

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

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Abstract

Dating back to the Renaissance and through to the sexual revolution of the nineteen sixties and into the twenty first century, the practise of mandatory Clerical Celibacy within the Catholic Church has come into increasing debate both in academic and cultural spheres. Despite these objections, the Catholic Church has chosen to remain firm in her stance for its continuance. This essay deals with the reasons why the Catholic Church has persisted in the practise. Thus, the question is: Why has the practise of Clerical Celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church? This prompted further exploration of the Vatican's official stance and whether it correlates with the view of the Religious currently living the celibate lifestyle in Australia.

In order to answer this question adequately, I examined both the official Vatican documents regarding the reasons for the continuation for mandatory Clerical celibacy, *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, as well as conducting a large amount of primary research, including interviewing five Celibate men (one religious priest, two Religious studying for ordination, a secular priest and a secular seminarian). These men are all currently living in Australia as celibates. From these sources I was able to gain valuable information regarding the topic and draw conclusions about why the practise has remained mandatory.

Both primary and secondary data that was collected, stipulated that there is, in fact, no biblical requirement for the practise of celibacy. However it is encouraged to those who can accept it. There are, however, many practical and

spiritual benefits of clerical celibacy, both to the priests themselves and also to the people they impact. This enables the church to fulfil its other biblical requirements, such as praying consistently and assisting the poor and therefore, according to the Catholic Church, it stands to reason that clerical celibacy should remain a mandatory practise.

Abstract word count: 298 words

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements:	2
Abstract	4
I. Introduction:	7
II. Differences between church in West and church in the East:	9
III. Objections to the practise of Celibacy	10
IV. Christological significance (Christ’s example):	12
V. Ecclesiological significance:	13
VI. Divine Office and Prayer:	15
VII. The motive for celibacy:	16
VIII. A sign of heavenly treasures	18
IX. The promise of a full and fruitful life:	20
X. The fullness of love:	21
XI. Pastoral Efficacy of celibacy:	22
XII. Evaluation	24
XIII. Conclusion	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	28
APPENDIX:	29
PRIMARY DATA:	29
Appendix A: interview with Name of interviewee removed.....	29
Appendix B: Interview Name removed at request of interviewee	38
Appendix C: Interview with Br. Paul Rowse:.....	52
Appendix D: Interview with Lewi Bakarar:	Removed for copyright reasons
Appendix E: Interview with Fr. Michael Destoop:	67
Appendix F: Interview with Dr. Allan Meyer:	92
SECONDARY DATA:	95
Appendix G - Sacerdotalis Caelibatus:	95

I. Introduction:

Celibacy is the state of life one assumes in which he or she vows to refrain from marriage and any sexual relations in order to be consecrated to the service of God and of the Church.¹ The term *Religious* denotes a man or women, who lives in community and has vowed to live the evangelical councils (poverty, chastity and obedience). Secular priests are men ordained for work within their diocese. In the understanding of the Catholic Church, a priest is a man, anointed by the Holy Spirit, ordained through and for the ministry of the Church, in the likeness of Christ, with the special authority of administer the sacraments. By Canon Law², Roman Catholic Priests and all Religious³ are not allowed to marry; neither are they allowed to engage in sexual acts, following the sexual morality of the church.⁴ Historically, the first official Roman Catholic Church statements requiring clerical celibacy appeared at the councils of Elvira (A.D. 306) and Carthage (A.D 390). Academically, the practise of celibacy has been debated since the Reformation⁵, however the questioning of clerical celibacy has exploded in mainstream literature and media since the sexual revolution in the nineteen sixties. During his time in office, Pope Paul VI was faced with growing pressure from society to clarify the Church's position on the practise of celibacy.

¹ <http://www.augustinianrecollects.org/glossary.html>

² The internal ecclesiastical law governing the Roman Catholic Church

³ A member of a religious order, congregation, etc - example: a monk, friar or nun

⁴ Hoenkamp-Bisschops pg 327

⁵ Although many factors contributed to this, it occurred sometimes in the middle of the fifteenth century – 1520-1550 AD

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

In response to this, the Pope, on behalf of the Church, issued an encyclical titled the *Celibacy of the Priest: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* on the 24th of June 1967. The encyclical considers and defends the Church's reasons for requiring priestly celibacy from its priests.

The purpose of this essay is to analyse the official reasons given by the Vatican for the continuation of mandatory clerical celibacy as outlined in *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* and *Canon Law*⁶. I also proceeded to interview five men currently practising clerical or preparing for Celibacy so that I could compare their reasons for this and determine whether they were similar. The men that I interviewed were all young men living in Australia. They came from a diverse range of spiritualities within the Catholic Church and included Priests, Friars and Seminarians training to become priests in the future.

