

Friday, January 8, 2010

[Remembering Mary Daly](#)



by Sr. Teresa Forcades i Vila (English translation by Rebel Girl)

[Un Manament Nou Blog](#)

January 7, 2010

Mary Daly, a doctor of theology and philosophy, a pioneer of radical feminism and feminist theology with her *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968) has died at age 81 after two years of illness.

I met her only once, while studying in the USA. It must have been in 1996. Daly was still a professor at Boston College then and came to give a speech at the Harvard School of Theology. I had been studying a year there and was overwhelmed by the politically correct armor found there. Daly's speech was a breath of fresh air, a moment of epiphany as simple and neat as herself.

She was rather short, with the look of a friendly and harmless aunt until she started talking. I remember that I stared incredulously at her "cowboy" boots with metal ornaments, while I heard her speak of the snake-shaped vibrations connecting the audience with the speaker or the students with the teacher and in general, all those who carry on a conversation. I have heard and seen these snakes many times. Sometimes I experience them as a spiderweb that wraps around me and limits movement and sight, other times they are real rays of light that are dancing all around and they uncover heights and hollows where everything seemed flat.

Mary Daly was a philosopher-poet. Calling her a philosopher-poet is redundant -- even though she was a professor of philosophy and not of poetry, it is not possible to be a philosopher without it.

Mary Daly loved the word and admired its ability to create worlds without falling into subjectivism, without ever losing contact with the material world and its nature. I think it is on the back cover of *Pure Lust* that Daly appears, stroking a black cat, laughing, backed into a tree trunk and with a finger clearly pointing to the earth, like Aristotle in Raphael's famous painting. Like her, I too have been moved by the novelty that Aristotle represented in the classical world and Thomas Aquinas in the medieval world. I think this innovation contains the core of so-called Western thought and even the dignity of what is material and anti-spiritualism. It includes the dignity of the body and is specific - as Daly has taught us while correcting her teachers and maintaining her position without giving an inch on respect for women's bodies. Basic, fundamental respect which is the pending issue of every generation, even in the 21st century. Respect without which the respect for the bodies and work of children, subordinates, immigrants and the poor is not possible. Respect for women's bodies without which social justice is not possible and what is proclaimed in the Eucharist would be a lie: that God has a body to which we belong without exclusions or subordinations whatsoever and that it is through this body and its wounds that we are writing our history.