

연구논문

# Constructing Feminist Christology with Julian of Norwich: Julian's 'Jesus as Mother' as Non-androcentric Christological Model

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## 〈Abstract〉

Julian of Norwich's image of 'Jesus as Mother' offers an alternative model to the traditional male-centered Christology, from the perspective of feminist theology. Through this image, Julian presents the image of saving life. By presenting the image of Jesus as Mother, a non-androcentric christological model, it is possible to convey the message of healing and self-fulfillment to women by emphasizing the fact that life saving is not only a matter for Jesus but also for women. Julian's theology is not only a part of Christian heritage, but also a reflection of the theology of the main monastery of her day. Thus, studying Julian is not only a study of Christian traditional theology through a woman's perspective, but also a constructive dialogue with theology and feminism.

**Key words:** Julian of Norwich, Jesus as Mother, feminism, non-androcentric, Christology

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## 1. Introduction

Constructing feminist Christology is lied on two layers: feminism and feminist theology. Concerning the relation between feminism and feminist theology, Rosemary Ruether puts it as following:

feminism is a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant and females with those defined as inferior and auxiliary... Feminist theology takes feminist critique and reconstruction of gender paradigm into the theological realm. They question patterns of theology that justify male dominance and female subordination, such as exclusive male language for God, the view that males are more like God than females, that only males can represent God as leaders in church and society, or that women are created by God to be subordinate to males and thus sin by rejecting this subordination... Feminist theologians also seek to reconstruct the basic theological symbols of God, humanity, male and female, creation, sin and redemption, and the church, in order to define these symbols in gender-inclusive and egalitarian way (Ruether, 2002: 3-4).

According to Ruether, feminist theologians may resist so called the patriarchal gender paradigm in Christian traditional theology, which justify male dominance and female subordination. While Ruether focuses on ‘gender-inclusive and egalitarian way,’ Inkyung Lee concentrates on ‘for women,’ introducing “feminist theology as an authentic discourse on Christian women consisting of three criteria such as ‘of women, by women, for women’” (Lee, 2008: 84). In order to achieve ‘gender-inclusive and egalitarian way for women,’ feminist theology should help women

re-consider who women are, what they do.

This study aims at criticizing traditional Christology from the perspective of gender-inclusive and egalitarian way, as well as reconstructing feminist Christology with the symbol of Julian of Norwich's 'Jesus as Mother.' The image of Julian's 'Jesus as mother' is rather androgynous Christological model than the model of gender dualism, which fortify gender hierarchy. Julian as woman mystic did not necessarily consider herself as inferior to her male counterparts, because she might regard herself as a human being in relation to God.

If the model of gender dualism justifies male dominance and female subordination, androgynous model can explain gender-inclusive and egalitarian way. Through the image of Jesus as mother women can find the meaning of 'make things living.' Since Mary Daly regarded Christology as Christolatry (Daly, 1973), however, feminist theologians have challenged the classical and traditional Christologies. Ruether also criticized that traditional Christology has prevented women becoming priests in high Churches, asking "can male savior save women?" (Ruether, 1983). In the eyes of those feminist theologians, Christology has been a tumbling stone for women.

Even though Ruether's question was the crucial question in the history of reconstructing feminist Christology, it still has something important from the perspective of 'the tension between suffering and salvation.' The problem of suffering (feminist issue) with doctrine of salvation (theological issue) generates the issue of redemptive suffering. Feminist theologians debate on the notion of redemptive suffering, because each feminist has different view on the notion of suffering, saying Christian church has been

justifying women's suffering with the image of suffering Christ on the cross.

To begin with Ruether's question, we need to step forward to modify Christology, searching for a non-androcentric Christological model. 'A non-androcentric Christological model' means a Christology which is 'not male-centered but including both male and female characteristics.' In this paper, I present Julian of Norwich's 'Jesus as Mother' as non-androcentric model of feminist Christology for the purpose of constructing a feminist Christology. First I explore the various Christologies from the first wave feminism to third wave feminism from the perspective of redemptive suffering and non-redemptive suffering. Second, I present an explanation of the meaning of studying Julian of Norwich's soteriology. Third, I suggest the Julian of Norwich's image of 'Jesus as mother' as a model of feminist Christology. Thus, the meaning of salvation and soteriology would be examined in the perspective of non-androcentric Christology.