- Brother Dean Mathieson OFM Cap – Capuchin Franchiscan friar studying for the priesthood
- Father Mannes Tellis – Dominican Priest
- Brother Paul Rowse OP – Dominican friar studying for the priesthood
- Mr Lewi Bakarar – Seminarian for the Archdiocese of Sydney
- Father Michael Destoop – Priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney and Vocations Director

⁶ <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/INDEX.HTM>

From this research I found that there were many similarities between the interviewee's responses, and also between these and the official stance of the Catholic Church. All interviewees commented that their prayer life and pastoral efficiency was impacted for the better, felt a supernatural calling to their chosen vocation and that they wouldn't get married even if they had the option to.

II. Differences between church in West and church in the East:

From the beginning of the 4th century, the Roman Catholic Church strengthened, spread and confirmed the practise of celibacy throughout the West. The commitment of celibacy was then endorsed by the Sacred Ecumenical Council of Trent (1563) and finally included in the Code of Canon Law.

*(Can. 277 §1). 'Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven and therefore are bound to celibacy, which is a special gift of God by which sacred ministers can adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart and are able to dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and humanity.'*⁷

Whilst this practise is currently upheld by the Catholic Church in the West, the Catholic Church comprises of two major divisions, the Roman Tradition (West) and the Eastern Tradition (East). It is important to note that within the Catholic Church in the East, the only clerics that are required to be celibate are bishops. This difference is reasoned by the Western Church to be because of the different

⁷ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_PY.HTM

historical background of the Church in the East, that ‘came about from a situation which the Holy Spirit had a providential and supernatural influence on.’⁸

III. Objections to the practise of Celibacy

The major objections today about the practise of mandatory celibacy include the claim that it is against human nature, not required by God and that there is no or little difference in pastoral efficiency. Dr. Allan Meyer, a Christian theologian who based his Ph.D thesis on the study of male sexuality claims “there is no doubt that we have been biologically and psychologically created as sexual beings.”⁹ Meyer goes on to say that although Celibacy is a moral and spiritual challenge that everyone must face at least for a season of life, to demand that men deny their sexual passions for a lifetime to qualify as a minister of Christ is to put some of those men in a place which strains their self control beyond that which God himself has required them.¹⁰ Meyer also argues that it is wrong to demand celibacy in order for one to serve God, as God never made it a requirement.¹¹ Hoenkamp–Bisschops, a psychologist and professor of theology, adds ‘the combination of denial of human nature and the irrevocability of the vows can lead to situations that can, in fact, be detrimental to a priest’s mental health.’¹²

⁸ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 38

⁹ Appendix F: Interview with Dr. Allan Meyer

¹⁰ Appendix F: Interview with Dr. Allan Meyer

¹¹ Appendix F: Interview with Dr. Allan Meyer

¹² Hoenkamp-Bisschops (page 335)

Don Swenson of the Royal Mount College, Department of Behavioural Science, conducted a study that interviewed 3,214 Priests from 22 denominations.¹³ He found that while there was a significant increase in both the time and frequency of time spent in prayer for celibate Religious, he concluded that ‘the implications for this study are that there is some empirical basis to argue for a change in the present law of clerical celibacy. In regards to one’s devotional life and time for ministry, celibacy doesn’t appear to matter.’¹⁴

Swenson performed a t-test on each scale and variable of interest. Apart from a small difference in mean age, (44 for Evengelicals, 60 for Catholics), in other areas such as gender and salary the participants were comparable. Whilst the sample group was substantial and there was a vast denominational representation in his research, the sample group was only from one country (Canada) and therefore it is more difficult to extrapolate the data to the Church’s practise of clerical celibacy, a practise that occurs over most of the world

I have personally been aware of these academic and cultural objections to the practise of celibacy. And I am particularly interested in how the objections of Meyer and Hoenkamp-Bisschops could be overcome, therefore, I have endeavoured to conduct research to discover why the Church requires this practise.

¹³ Don Swenson (page 9)

¹⁴ Don Swenson (page 42)

IV. Christological significance (Christ's example):

The Roman Catholic Church is the world's largest Christian Church, comprising of more than one billion members.¹⁵ The title Christian, originating from the Greek word *Christanos*, describes someone being 'Christ like' or a 'follower of Christ.' It follows, according to the Catholic Church, that the Christian priesthood can therefore only be understood in the light of Christ and that as the ministers of Christ; Religious should look to Christ directly as a their model and supreme ideal.¹⁶ As Christ remained throughout his whole life in the state of celibacy, signifying his total dedication to the service of God and men¹⁷, "each priest follows in his footsteps, taking up his cross and eventually giving his life totally for the church."¹⁸

Father Michael DeStoop agrees. Fr DeStoop is a priest and director of the vocations office for the Archdiocese of Sydney. He argues that the importance of this "concern between celibacy and the priesthood of Christ" is that it enables those who embrace it to become more like Christ on account that they choose to espouse themselves to the Church; it enables the priest to adhere to Christ more

