

The specificity of feminine nature according to John-Paul II

Consequently, even the rightful opposition of women to what is expressed in the biblical words "He shall rule over you" (*Gen 3:16*) must not under any condition lead to the "masculinization" of women. In the name of liberation from male "domination", women must not appropriate to themselves male characteristics contrary to their own feminine "originality". There is a well-founded fear that if they take this path, women will not "reach fulfilment", but instead will *deform and lose what constitutes their essential richness*. It is indeed an enormous richness. In the biblical description, the words of the first man at the sight of the woman who had been created are words of admiration and enchantment, words which fill the whole history of man on earth.

The personal resources of femininity are certainly no less than the resources of masculinity: they are merely different. Hence a woman, as well as a man, must understand her "fulfilment" as a person, her dignity and vocation, on the basis of these resources, according to the richness of the femininity which she received on the day of creation and which she inherits as an expression of the "image and likeness of God" that is specifically hers.

Source : apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the occasion of the Marian year, Rome, 15 August 1988