## 2. Typical Feminist Christologies Through the Feminist Movements

Foremother of feminist theology, Daly, claims Christology to be "idolatry" in *Beyond God the Father*. In this book she titles Chapter Three as "Beyond Christolatry." This title shows that Daly regards Christology as Christian idolatry concerning the person of Jesus, which is not likely to be overcome except through the revolution. In this sense, Daly is called revolutionist. She writes:

It is still not unusual for Christian priests and ministers, when confronted with the issue of women's liberation, to assert that God "became incarnate" uniquely as a male and then to draw arguments for male supremacy from this. Indeed, the Christological tradition itself tends to justify such conclusion (Daly, 1973: 70).

For Daly, the universal exclusion of women from the priesthood in Roman Catholic Church is a scandalous reality, which has been theoretically supported by traditional Christology. Roman Catholic Church does not allow women to be ordained ministers, saying "women are unqualified for the priesthood because of their femaleness" (Raab, 2000). Daly states not only that the functioning of the Christ image in Christianity to legitimate sexual hierarchy has constantly been obvious, but also that traditional Christology cannot liberate women. She finds no value in the male symbol of Jesus, so she rejects classical Christology. For Daly, Christology is no more than the target for destructing, which should be replaced by Mariology.

In *Sexism and God-talk* Ruether also asserts that Christology is used as the basis of the dispute against women's ordination. Chapter five is titled as "Christology: Can a Male Savior Save Women?" (Ruether, 1983: 116) In this book Ruether points out that classical Christology brings 'the idea of a messianic king of new age of redemption' and 'the idea of divine wisdom' together. She states that both ideas enforced patriarchalization of Christology, and that androcentric Christologies – male centered image of Christ – became the dominant tradition. She also claims that there is no sufficient model for feminist Christology in Christian doctrinal tradition,

thus a starting point for feminist Christology must be reencounter with the Jesus of Synoptic Gospels. But Ruether did not fully accept the life and work of Jesus Christ in the Synoptic Gospels. She regards the event of Jesus Christ as representative event of salvation. She writes;

Christ, as redemptive person and Word of God, is not to be encapsulated “once-for-all” in the historical Jesus... Christ, the liberated humanity, is not confined to a static perfection of one person two thousand years ago. Rather, redemptive humanity goes ahead of us, calling us to yet incompleting dimensions of human liberation (Ruether, 1983: 138).

Ruether regards Jesus as a christ, not the Christ. Jesus is not exclusive or final event of salvation for her. In this sense, Ruether is called reformist. She does not identify historical Jesus with confessional Christ. She rejects the formula of “once-for-all.” For Ruether, Christology is a required doctrine for women’s liberation and transformation, but she does not give any credit to traditional Christologies. For Ruether Christian community is more important than Christologies.

Even though some differences exist between revolutionist and reformist, both the feminist theologians share something common that Jesus’ event is not the constitutive event for women’s liberation. Both Ruether and Daly state that traditional Christology cannot liberate women. As leading scholars of first wave feminist movement, both Daly and Ruether criticize that the patriarchal and androcentric Christologies, which exclude women from the equality of leadership in the church, namely women’s ordination. In other words, their theories on Christ seem to have the presupposition:

high church's hierarchical system which excludes women from priesthood will be perpetual. However, if there is any presupposition in Christology, it might be the salvation through Jesus Christ, for its name's sake.

Concerning the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of salvation, the salvation through Jesus Christ can be explained in two different perspectives of salvation in feminist theology. In other words, there is a tension 'between the redemption of crucifixion and the redemption of resurrection' or 'between redemptive suffering and non-redemptive suffering.' Some feminist theologians focus on crucifixion, and others focus on resurrection for the act of salvation.

In the second-wave feminist movement in Christian Theology, feminist theologians were rather attacking patriarchal system in Christian than empowering women with finding the great women figures in the history of Christianity. When it comes to theology, especially on doctrine of Christ, feminist theologians were searching for the image of Christ, with which they could support and empowers those who are suffered from hierarchical and patriarchal system. Asian Feminist theology and Liberation theology share the ideas of redemptive suffering and of resistance against oppression at the same time within the second-wave feminist movement in Christianity.

In the second wave feminist movement, Asian feminist Theologian, Hyun Kyung Chung affirms that women's suffering is redemptive. According to her, the image of Jesus' suffering enables Asian women to find a meaning in their own suffering, for example Asian women view their own suffering as redemptive and view their own suffering as a source of empowerment for themselves and for others. She interprets women's suffering as redemptive, and regards it as the source of empowerment. It

can be said that suffering is a transforming or resisting energy for Asian women (Chung, 1990).