¹⁵ ["Annuario Statistico della Chiesa dell'anno 2008"](#). Holy See Press Office. 27 April 2010

¹⁶ Appendix G: *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* - point 19

¹⁷ Appendix D: interview with Mr. Lewis Bakarak

¹⁸ Appendix A: interview with Fr. Mannes Tellis

easily with an undivided heart and to serve others without any hindrance or encumbrance.¹⁹

V. Ecclesiological significance:

The second reason Pope Paul IV gives for mandatory celibacy is the ecclesiological significance of the practise. Ecclesiology refers to the branch of theology concerned with the nature and the functions of a church, pertaining directly to the passage in the Bible:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her...”(Ephesians 5:25-26)

One interviewee commented that the “greatest benefit” of his life “is the intimate relationship he is drawn into with Christ as a celibate man... imitating more fully the life of Christ as he himself lived it for his people.”²⁰(Lewi Bakarar).

Therefore celibates argue that rather than “loving their wives, just as Christ loved the Church” in their act of celibacy they are in fact loving the Church, just as Christ loved the Church. Their act of celibacy is them “laying down their life” as Christ laid down his own for his friends. In doing this, the priest takes on a closer likeness to Christ, even in the love with which the eternal priest (Jesus) has loved

¹⁹ Appendix E: interview with Fr. Michael DeStoop

²⁰ Appendix D: Interview with Mr. Lewi Bakarar

the Church and offered himself entirely for her sake;²¹ He is able to dedicate himself to the service of the Lord Jesus with complete liberty.²²

The practise of celibacy also contains Ecclesiological significance in terms of the priest's ability to pray more. "The word of God, as preserved by the Church, stirs up a vibrant and profound echoes in the priest who meditates on it, lives it and preaches it to the faithful."²³ The celibate men I interviewed reported that they had a strict daily prayer schedule of up to 4-5 hours a day. They also commented that they spend much of this time praying together in community with their brother friars or priests²⁴ and also that the essence of their relationship is relationship with God; they enjoy a deep intimacy with Him as a consequence of this time spend in prayer.^{25 26}

²¹ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 26

²² Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 27

²³ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 27

²⁴ Appendix C: interview with Br. Paul Rowse

²⁵ Appendix A: interview with Fr. Mannes Tellis

²⁶ Appendix E: interview with Fr. Michael DeStoop

VI. Divine Office and Prayer:

This increased capacity for prayer, originating from the practise of celibacy, also enables the Church to fulfil a number of it's biblical obligations, one of which is to never cease to pray.²⁷ These obligations are outlined in St Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints"
(Ephesians 6:18)

One of the differences between celibate and non-celibate members of the Catholic community is that whilst all Catholics are encouraged to pray, priests and Religious are obliged to pray as part of their vows.²⁸ They include morning prayers, morning Mass, evening prayers with Eucharistic adoration and finally night prayers.²⁹

The Church maintains that not only does this unceasing prayer benefit the Church as a whole, but also it is also advantageous for the individual clergy. 'The priest receives joy and encouragement unceasingly from the attentive and devout recitation of the Divine office, and prayer from his spouse, the Church.'³⁰

²⁷<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=ephesians+6%3A18&version=NIV>

²⁸ Appendix B: interview with Br. Dean Mathieson

²⁹ Appendix D: interview with Mr. Lewis Bakarak

³⁰ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 36

The Church also stipulates that the celibate vocation is a calling from God responded to by the free will of the individual. “Jesus replied, not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.”³¹ Like Christ, a priest wholly and solely intent on the things of God and the Church, imitates the great high priest who now lives ever in the presence of God.³² “An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs...But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world....”³³ (1 Corinthians 7:32-34) They reason therefore, that if a celibate lifestyle is a calling from God, it follows that it is an appointment to a ‘divine office’ and must be pleasing to God.

My Primary research confirmed this as all my interviewees expressed that they had felt a divine calling towards their current vocation and that this calling was one that was responded to daily with both joy and sacrifice.

VII. The motive for celibacy:

My celibate interviewee’s all showed similar responses on their personal beliefs on the motive for the celibacy. All five interviewees referred to their lifestyle as a calling from God and also commented on following the example of Christ and biblical instruction in their vocation.

³¹ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matt%2019:11&version=NIV>

³² Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 28

³³ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20cor%207:32-33&version=NIV>

It is this call to 'divine office' that Pope Paul IV asserts should be the principle motive to a celibate life, "I choose to pursue a celibate vocation not because it was primarily my initiative to do so, but in response to God's call."³⁴ Additionally, there are also other motivations outlined in the bible for those called to embrace a celibate lifestyle.

