

Response

Adrian Edwards on sacrifice and gender

The November 1986 number of *New Blackfriars*, containing, on pp. 409—500, the responses of Anne Inman and Joan Doyle Griffith to my article 'Gender and Sacrifice' (September 1986, pp. 372—377) reached me on Palm Sunday. I then felt that too much time had elapsed for a reply by me to be of any interest. However, a missionary confrère considered that Anne Inman had a valid point and that I ought to reply to it.

Anne Inman wrote '... if femininity is indeed incompatible with sacrifice, then women are without hope of salvation.'

I never said, or intended to say, that women did not need redeeming, and therefore could not be involved in continuing the work of redemption. If the work of redemption was exclusively continued through the celebration of the Eucharist, then the exclusion of women from this ministry might well seem unjust. I did in fact criticise the 'pan-liturgism' which makes the Eucharist the exclusive source of grace, and commended the Catholic tradition of belief in the continuing importance of the communion of saints. The terms 'Co-Redemptress' and 'Mediatrex of all graces' not long ago frequently applied to Mary now seem to have been dropped, owing to the likelihood of misunderstanding, but the underlying ideas are surely valid. Now, Mary is not simply a fantasy figure on whom we can hang our daydreams; she was a woman who lived in a real historical context, and the ways in which she is interpreted in biblical, liturgical and patristic imagery must be to some extent relevant for women's ministry today.

Adrian Edwards C.S.Sp.
P.O. Box 1422
Yola Town
Gongola State
Nigeria