In the meantime, Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker state that “despite all the correctives taught by liberation theology on how to interpret suffering, this Christian theology with atonement at the center still encourages martyrdom and victimization” (Brown and Parker, 1989). As Brown and Parker point out, there is a possibility that people perpetuate suffering as well as advocate suffering with the notion of redemptive suffering. Indeed, those who have power in patriarchal system and hierarchical system have misused the notion of redemptive suffering. However, a great number of religious women have volunteered their time, money, and efforts to their churches as the ‘living sacrifices.’ Thus, the problem is placed on those who misuse it, not on the notion of redemptive suffering itself.

On the contrary, Ruether criticizes the notion of redemptive suffering and asserts redemption of resurrection, saying “we are not redeemed through or because of anyone’s unjust torture and death” (Ruether, 2000). Ruether assists that to live an abundant life is important factor, because traditional doctrines of atonement have forced women to ‘carry their cross.’ She writes:

The God of the resurrection did not cause the cross, but was momentarily crushed by the cross, only to rise again, overcoming it with a rebirth of protest and new hope. In the resurrection, we say ‘No’ to unjust death and ‘Yes’ to life abundant for all of us together” (Ruether, 2000: 107).

When she emphasizes the abundant life, she seems to diminish the

meaning of life. It is because abundant life means to give or share one's life for others rather than to live a life without suffering. As Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (Holy Bible, 1995). Concerning the relationship between the abundant life and resurrection, she inappropriately identifies the abundant life with a life which is free from suffering. Resurrection may play a key role for the sake of the abundant life and the empowerment, but a life without suffering can hardly be imagined from the perspective of ordinary women's daily life, especially of those who are poor and who have babies to take care of. As Ruether says, we say 'no' to unjust death and 'yes' to life abundant for all of us. But the 'yes' should not be a naïve 'yes.'

The most well-known leader of Second wave feminist movement in Christianity, Elizabeth Johnson explored and focused on Christology.<sup>1)</sup> Johnson's theological methodology on Christology is not far from feminist liberation theological tradition. In *Consider Jesus*, Johnson describes her theological method from the perspective of feminist liberation theology. She follows three steps of liberation theology: naming a situation as sinful and analyzing its roots, searching the tradition for oppressive elements, and searching it again for liberating element (Johnson, 1991). On searching for liberating elements, Johnson asks as following:

What in the tradition of Christology has been overlooked and, in the light of the experience of the poor, might be used to shape a Christology that would liberate? Liberation theologians look primarily to the Jesus of the gospels. Is he really a passive victim whose example legitimates passive

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1) Concerning Johnson's works on Christology, see Johnson (1985; 1991; 1993; 1995).

suffering? Is he really a dominating lord whose will legitimates oppressive rule? What did he stand for in his ministry? What about the fact that his ministry of the outcast and sinners led to his death in an intrinsic and profound way? Is the resurrection not God's victory over oppressive forces? (Johnson, 1991: 90).

Through those questions, Johnson leads readers to read the scriptures from the perspective of 'the poor,' and to find meanings in the life and work of Jesus Christ. According to Johnson, "Jesus' preaching of the reign of God is a powerful liberating force." As Johnson points out, the life and work of Jesus Christ can generate a story which empowers and liberate women. Now, as did the second wave feminist theologians find the great figures within the history of women in Christianity, I present Julian of Norwich and her theology to answer Johnson's methodological questions on Christology, especially for constructing non-androcentric Christology.

### 3. Why Julian of Norwich?

#### Dialogue Between Theology and Feminism

Within Christian tradition, not only patristic tradition but also matristic tradition (Børresen, 2002) has existed, and the both provide a lot of source for constructing and doing theology to Christian Church. The matristic tradition has long been ignored, though. However, the matristic tradition can be the bridge between today's women and Christian tradition as well as between feminism and theology.

When we define the notion of salvation, the definition is closely related to the set of life and experience. For example, women's experiences in every age reflect both their femininity and other categories such as economic status, social class, religious and cultural diversity, which create crucial differences among women as well as from men. The definition of salvation can be suggested differently by each woman's experience and their set of lives, which affect the response to 'from what we will be and should be saved.'