Firstly, the book of Matthew reveals to us Christ's support for those who are willing to live a celibate lifestyle: "*for some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept it should accept it.*"³⁵ (Matthew 19:12)

Jesus, in this passage, is drawing his disciples' attention to the third type of eunuch. Whilst the idea of genital mutilation was abhorrent to the Jews, Jesus was using eunuch metaphorically. Just as eunuchs were often appointed into high positions of service for a monarch, "the eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" are those who are called to dedicate their lives in an exclusive love for Christ our king." "By asking his Apostles to become eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God it is very clear that Jesus was asking them to renounce marriage to look after his Bride, the Church."³⁶

³⁴ Appendix E: interview with Fr. Michael DeStoop

³⁵ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2019&version=NIV>

³⁶ Appendix E: interview with Fr. Michael DeStoop

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

Secondly, Jesus promises a practical reward for those who intend not only to participate in his priestly office, but also share with him in his very condition of living.

“I tell you the truth”, Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age and in the age to come.”³⁷

(Mark 10:28-30)

Jesus is promising not only physical blessings for those willing to accept celibacy but he promises eternal and spiritual rewards also.

VIII. A sign of heavenly treasures

Not only does the Catholic Church believe that people who live a celibate lifestyle on earth will be rewarded once they are in heaven, they also believe that the vocation of celibacy is an anticipation of the return of the kingdom of heaven. ‘At the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like angels in heaven.’³⁸ (Matthew 22:30) Brother Dean commented on the eschatological significance³⁹ of his vocation, and feels a

³⁷<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark%2010:29-30&version=NIV>

³⁸ <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=mark%2022:30&version=NIV>

³⁹ Eschatology- The branch of theology that is concerned with such final things as the ultimate destiny of humankind.

particular call to be a “sign that this life on earth is not all there is”, even to strangers who see him on the street.⁴⁰

The Church, therefore, submits that the act of Celibacy is not a denial of earthly marriage but on the contrary, acts as a special token of the rewards that will be given in heaven.⁴¹ It “...anticipates the fulfilment of the supreme values which one day will shine forth in all the children of God.”⁴²

Additionally, as part of the coming of the kingdom of God, the Church recognises that there will be a marriage as such; a union between the children of God and God’s eternal love. “...Christ tells us that there will be no physical marriage in heaven. There will be no need, because we shall all be united directly in the love of God... it [celibacy] is a witness on earth of the union with God that we can all expect to one day share in heaven.”⁴³ The apostle John, during his vision recorded in the book of *Revelation* recalls that he ‘saw a new heaven...coming down from God, prepared as a bride adorned for a husband.’ As such, the Church argues, the celibate priest is not abstaining from marriage, but rather awaiting a more glorious union that is yet to come.

⁴⁰ Appendix B: interview with Br. Dean Mathieson

⁴¹ Appendix G: *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* - point 34

⁴² Appendix D: interview with Mr. Lewis Bakarak

⁴³ Appendix D: interview with Mr. Lewis Bakarak

IX. The promise of a full and fruitful life:

All Religious within the Roman Catholic Church, upon the completion of their formation, are required to take canonically binding vows to live Chastity, Poverty and Obedience.⁴⁴ One interview explained these vows quite poignantly:

“The vow of poverty means that you own everything in common. Obedience is listening to your superiors, and in a way giving up your own ambitions. The vow of chastity for us is a celibate chastity; all people are called to live a life of chastity.”⁴⁵

While some would argue that the Religious that partake in these vows ‘go without,’ the Church insists that the priest’s life acquires richness and meaning through his intimate relationship with God.⁴⁶ They go on to say that the sacrificial priest will find the glory of an exceedingly rich and fruitful life in Christ.⁴⁷

Pope Paul IV also reasoned that the priest in giving up of a possible family, a home and earthly riches, becomes a father to his parish, which gives him an outlet for his God given paternal instinct.

⁴⁴ Appendix B: interview with Br. Dean Mathieson

⁴⁵ Appendix B: interview with Br. Dean Mathieson

⁴⁶ Appendix G: *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* - point 29

⁴⁷ Appendix G: *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* - point 30

X. The fullness of love:

If Scripture tell us that 'God created man in his own image,' (Genesis 1:27) and says, 'Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love,' (1 John 4:8) then it follows, according to the Church, that we as human beings should show love to each other and to God. The response to the divine call to celibacy is, in itself, an answer of love in response to the example Christ has shown us.⁴⁸

The Church also argues that the love we receive from God is an 'all embracing stable, lasting and irresistible spur to all forms of heroism...a love that is open to all,'⁴⁹ In other word, the fullness of love that celibate ministers receive, is a motivation for them to show love to others around them. Paul asks Christians to 'Be imitators of God, therefore...live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and Sacrifice to God.' (Ephesians 5:1) The celibate experiences a love without reservations and stipulates to a charity, which is open to all. Many priests, friars and other Religious live in seminaries where they are able show their love in many practical ways, which are exemplified in the following quotes from my interviewees:

"We, as Franciscans, mainly serve the poor; that is our major work. We have a van that visits and goes out and spends time with the poor giving out tea and

⁴⁸ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 24

⁴⁹ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 24

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

*coffee. Visiting the lonely and the poor and the hospitals and even teaching in poor areas.*⁵⁰

*“The central task of human and Christian living is to become persons of charity, capable of deep, intimate relationships. Celibacy is therefore, the most radical way a person can reflect God’s all embracing love in the world.”*⁵¹

In a life so completely dedicated and motivated by love, celibacy is and ought to be, a rare and very meaningful example.⁵²

XI. Pastoral Efficacy of celibacy:

With the busy schedule of everyday life, people find it hard enough to look after themselves and their families let alone keeping time to think about spiritual issues. According to St Paul, ‘*a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world...*’⁵³ (1 Corinthians 7:33) This idea of less earthly responsibility forms part of one of the Church’s main reasons for the continuation of mandatory celibacy. It is argued that celibacy evidently gives to the priest ‘the maximum efficiency and the best state of mind, mentally and emotionally for the ongoing exercise of perfect charity.’⁵⁴ Priests and Religious not only experience an increased prayer time and live in a community where they are encouraged in their choice of vocation,

⁵⁰ Appendix B: interview with Br. Dean Mathieson

⁵¹ Appendix E: interview with Fr. Michael DeStoop

⁵² Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 24

⁵³ www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20corinthians%207:22&version=NIV

⁵⁴ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 32

but they also participate in personal reflection,⁵⁵ and must ‘observe faithfully an annual period of sacred retreat,⁵⁶ a process that is required by Canon Law.

The practise of celibacy also guarantees the Religious a greater freedom and flexibility in the pastoral ministry.⁵⁷ Father Mannes argues that “the situation where all of my personal and financial responsibilities are looked after by my Religious order frees me for ministry at all times of the day and night.”⁵⁸ Father Michael Destoop adds “if I was married I would not have the time I have to fulfil my pastoral responsibilities in administering the sacraments, providing instruction, visiting the sick.”⁵⁹

For these reasons, the freedom given through a celibate vocation ‘allows the priest [or Religious] to spend himself wholly for the welfare of all, in a fuller and more concrete way.’⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Appendix D: interview with Mr. Lewis Bakarak

⁵⁶ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P28.HTM

⁵⁷ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 32

⁵⁸ Appendix A: interview with Fr. Mannes Tellis

⁵⁹ Appendix E: interview with Fr. Michael DeStoop

⁶⁰ Appendix G: Sacerdotalis Caelibatus - point 32

XII. Evaluation

This essay gains its strength and validity from the amount of primary sources utilised. Not only are the Vatican sources reliable for the answering of this essay as official documents of the Catholic Church, but I was also able to perform extensive interviews with Religious currently living a celibate lifestyle, hence giving my research a high ecological validity. All interviewees answered the questions comprehensively and sincerely, even when the questions became personal.

In saying this, however, the research essay could have been made better by further primary research for example I could have spent some time visiting seminaries in order to get a real grasp of what it is like to live a celibate lifestyle. The research would have also been more reliable if female Religious, were included in the interviewing process and also perhaps those priests and Religious who have left the Religious order and now believe they can effectively serve God without remaining celibate.

XIII. Conclusion

In light of the objections presented against the practise of mandatory clerical celibacy, this essay endeavoured to research the reasons why both the Church as a whole, as well as Catholic individual's currently practising celibacy, defend their decision.

The first of these objections from Don Swenson was that whilst the practise of celibacy increased the time spent in prayer "in regards to one's devotional life and time for ministry, celibacy doesn't appear to matter."

The response from my interviewees whilst confirming that celibates do spend an increased amount of time in prayer , including morning prayers, a morning mass, evening prayers with Eucharistic adoration and finally night prayers (Lewi Bakarat), they also argued against Swenson's findings. Pope Paul VI argues in *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus* that "the practise of celibacy guarantees him [the Religious] a greater freedom and flexibility in the pastoral ministry," and Fr Michael DeStoop agrees adding that if he was married [he] would not have the time to fulfil his pastoral responsibilities in administering the sacraments, providing instruction, visiting the sick as many of these duties go beyond the working hours of the day."

The second objection comes from Hoenkamp-Bisschop's research, which found that the combination of denial of human nature and irrevocability of the vows can be detrimental to a priests mental health. All interview's I conducted as well as the official opinion of the Church strongly disagrees with this assertion. Pope

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

Paul IV goes as far to say that celibate priests experience “the maximum efficiency and the best state of mind, mentally and emotionally for the ongoing exercise of perfect charity.” It is also argued that according to Canon Law it is required for all priests to observe faithfully an annual period of sacred retreat, which in my opinion would be beneficial rather than detrimental to the mental health of a priest.

