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What this Catholic woman wants

Isabella R. Moyer | Aug. 23, 2013 NCR Today

The Washington Post article "What Catholic women want [1]" by Elizabeth Tenety has rightly garnered a lot of interest. What do Catholic women want? Here is what I want:

I don't want to be patronized with flowery language about my "feminine genius." Yes, I am a loving wife, mother and grandmother, but I am no one's meek and mild handmaiden, and neither are my daughters or daughter-in-law. Yes, I am a nurturer, but so are my husband, my sons and my sons-in-law.

I want inclusive language in our teachings, our documents and our prayers. Don't tell me, "But of course you are included, dear" when I am asked to pray "for us men."

Do not ask blind obedience from me, for I have been hurt and disillusioned too many times in our church. I understand too well that unhealthy submission allows for a rampant abuse of power. Expect me to question and challenge that which seems unclear, illogical or unjust.

Treat me as an intelligent adult who is willing and eager to dialogue. I will listen respectfully, but I expect to be listened to in return. We may not always agree, but a respectful conversation will open doors to greater understanding.

If I wish to speak from a woman's experience, do not minimize my desire by stating that all experiences are human and therefore must include men. Equality does not mean sameness, and difference need not be a threat. We can, and need, to view our differences side by side, not one above the other.

Yes, we need a deeper theology of women that studies not only the difference between women and men, but the difference among women themselves. We come from a diversity of cultures, life experiences and ideological leanings. This requires hearing and including the voices of many. We need to let go of the need to have a definitive theology that claims to speak for us all, whether it comes from popes and bishops or women theologians. A deeper theology requires exploring many theologies.

This is a small part of my wish list. What's on yours?

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[1] http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/on-faith/wp/2013/08/20/what-catholic-women-want/