Women's experiences play a crucial role in constructing feminist Christology, just as all localized theologies place emphasis on localized people's experiences. Even though every woman has different experience and different definition of salvation, Julian of Norwich put an emphasis on a kind of common experience of all human kind. That is the experience as mother and/or of mother. Even if not every woman has the experience as a mother, the image of mother is so powerful, because mother is the root of one's existence. The experience as mother (to give motherly love) and the experience of mother (to be given motherly love) is the basis of Julian of Norwich's Christology. She intertwines the experience of a mother with Jesus' image as Mother for her Christology.

Mostly, the image of mother can be identified with a provider, comforter, nurse, and healer. Julian's Christology of 'Jesus as Mother'<sup>2)</sup> can be one of the best models for feminist Christology in terms of non-androcentric

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2) According to Caroline Walker Bynum, the image of 'Jesus as Mother' shows the presence of maternal metaphors in twelfth-century devotional texts in terms of affective spirituality and feminization of religious language (1984: 129).

Christological model. It is necessary for women to seek a message of healing and self-fulfillment. At this point, 'healing and self-fulfillment through a saving faith in Jesus Christ' requires the notion of redemptive suffering. This notion of redemptive suffering finds its highest point at the passion of Christ, which is the main subject of Julian of Norwich's *Showing of Love*.

Remarkably, Julian of Norwich gives us a typical example of Christology based on women's experience as well as mystical experience, through which her physical suffering experience merged to passion of Christ and his compassion. Julian's Christology can be examined within her Long Text of *Showing of Love*, which is different from the Short Text of *Showing of Love*. Julian received a vision of the crucified Jesus accompanied by certain revelation about God's love for humanity in May of 1373. She recorded this experience as well as her initial reactions to it, and the record is now called the Short Text of her *Showing of Love*. But for twenty years thereafter, Julian engaged in a continual process of prayer and study on the meaning of her experience (Julian of Norwich, 2003). The result is the Long Text, which ought to be considered an example of theology as reflection upon the experience of faith. Long Text is more than description of Julian's religious experience. She tries to explain its doctrinal significance and gives expression to all the main areas of Christian theology: incarnation and redemption, ecclesiology, the one and triune God, theological anthropology, creation and eschatology (Nuth, 1991). Through Julian's Long Text, one can examine the relationship between women's experience and Christology.

Julian is one of the important women to be examined in women's studies, because she is the first woman who wrote a spiritual instruction in English (Jantzen, 1987). In other words, in the history of English literature

Julian is ranked as the first woman writer. In due course the study on Julian of Norwich in the twentieth century started in the field of English literature. In *Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages* Frances Beer, whose area of special interest is Medieval Literature, states that Julian reveals her femaleness in her understanding of the motherhood of God, and that Julian explains the Trinity actually includes a female component (Beer, 1992). When Beer points out Julian's motherhood of God and Trinity, she makes a room for theologians to study Julian of Norwich in the perspective of classical and traditional Trinitarian Theology as well as feminist theology.

Julian is not only the first English women writer, but also one of the greatest of all theologians. Thomas Merton did not remain any work on Julian of Norwich, but he ranked her with the greatest of all theologians (Jantzen, 1987). According to Merton, one of the greatest spiritual writers of 20th century and the author of *The Seven Storey Mountain*, "she [Julian] is a mighty theologian, in all her simplicity and love"<sup>3)</sup> (Merton, 1994: 26).

In a letter to Sister M. Madeleva, Notre Dame, early March 1962, Merton expresses his love for Julian of Norwich as the following:

Julian is without doubt one of the most wonderful of all Christian voices. She gets greater and greater in my eyes as I grow older, and whereas in the old days I used to be crazy about St. John of the Cross, I would not exchange him now for Julian if you gave me the world and the Indies and

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3) Merton mentions that in a letter to Clare Boothe Luce, New York, December 1961 or January 1962.

all the Spanish mystics rolled up in one bundle. I think that Julian of Norwich is, with Newman, the greatest English theologian. She is really that (Merton, 1994: 43).

Seemingly, her theology is far from contemporary women at first glance. According to Grace Jantzen, however, Julian's theology attracts attention in our own time; for example, understanding of the relationship between God and the world, and its implications for the healing of person and confrontation with the problems of evil and suffering, as well as her theology of motherhood of God (Jantzen, 1987). Even more, Julian and our contemporary share not only the relationship between God and the world, but also its implications for the healing of person as a common ground for theological discourse. Especially, Julian's motherhood of God can be one of the most important notions of gender in her theology.