Finally, Allan Meyer objects to the practise of mandatory celibacy for two reasons. Firstly, human beings have “been biologically and psychologically created as sexual beings.” He also argues that it is wrong to require mandatory celibacy because “God never required it” and that “to demand that men deny their sexual passions for a lifetime to qualify as a minister of Christ is to put some of those men in a place which strains their self control...”

In the research I conducted it was found however, that according to the Church, the choice of vocation that the priests and Religious take originates from a calling from God, therefore the practise is not right for everyone and the relationship that is formed, according to Lewi Bakarat, whilst not sexual, is an intimate relationship between the Religious and Christ.

It is clear from this research that the practise of celibacy is beneficial in many aspects of the Church’s biblical requirements, namely continuance of prayer, caring for the poor and imitating life of love. This essay however leads to the question whether the benefits of celibacy do, in fact, outweigh the possible implications of its existence, and furthermore whether, if it hasn’t been required

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

by God in order to serve as a minister of Christ, than should the practise still remain mandatory?

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

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INTERVIEW:

Br. Dean Mathieson, (Personal Interview), conducted on the 24th January 2010

APPENDIX:**PRIMARY DATA:****Appendix A: interview****Interviewee:** Name of interviewee removed**Interviewed:** via email 09/02/2010**1. Why did you choose a celibate life?**

Part of the reason I chose to be celibate is that it was a necessary requirement for becoming a priest and religious. I am sort of like a monk that lives in the world and am involved in ministries that take me from my religious house (monastery). Partly my desire to be celibate is that I believe I have received a certain grace of God to do so. If I hadn't come to that conclusion I would never have persevered with religious life or the priesthood. However, that being the case it is not always easy, just as being married is not always easy. Often I fail in my celibate lifestyle and think maybe the grass is greener on the other side, but I also see my married friends and am in awe of what they do for their spouses and children and then I reflect and think-"I don't think I have been given the grace to do that!" I think personally for me celibacy has been a great blessing.

2. Why did you decide to be a celibate man rather than pursue another kind of ministry?

We usually describe this as a particular calling in the Church. It is mysterious, hard to describe, it is sort of like asking why did you marry this particular woman and not another. It is a mystery, but also there was in me a great desire to serve the Church I love and to act as God's instrument in the economy of salvation.

3. What is your daily life like? How would it be different if you were married?

My daily life is taken up with being the full time chaplain to the school my religious order runs, I assist the Religious Education faculty in the school and am available to the school community in a sacramental way. If I were married I think I would have a lot more personal responsibilities to wife and children as well as extra financial concerns (like a mortgage etc), I don't have these as a religious and as a priest. All of those responsibilities are looked after by the religious order I belong to. This situation frees me for ministry at all times of the day and night. Why do you think that the Catholic Church embraces celibacy as a lifestyle? The Church has seen in celibacy a complete giving of oneself to Christ. Especially this giving is found in the command to leave all things,- lands, brothers, sisters, parents etc and follow Christ. Secondly celibacy frees the

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

individual to serve God and the Church with an undivided heart. Being married and a priest often means serving two masters; which takes precedence the Church or one's particular family? The celibate doesn't need to answer that question it must always be the Church, otherwise the celibate then becomes selfish and his celibacy quickly loses its meaning.

4. If you were allowed, would you get married? Why/Why not?

I would not choose marriage for the simple reason that I live in a community of other male religious, the situation of marriage would not really enter the equation, it just wouldn't work out. I am not opposed however to diocesan priests getting married, often they live by themselves and their household arrangements would be more fitting for the rearing of a family. This is not so in a monastery, which is basically where I live.

5. Did you choose to become a celibate man because you didn't meet a girl that you wanted to marry?

Actually I left the girl I considered marrying to join religious life. I realized first of all that I was too young to marry at that time (I was 21) and that prior to going with this girl I had already had investigated joining the religious order I now belong to. Also during my formation I met a wonderful girl who I could have left the Order for but I didn't for the simple fact that I was not in love with her but merely infatuated, but at the time it was hard to discern that. It was really by talking things over with brothers close to me in the Order that I was able to realize what my feelings truly were. I also am well aware that I may again meet a woman who I will fall in love with, but like the married man, I have to be prudent about how I deal with those feelings.

6. What are the benefits of being celibate?

I suppose the benefits that come with celibacy basically enables you to be radically open to all kinds of relationships. As well the celibate state enables me to be ready to move from one ministry to another or one assignment to another without the hassle of uprooting a whole family and moving them. At the root of the celibate call though is one's relationship with God which is cultivated in prayer. Voluntary celibacy without some kind of prayer life makes things a bit more difficult. For me being celibate means being open to God and his will for me, wherever that takes me.

