhood has no such clear and sustained biological involvement as Pope John Paul II noted.⁶ Granting this, we must re-examine our assumptions about biological fatherhood. Is it insignificant, and therefore in need of support by social conditioning to have men care for their offspring? But this leaves us with a concept of masculinity and proper masculine behaviour which denigrates care. That would claim that men are not directed to the other; yet the Pope’s analysis of the nuptial meaning of the body applies to men and women; it is not just socialization, not just biology, but our bearing of the Trinitarian image of God which means we are directed toward communion.

The Christian anthropology detailed in that article in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* brings together the Trinitarian theology which grounds mutuality:

An understanding of divine personhood is necessarily Trinitarian for it is only in the mutuality and reciprocity of giving and receiving of love among the persons of the triune God that the full scope of personhood is manifested. The fundamental elements of personhood may be designated as receptivity and donativity. Only in a communion of persons can these capabilities be realized. Receptivity refers to the capacity and openness of a person to receive from others the gifts that they offer both spiritual and material and above all the gift of their very selves. Donativity or generativity is the corresponding and reciprocal capacity to give to others and to make a gift of oneself. (Vol 3, p 531)

Part of the interest in this article is that it recognises receptivity and donativity as present in men and women, rather than a complementarity of female receptivity and male donativity. Both male and female are structured for the other, both are receptive and donative, both flourish in a communion directed to the Trinitarian God. The structures of the economy must recognise both the father’s and the mother’s call to a life of service to others.

The framework for the discussion in the social documents often treats the masculine participation in the economy as an unexamined standard and seeks to find the adjustments that will make women fit in. This approach leaves unquestioned the claim that the demands of the workplace rather than the human person to come first. Further, it assumes that our concept of masculinity is unproblematic. This claim is denied by an anthropology derived from a Trinitarian theology of mutuality.

The first problem, the demands of the workplace on all workers is addressed by Pope John Paul II in his reminder in *Centesimus Annus*:

When it [economic freedom] becomes autonomous, when man is seen more as a producer or consumer of goods than as a subject who produces and consumes in order to live, then economic freedom loses its necessary relationship to the human person and ends up by alienating and oppressing him. (section 39)

The problem of the structure of business (and of social organisations such as government departments) is apparent across the economic spectrum: in the United States the long hours culture is creating problems for workers; in Europe the unemployment rate remains at a problematically high level, and the solution proposed is moving to a culture of longer working hours; in the developing economies, working conditions close to slave labour offer the only chance of survival to many.

Why men earn more (Farrell 2005) summarizes how to earn more money and reveals how the American economy is structured. I paraphrase his findings: To earn more money: work in hazardous jobs, in unpleasant jobs, in jobs with lower fulfilment (Engineer vs. Child Care Professional), work the worst shifts, work more hours, work more uninterrupted years, work more weeks during the year, be absent less, commute to jobs that are further away, relocate often especially to undesirable locations at the Company's behest, travel extensively, and require less security. None of these options take any serious account of the individual's obligations to family; and most require the individual to trade off leisure time and necessary re-creation for monetary gain.

In Laurence Summers' speech he discussed the long hours culture and its inhibiting effect on female achievement:

"Is our society right to expect that level of effort from people who hold the most prominent jobs? Is our society right to have familial arrangements in which women are asked to make that choice and asked more to make that choice than men?" He worried about employers' defiance of "legitimate family desires" and suggested that they offer "different compensation packages that will attract the people who would otherwise have enormous difficulty with child care," as well as "extending tenure clocks" and considering other "family benefits." (Saletan)

The Mommy Track, though, seems to fail on two counts: first it institutionalises women's underachievement and thus fails on justice; and secondly, it institutionalises the notion that only women are responsible for care, and that care means only care for children. This fails to account for reality where workers, married or single, male or female, may be responsible for the care of the elderly or the handicapped. Further, it doesn't acknowledge the unjust demands of the long-hours culture on all workers, male and female, who are entitled to leisure, and to a life which is directed to fully human goods and not just an economic good.

