

## THE MASCULINITY OF CHRIST

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This talk shall be structured in three parts. First, we shall consider how affirming the truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation, of God's becoming man, is to affirm the truth of Christ's male sex (in the full, though not exclusively, biological sense of the term). Feminists concerns notwithstanding, salvation history turns on what is sometimes termed the "scandal of particularity," that is, the paradox that universal salvation is accomplished through particular historical events and particular individuals. This paradox (or "scandal") reaches its highpoint in the life, death and resurrection of the male individual Jesus of Nazareth. Second, the Christian witness is clear that Jesus was sinless. This means that in his actions, Christ provides a supreme model of virtue. Since he was a man, he displays masculine traits and virtues. If on one level, then, he is the supreme model of moral excellence for all to emulate, he is at the same time the supreme model of masculine virtue; he serves as a particular role model for men. Christ's exemplarity, it turns out, both confirms traditional views of masculine virtue and, in perhaps certain unexpected ways, corrects distorted views of masculinity. Third, Jesus clearly regards men and women, if equal in dignity, as fundamentally different. Evidence for this is seen in how he treats both sexes. This talk will close, then, with consideration of how, for Jesus, equality between the sexes does not mean sameness or interchangeability, particularly in the Church.