7. What are the things that you can do in your ministry that you couldn't do if you were married?

These days there are many taxing issues that face married couples and families. Work issues are high on the list of things which affect how a family works and its stability; so if Dad is out of work or has to do a lot of traveling for work that affects the family, similarly if parents have to work late that affects how the children are brought up.

For me being celibate enables me to do a lot of things like traveling, coming home late, being available to people at all hours. Hence the fact that I can minister in a way which is unimpeded or in ways which do not adversely affect a family point to the genius of celibacy undertaken for the right reasons. Our celibacy has to be undertaken as a form of service to the Church. This outlook reflects the meaning of the priesthood within the Catholic Church, you see the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the priesthood of all the baptized (called the Common Priesthood). This outlook is understood by the fact that the celibate priest must essentially be radically at the service of the laity to the point of putting his own emotional and physical needs seconds. This may seem harsh but each priest follows in the footsteps of Jesus Christ taking up his cross and eventually giving his life totally for the Church, which as we understand in our theology, is the body of Christ. So there is an undoubted sacrificial element which is bound up with celibacy but this sacrifice is positive in that it is a freedom for service, complete and utterly devoted service to God's people.

8. What is the benefit of your celibate life for your relationship with God?

Being celibate means I have no family of my own so my family is the family of God which is the Church. As I mentioned before prayer must be at the heart of Christian celibacy, because it is God who is the partner in our life it is he who helps us when we need consolation, it is he who assists us in our needs. Yet God also provides many lay people who also act as "surrogate" families for celibates. I have had the great pleasure in my life as a religious and as a priest to be a part of many great families, families who want the support of their priests but who also feel it their duty to look after priests and their needs.

9. How important is community to your life of celibacy?

Once again because I don't have my own family my religious community is important to me because it affirms my celibate vocation and assists in my meeting affective needs. However the wider community of the Church is also helpful in this as I have already alluded to elsewhere.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

10. How did your formation prepare you to be celibate?

Nothing really forms you for celibacy because primarily it is a supernatural calling, a calling we cannot fully understand. However during my time in formation we did have seminars and discussions about celibacy and sexuality, though probably not as much as there should have been.

11. How does not being married mean you relate to female members of the Church in your ministry? – do you relate better or worse with them?

Personally I don't think being celibate has any effect on my relationships with men or women. Obviously you have to be prudent about cultivating particular friendships which could jeopardize the celibate and religious lifestyle but this would be the same for the married person as well. Furthermore you could be a misogynist and be married, celibacy does not imply a dislike for the opposite sex nor of one's own sex. One may merely call it an alternative lifestyle.

12. What are the negatives/difficulties with being celibate?

From a purely natural standpoint there will be always times of loneliness and listlessness. Once again this could be the case in married life as well or in any other relationship. Furthermore one must look at one's loneliness and convert it into a positive, it is in those times of loneliness that God may be calling you to a deeper relationship with himself, so loneliness in fact can be converted to 'solitude with God'.

13. Do you miss or long for female company?

Once again speaking on the purely human plane, yes there are times when it would be great to have a female companion. Women always give another aspect to the whole human experience that is why God created male and female, both sexes represent something of God. Also from the emotional and physical aspect a woman complements the man this is once again natural and normal, so any of those desires, even in the celibate, are natural and normal and not in anyway sinful. Yet this is where the sacrificial nature of celibacy comes in-celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom of God. It is in our desire for the 'other' that our desire for God is really hidden. My desire to be consumed, loved and looked after by a woman really is nothing other than my quest for divine love which is more profound, utterly sublime and wholly fulfilling, yet it is a love I will only but merely taste in this life.

14. Was it difficult to give up the idea of having a wife and children? (what about the command in Genesis to “Go forth and multiply” “it is not good for man to be alone” (Adam and Eve)).

In Mt 19:12, Jesus talks about those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom: “others have renounced marriage because of the **kingdom** of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” The celibate sees himself as one who has done this. What Jesus is calling the eunuch for the kingdom to do is to relinquish all things and come follow him. It is a supernatural call and therefore to be able to accept and live that call it is understood that Christ would also give his grace to live this particular way of life. Seeing that celibacy is a supernatural calling, that is, a calling above and beyond our nature, a special assistance has to be given so as to live this way, hence the celibate is able to live celibacy only with God’s help, it is true what Jesus tells us in St John’s gospel:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener...Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Personally speaking I never had a great anxiety about giving up the idea of being married and having children. To be honest I never ever really felt called to it, even when I was seeing a girl prior to entering the Order. I always thought marriage was for others, I always felt drawn to the priesthood and the religious life. On the other hand I have sometimes thought it would be nice to have a child, particularly a son, someone you could teach and nurture, and I admit that is just part of the natural instinct of the human person. I think it would be quite odd to never have felt paternal feelings as a man. However I am able to exercise a paternal concern in my priestly ministry, and that is why each priest is called ‘Father’ because the people we serve are in some sense our spiritual children. This spiritual paternity is seen in the sacramental and pastoral activity of the priesthood-when a priest baptizes he begets, in a spiritual way, the child he baptizes. In the Holy Eucharist he feeds his children from the table on which he works, in the sacrament of Confession the priest acts as Father, consoling, rebuking and embracing those who have lost their way, just as a biological father would do to his own children when they have done wrong.