As feminist theologians such as Daly and Ruether conclude that the Christian theological tradition has been produced from an androcentrism, most Christian women in every age had to live with symbols created by men (Nuth, 1991). Julian of Norwich, however, is one of the exceptions. Through the motherhood of God and the motherhood of Holy Trinity, Julian intertwines women's experience as mother with divine love.

Our natural Mother, our gracious Mother. For he would all wholly become our Mother in all thing. He took the ground of his work full low, and full mildly in the Maiden's womb, taking flesh of her. The Mother's service is nearest, readiest and securest. Nearest for it is most of nature, readiest for it is most of love, and securest for it is most of truth. This office might not, nor could ever be done to the full but by Christ Jesus, God and man, him

alone. We know that all our mothers bear us is to pain and to dying (Julian of Norwich, 2003: 90).

When Julian mentions the maiden's womb and the mother's service, she paves the way for motherhood of Jesus. Definitely, Jesus' passion and death on the cross can be expressed by the words of mother's service. From the fact that our mother bear us 'to pain and to dying,' we can understand the image of Jesus as mother.

As Julian scholars show, it is necessary to take gender, love, and healing into consideration in doing feminist theology, in that love and healing are the ones of crucial themes in the tradition of Christian theology. Jantzen also states that Julian is careful to take the framework of her understanding from the teachings of Holy Church, and she stands directly in the Augustinian tradition (Jantzen, 1987).

Concerning Augustinian tradition – in spite of feminist scholar's denouncing Augustine and his theology – Kari Elisabeth Børresen asserts that Augustine was a feminist in his era (Børresen, 1994). From the fact that Julian's theology is rooted in Augustinian tradition and that she uses female component in doing her theology, Julian's doctrine of salvation can lead and guide feminist theology to Christian tradition. In due course, probing Julian theology can make a room for a dialogue between theology and feminism, so that feminist Christology can be constructed within Christian tradition.

As Joan M. Nuth points out, while Christology was concentrated more upon the relationship between the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ after Chalcedon, its soteriological importance was less emphasized, and

then gradually ignored (Nuth, 1991). Therefore, it can be understood as an effort to recover the soteriological element in Christology that the interest in the humanity of Jesus, especially his passion, was revived in the theology of the tenth to twelfth centuries. Julian of Norwich was received the heritage of the revival. She stood not only in theological revival of the tenth to twelfth century, but also mystical tradition, which is seriously rendered by Matthew Fox. Fox says that “we need to let go the Enlightenment and its world view that denies mysticism and lacks a cosmology” (Fox, 1988: 6). Fox proposes to make our spiritual heritage almost important. From the perspective of Fox’s cosmic Christ, Julian’s Christology sheds light on our contemporary as well as her age.

According to Caroline Walker Bynum, ‘Jesus as Mother’ is not obscure in mystic tradition and Cistercian writing (Bynum, 1984). It means Julian’s theology is not only a part of the Heritage of Christian tradition, but also a mirror of mainstream theology of her era. Therefore, to study Julian of Norwich means not only to study traditional theology through the eyes of women, but also to engaged in a constructive dialogue between theology and feminism.

#### 4. Meaning of Salvation and Motherly Love for Julian of Norwich

As Kerrie Hide states, some theologians such as Brant Pelphrey and Nuth presented that Julian was a significant theologian in her development of a theology of divine love from the perspective of Trinitarian theology.

The scholars pointed to the importance of her doctrine of salvation in terms of divine love (Hide, 2001). In understanding Julian's soteriology, divine love might be the starting point, because the foundation of Julian's soteriology is the love within the Trinity. As the title, *Showing of Love*, shows love is the essence of her theology. She writes what the theme of her showing is in the first place.

This is a revelation of love that Jesus Christ, our endless bliss, made in sixteen showings, of which the first is of his precious crowning with thorns. And therein was comprehended and specified the Trinity with the Incarnation and the unity between God and man's soul with many fair Showings of endless wisdom and teachings of love, in which all the showing that follow be founded and oned (Julian of Norwich, 2003: 3).