It also fails because it is uncritical of the long-hours culture. As natural law ethicists would expect the discernment of the ethical action which starts from the eternal principles is congruent with the result of ethical deliberation based on common sense. In support of this critique of the long hours culture I offer for your consideration a highly critical view of that culture from a non-religious source: *Dilbert*. Scott Adams, Dilbert's creator, details the madness of life in the large corporation the endless meetings, new starts, change initiatives, consultants, office politics, and offers a new view of corporate life in the closing chapter of *The Dilbert Principle*.⁷

His recognises the herd instinct at work in much of the long-hours culture as experienced in American business. His recommendation to end the madness is the OA5 organisation. That stands for Out at Five—less time at work, producing more work on the fundamentals which is make a good product and serve your customers.

Trinitarian theology cannot solve (directly) the problem of the long-hours workplace; but it can put the discussion of gender roles into a new, and more helpful context. Recovering Trinitarian theology so that its absence would make a difference to our lived experience as Christians will also reframe the questions of male/female, so that difference no longer implies superiority/inferiority. Cardinal Carter wrote:

The Christian faith in the Trinity is at one with the Christian belief in the radical goodness of the created order. ..The Christian doctrine of the good creation, ...rests upon a conversion from and a contradiction of the pagan experience of a disordered world of irresolvable tension between two balance principles of good and evil. Christians exist in an ordered world, an ordered history, whose single principle of order is Triune. ...Creation ceases to be merely cosmological, and becomes anthropological, convenantal, and human society is transformed by the elimination of the previously inevitable understanding of authority as monist and despotic. ..(5-7)

Sayers' understanding of our bearing the image of the Trinitarian God in our ability to create, and LaCugna's understanding of sexuality as the clue that we are beings 'whose To-Be is To-Be-For' is congruent with John Paul II's teaching of anthropology's relation to theology:

The Church receives 'the meaning of the person' from Divine Revelation. 'In order to know man, authentic man, man in his fullness, one must know God,' said Pope Paul VI, and he went on to quote Saint Catherine of Siena, who, in prayer, expressed the same idea: 'In your nature, O eternal Godhead, I shall know my nature.'

Christian anthropology therefore is really a chapter of theology, and for this reason, the Church's social doctrine, by its concern for the person and by its interest in him and in the way he conducts himself in the world, 'belongs to the field ... of theology and particularly of moral theology.' (CA 55)

Using Sayers' understanding of work and LaCugna's Trinitarian theology as an theological base, we can complement the *Letter to Bishops*.⁸ in order to re-examine what we mean by masculinity and fatherhood and to critique the economy and its structures which prevent men from exercising their vocation to live directed 'toward the other'. John Paul II reminds us that fatherhood and motherhood represent a 'responsibility which is not simply physical but spiritual in nature'.

Recovering the masculine vocation to care and to live for the other will mean shattering the stereotype of the good father as the good provider (of money) whose responsibilities to the family are completed when the pay check is paid into the account. The traditional role of good provider has been described as that which creates inequality in marriage, as it 'requires that the breadwinner subordinate everything (including wife and family) to work.' (Martos and Hégy: p189) The idea of a peer-marriage proposed in a book of that name by Professor Pepper Schwartz and quoted by Martos and Hégy is consistent with the principles of mutuality and the primacy of the person over the economy:

Peer marriage entails the notion ...[that] both men and women contribute to the family income because work outside the home is personally as well as financially rewarding. Similarly, both raise the children, because of the benefits of shared nurturing to spouses and children alike. ...When both partners value marriage above economic success and when family nurturing is also a shared value, this situation alters the reality of marriage and creates a potential for transformation of society. (ibid.: p 189)

It is, of course, beyond the scope of this paper to do more than sketch out some areas for further study. Fatherhood deserves the theological attention that motherhood has received in Catholic Social Thought, asking why we have been content to assume we understand its dimensions and that it is unchanging in a changing world of work. In practical ethical reasoning, we need to examine working hours, unemployment and retraining, and the structures of the welfare state which actively discriminate against marriage and therefore against fathers. Further, we need to examine the programs designed, with the best intentions, to support children which often denigrate fathers, positively discriminating against those who stay involved with their families.

