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COVERING WOMEN DURING THE ORTHODOX LITURGY: OBLIGATION OR CUSTOM?

In most Orthodox countries (Serbia, Russia, Greece), covering the head in church is a tradition, but not a social norm outside of worship. Covering women is a religious custom, but it is not a strict obligation in all Orthodox communities. In modern society, many women no longer practice this custom and in modern Orthodox communities it may be a matter of personal choice. Women in church usually wear a headscarf or a veil that covers their hair, but the face remains uncovered. There are no strict rules about the color or the material, but simple, modest clothing is often chosen. Covering the head is a sign of modesty, humility and respect for God and the church. The apostle Paul states in his epistle to the Corinthians: "Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head – it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head." He explains that this is in accordance with the divine order and natural laws, because "a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man." In traditional Orthodoxy, which episcope Nikolay advocated, head covering for women was not just a mere custom, but an expression of inner piety, humility and respect for God. A shorn woman would be no exception and would also have to cover her head during the liturgy, suggesting that he supported this practice as part of spiritual discipline and church tradition.

In general, the media in the EU strive to balance between respecting religious freedoms and promoting secular values. Women's covering is often considered in the context of gender equality, integration and human rights. In the European Union, the attitude towards the veiling of Muslim women varies among member states, but France stands out as the country with the strictest laws and the most pronounced condemnation of the practice.

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