

A Woman's Place

When I tell people the boys and girls in our high school were split up as we entered our senior year in 1960 because the Pope was against co-education, I'm often not taken seriously. But at right is an example of the attitude from Rome we were dealing with in that era. Note the Pope at the time was everyone's "liberal" favorite, John XXIII.

Today, some might call the Pope's attitude misogynistic, others just old fashioned. But I think I would in some ways agree with him.

Of course, I'm a product of the times and partially the result of the opinions of those who raised me. But I think I grew beyond such limiting attitudes (and no doubt invented a few of my own.) I don't expect the world to be like television shows of the 1950s with the "little woman" staying home and dealing with the laundry and planning dinner parties to advance her husband's career. But as long as I'm being realistic, I also don't expect that American Business is always going to be a woman's best friend.

I've enjoyed working with and for many women. Often they were top-notch professionals who were serious about their work and damned good at it. Some taught me a lot about business, technology and management. A few helped me to attain higher career goals. Many were nice looking, too, which didn't hurt.

I think the workplace would suffer without the talents women bring to it. But I also see homes suffering, often in ways that even a helpful husband cannot make up for. And what also bothers me is women appear to be once again taken advantage of in the work place. It's true today's lady engineer may not be exploited like a sweat shop seamstress in 1900. But after World War II industry convinced millions of women they should work outside the home for the extras in life. As time progressed companies paid much less for the labor of both women and their husbands. Today parents must work two jobs and sometimes more. We've gone from a norm where a father supported his family to modern America where both parents are not able to do so. I'd say a devaluation of labor took place when businesses simply flooded the workplace with new workers, women who were sold a bill of goods about their freedoms. When new workers are pumped into the workplace ... whether they come from another country or from across the kitchen table ... their sheer numbers demote everyone. Labor loses economic value and bargaining power. And that's followed by wage stagnation and the cutting of benefits.

So I guess I come out ambivalent about women in the workplace, as anachronistic as it sounds. I enjoy women and like to be with them throughout the day. And I'm a man who thinks smart and capable are sexy and the opposite is not. But I'm concerned women are not getting a good deal and often neither are their families.

It's OK if you don't agree with me. But it's important to know that at one time in our past almost everyone believed that women had perhaps a higher calling in their families. The advance of the centuries may have brought an increase in scientific knowledge, but just our current divorce rate broadly hints that two thousand years has not necessarily brought a better understanding of ourselves.

You've come a long way baby, but I'm just not sure it's where you really wanted to go.

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Woman's Place Is In the Home: Pope

Castel Gandolfo, Italy (UPI)

Pope John XXIII said yesterday that woman's principal place is in the home.

"The family is for women the principal center of their activity in which their presence is indispensable," the Pope said.

"Economic need often compels women to work outside the home. Nobody can fail to see how this dispersion of energies, this prolonged absence from the house, places women in a condition preventing them from absorbing their duties as wives and mothers."

The Pope spoke on equality of rights between men and women before some 400 delegates at the summer Papal Palace here. The meeting, on "women and social life," was sponsored by the Catholic University.