As Julian writes, her theology is Christo-centric. When she says, "this revelation of love which Jesus Christ made in sixteen showings" and "the first is about his precious crowning of thorns," she seems to suggest a guideline for her theology, in which passion of Christ is placed in the center of her theology. Divine love can best be understood through incarnation as well as the passion of Christ, because incarnation itself is the way in which God revealed God-self to human being with becoming a human being.

At the end of the Long Text, the Eight-Sixth Chapter, Julian summarizes her understanding and the meaning of salvation. Love is shown as the only definite answer for all questions.

And fifteen years after and more I was answered in ghostly understanding, saying thus, "Would you know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it

well, love was his meaning. Who showed it to you? Love. What did he show you? Love. Why did he show it to you? For love. Hold yourself therein, and you shall understand and know more of the same. But you shall never know or understand therein other things without end.” Thus was I taught that Love was our Lord’s meaning (Julian of Norwich, 2003: 124).

Through systematic questioning Julian considers the theological conclusion that God is love and love was his meaning. She repeats the word “love,” emphasizing that love is the essence of God. As Jantzen explains Julian’s theology of divine love, “the passion of Christ offers a principle for understanding what love really is” (Jantzen, 1987).

Before presenting “Love was his meaning,” Julian gives a reflection on Charity in the Eight-Fourth Chapter. Julian describes three kinds of charity as following:

I had three manner of understanding charity in this light. The first is charity unmade. The second is charity made. The third is charity given. Charity unmade is God. Charity made is our soul in God. Charity given is virtue. And that is a gracious gift of working in which we love God, for himself, and our selves in God, and all that God loves for God (Julian of Norwich, 2003: 123).

Her insight on threefold of charity seems to be rooted in the tradition of Augustinian Trinity, because Augustine explained trinity with the notion of love, explaining trinity as the lover, the beloved, and the love. For Julian uncreated charity, created charity, and given charity are three ways in which divine love originates and shares itself. The first way of

understanding divine love, uncreated charity, emphasizes that there is no beginning to God's loving. God has no other source except God's self from which God loves. God does not possess love; God is love. The second way of understanding divine love, created charity, shows how completely divine love is shared with humankind. The third way of understanding divine love, given charity, includes "virtue, and that is a gift of grace in deeds, in which we love God for himself, and ourselves in God, and all that God loves for God"

Julian signifies compassion not only as the salvific work of Christ but also as the feeling of pity or feeling of compassion in terms of compassionate love of motherhood. As Nuth points out, the image of the motherhood of Christ expresses the aspects of the role of Christ in the work of salvation: "Christ's love for the soul was compared to the compassion of a mother toward her child" (Nuth, 1991: 65). For Julian, the salvific work of Christ includes Jesus' work of care. As Francesca M. Cancian presents in her *Caring and Gender*, "Caregiving or caring is feelings of concern, responsibility combined with actions that provide responsively for an individual's personal needs or well-being, in a face-to-face relationship; caregiving includes physical care, such as bathing or feeding a person as well as emotional care, such as tender touch, supportive talk, empathy, and affection" (Cancian and Olikier, 1999). In this sense, not only the image of childbirth but also the caring children is important for understanding Julian's salvific work of Christ from the perspective of emotion.

Julian considers the compassion of Mother Mary to show "feeling like a woman," especially feeling like a mother. Julian depicts Jesus' compassionate love of motherhood as a mother who gives breast milk to her child, which

is directly related to the notion of the medieval Eucharist or Sacrament. Julian integrates the salvific work of Jesus Christ into the image of a caregiving mother from the perspective of medieval Eucharist, as follows:

He might no more die but he would not stop from working. Wherefore he needs to feed us for the dearworthy love of Motherhood has made him debtor to us. The Mother may give her child suck of her milk, but our precious Mother Jesus may feed us with himself. And does most courteously and most tenderly with the blessed sacrament of his body and blood, that is precious food of very life and with all the sweet sacraments he sustains us most mercifully and graciously (Julian of Norwich, 2003: 90).

It is notable that Julian relates the milk to the blessed sacrament of the body and blood, from the perspective of medieval spirituality of Eucharist. As Mary Frances Walsh Meany praises, Julian excels St. Anselm in some aspect of Jesus as Mother theme in terms of a spirituality of the Eucharist, as the following:

St. Anselm touches on the nourishment with which the Christian is provided under the aspect of St. Paul's participation in feeding the faithful the meat of true doctrine ... For Dame Julian, however, the nourishment is specifically Eucharistic. Here we see the English anchoress going beyond the Archbishop [St. Anselm of Canterbury] in her development of the theme of the divine maternity (Meany, 1975: 186-187).