In Britain and America, our masculine roles are not working; and men and women are suffering. In Britain, young men are falling behind young women academically, economically and socially. We have one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Europe, and BBC Radio Cambridgeshire announced the latest rise as “More young girls than ever are getting themselves pregnant”⁹ an indication of how invisible and disposable young men are. One researcher into single fatherhood is having great difficulty in doing a literature review as there are few if any studies of the phenomena.

And as global capitalism exports the organisation of the economy to the developing world, trampling the existing structures of tribe, clan or traditional society, we cannot stand by and export our disfunctions. The Trinitarian understanding of the person central to all questions of Catholic Social Thought can frame the ethical reasoning in a variety of concrete situations.

Walter Farrell whose study *Why Men Earn More* concludes with his new vision of men and women, a vision which, like Schwartz’s has echoes of Pope John Paul II’s personalism. Farrell wants to shed the old stereotypes of women-as-mothers and men-as-wallets. He concludes, ‘when men can earn less and be valued more, we will unlock our sons from being human doings and free them to become human beings. Our daughters deserve that.’ So do we all.

¹ J. Martos and P. Hégy in *Equal at Creation: Sexism, Society and Christian Thought* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1998) identify marriage and ordained ministry as the two areas where women’s status in the Christian churches is defined by a patriarchal and therefore sexist interpretation of the Scriptures and nature.. This paper does not examine the issue of ordination of women. For this writer, clericalism, understood as seeing vocation primarily in roles of ordained ministry, and the related problem of seeing ordination in terms of power and an issue of justice, is a continuing problem in the Church which prevents the laity living out their full call to redeem the world.

² See HEILBRUN, C. 1968 Sayers, Lord Peter and God. *The American Scholar*, Volume 37, No.2 Spring and KENNEY, C., 1990. *The Remarkable Case of Dorothy L. Sayers*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press.

³ As this entry in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* demonstrates: ‘*The Mind of the Maker* (1941) is a fascinating study of the process of creative writing as a rough analogue of the relationships within the Trinity. Her religious position was very close to the central Catholic tradition, although she never joined the Church of Rome. On

practically every point of theology her orthodoxy was unimpeachable, and she made no secret of her personal commitment to Christianity.’ (Corbishley, T. Dorothy L. Sayers, Vol 13, p 717.)

⁴ These chapters (5, 6 and 9) offer some of the most revealing insights into the problems of the philosophy of religion I have found. Several reviews, including C S Lewis, praised especially her handling of free will and miracle.

⁵ Given the widespread accusations hurled at the Church for being patriarchal, it is not perhaps very surprising.. This, I would suggest, is a task that needs the insights of male and female theologians.

⁶ His comments quoted above seem to this writer to recognise the physical dangers of child-bearing and the possibility of maternal death.

⁷ *The Dilbert Principle* is that People are idiots, but not all at the same time or about the same things, and the most ineffective idiots are moved to management. When I was teaching business seminars I tested Adam’s account of corporate life and found that most participants from organisations large and small agreed that he had fairly characterised the modern workplace.

⁸ Tina Beattie remarked in *The Tablet* (7 August 2004) “What other institution today would produce a document about women, written by one group of men (the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, under the signature of Cardinal Ratzinger), addressed to another (the bishops), without quoting or referring to any woman’s ideas?” So one could see it as a reasonable task for women to write a response about men, mutuality benefits from both perspectives

⁹ News bulletin 10th March 2005

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