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On the Role of Women in the Church

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English



A transcript of a talk given at St. Tikhon of Zadonsk Orthodox Retreat on 7 September 2009 in Guerneville, CA

The issue of women in the Church has been raised many times during the history of Christianity, beginning with the very first decades of the Church's existence. That is why, when in the twenty-first century one asks about the role of women in the Church, one does not speak of this role—Christ Himself spoke about it and the

Apostle Paul wrote about it in his letters—but the continuing problem of the relationship between genders in the family, society, and the Church. In Church consciousness, this problem is usually expressed in terms of bearded men in black possessing administrative authority which they withhold from women, even if the latter choose to glue on a mustache and don a black robe. From the point of view of modern Western culture—to which not only immigrants making their lives in the United States belong, but also in a significant way Orthodox people living in the European part of Russia—there is clear evidence of the discrimination of the Church against women only because they were born women. This is why it seems somewhat strange to me that I, a bearded man in a black robe who possess some limited administrative authority in my parish—a small part of the Church, have been invited to tell women about their place in the Church.

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