While church fathers and medieval male theologians focus on the image of "Jesus as Mother" as the motherhood of making a new life, Julian emphasizes the motherhood of taking care of the new life or feeding the

child with “food spirituality.” As also Bynum points out, Julian’s Jesus as Mother can best be understood from the perspective of “centrality of food in female spirituality” (Bynum, 1987). From the perspective of the Eucharist in late medieval culture, both the motherhood of making a new life and the motherhood of taking care of the new life are the salvific work of Jesus Christ. Concerning this medieval Eucharistic culture, Miri Rubin writes “a symbol which was simple and all powerful was placed in the midst of the culture, promising salvation through physical incorporation into Christ or doom through the undeserving and the sinful proximity or reception of the sacrament” (Rubin, 1991: 77). With this image of the breastfeeding or caregiving mother Julian integrates the salvific work of Christ. This integration can construct non-androcentric Christology within Christian Tradition.

## 5. Conclusion

Even though Christian theology should be soteriological, feminist theologians are far from traditional Trinitarian soteriology. The salvation through Jesus Christ is the core theme of soteriology and it has been centered on Christian faith. However, some feminists deny Jesus as the Christ, whereas some feminists deny his “once-for-all” salvific event of crucifixion. The notion of salvific event of crucifixion is closely related to the Passion of Christ as well as redemptive suffering. Some feminist theologians assert that the notion of redemptive suffering is one of the

characteristics for supporting patriarchal system. But, the Passion of Christ and redemptive suffering has long been centered in Christian tradition, especially in some of matristic tradition.

Interestingly enough, Ruether remarks ‘androgynous Christologies’ and ‘spirit Christologies’ as the alternative Christologies (Ruether, 1983). Those alternative Christologies are not good enough to be the models of feminist Christologies for her. In opposition to her assessment, however, I presented that the reason why Julian of Norwich’s non-androcentric Christology can be a suitable model for feminist Christology. Her soteriology is the love within the Trinity, which is best analogized with the mother’s love. Julian’s Christology of ‘Jesus as Mother’ can be one of the best models for feminist Christology, because the image of mother can be identified with a provider, comforter, nurse, and healer. And this feminist Christological model should give women message of healing and self-fulfillment in terms of women’s abundant life through a saving faith in Jesus Christ in terms of redemptive suffering.

Feminist theologian need to harmonizing message of radical theology with message of healing and self-fulfillment, as if Gayraud S. Wilmore suggested for black theology (Cone and Wilmore, 1993). Julian’s healing experience is derived from passion of Christ who is with her and who shows compassion to her. In other words, for Julian where there is a healing experience, there is compassion, in which her pains meet the passion of Christ. With Julian, we can say that passion of Christ and his compassion make women have healing experiences. Moreover, the feminist Christological model of ‘Jesus as Mother’ can make women achieve the self-fulfillment as mother.

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## 노르위치의 줄리안의 작품에 나타나는 여성주의 기독론 모델: 탈-남성중심주의 기독론적 모델로서의 어머니 예수 이미지

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### 〈국문 초록〉

노르위치의 줄리안의 어머니 예수의 이미지는 여성신학의 관점에서 볼 때 전통적인 남성 중심주의적 기독론의 대안적 모델이 될 수 있을 것이다. 어머니의 이미지를 통해서 줄리안은 생명을 살리는 구원의 이미지를 설명하고 있다. 탈-남성중심주의적 기독론적 모델로서 어머니 예수 이미지를 제시함으로써 생명을 살리는 일이 예수의 일이었을 뿐만 아니라 여성의 일이기도 하다는 사실을 강조함으로써 여성들에게 치유와 자기충족의 메시지를 전해 줄 수 있을 것이다. 노르위치의 줄리안의 신학은 기독교 전통유산의 일부일 뿐만 아니라, 그녀 당대의 주류 수도원 신학을 반영하는 것이라고 할 수 있다. 따라서, 줄리안을 연구하는 것은 여성의 시각으로 기독교 전통 신학을 연구하는 것일 뿐만 아니라 신학과 여성주의와의 건설적인 대화에 참여하는 것이기도 하다.

**주제어:** 노르위치의 줄리안, 어머니 예수, 여성주의, 탈-남성중심주의, 기독론

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