5. Many men seem to have the inherent desire to be a husband and a father - where is your outlet for those feelings/desires?

I think I have answered that question in the previous question.

**16. Does being celibate make it difficult to control your sexuality?
Where/what is the outlet for your sexuality?**

Obviously as a celibate and as a human being, broken and wounded by sin, I fail at times to be authentic in my living out of the celibate lifestyle. Being in a world that is saturated with sexual and provocative imagery it is often difficult to live a pure life. So what is the solution? The celibate has to be discerning in what he sees on the TV, on what he looks at on the internet and in the way he associates with people. As a priest I am a public person and all my actions are in some sense under surveillance. If I act inappropriately in a public place I not only give scandal to those whom I am with but I also portray the Church in a poor light.

Sexuality, like any other appetite, has to be regulated by a reasonable approach. So, like the use of food, my sexual desires have to be restrained and lived in the light of what is reasonable and what is authentic to my religious vows and priestly life. This means living what is called celibate chastity. Chastity is a virtue, the virtue which enables the person to live as a sexual being according to right reason and the bounds of nature. Hence living a chaste life means first of all seeing sexuality as a part of the human person. Our sexuality should not dominate or define us, it is rather a facet of the multi-faceted entity which is the human person. Secondly, chastity means respecting our bodies-respecting the bodies of others by not allowing them to be made into objects for our gratification, nor allowing our own bodies to be loci of our own disordered desires.

So for the celibate there is no sexual “outlet” as such. Practices such as masturbation or casual non-committed sexual activity are completely and utterly at odds with the idea of chastity because neither of those practices really appreciate, nor respect, the individuals involved. A non-committed sexual encounter runs contrary to the true meaning of the sexual act, rather what is really being achieved is a gratification of the ego, a selfish pleasing of one’s own libido. Similarly with masturbation, it is a practice which does not respect the integrity of the human person. Masturbation is merely the sexual expression of a deep seated narcissism, a sexual illustration of self-obsession. Neither of these practices fulfill the true ends of the sexual act which is to unify the partners in their life long partnership and to bring forth new life for the good of society.

Sexuality also has to be seen in a broader context than the merely genital. To look at the genital only is superficial. Sexuality is more about how I relate as a man to other people. How do I live out my masculinity, how do I become a true man. All of these aspects I personally find in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. For me Jesus is the one who lived his sexuality, his masculinity, in the most wholesome and balanced way. He was tender when he had to be, compassionate, self-sacrificing, disciplined, heroic. I pray that I may be a true man after the heart of our Saviour.

17. Do you think it should be a personal choice to be celibate or should the Church require it?

I think it should be optional for priests who are not in religious orders. This is the practice in the Orthodox Church, so I don't have a problem with it, it is consistent with tradition. The only exception is that, in the Orthodox Church the Bishop is normally a celibate, usually taken from the monasteries.

18. What would happen if you met a girl you liked or fell in love? What would you do?

What would a married man do in the same situation? Obviously you would have to come to an understanding of what is the best for the individual concerned. Falling in love is not the problem, the problem is where is this leading to? This situation is a difficult one for the priest because if he perhaps doesn't go along with the wishes of the woman he is involved with there is the possibility of recriminations, if these became public then the priest could lose his reputation and perhaps be suspended from the priesthood.

The Church has an official document-*Integrity in Ministry* -which outlines clerical protocols concerning dealing with people, this has to be observed. If a priest does realize he is becoming emotionally involved with an individual he must report this to his bishop or religious superior. In doing this the superior then can make adequate arrangements, it may mean moving the priest somewhere else so he can be removed from the potentially dangerous situation. This whole process means being truthful to yourself and to those who are in authority as well.

On a personal level it is perhaps wise also to be a bit distant when dealing with people, especially women. When counseling these people it must be done in a professional way and in such a way which respects the individual concerned but does not cultivate an emotional dependence. Familiarity is also an important thing to avoid if possible. Priests shouldn't be over familiar with individuals who are potentially causes for concern. Hence I would probably act in a more distant and unfamiliar manner with a young female teacher at my school than with say an older or maturer female staff member. Prudence has to govern these relationships at all times.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

19. Do you think that celibacy is a cause of sin? Are men putting themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation rather than allowing themselves to marry and enjoy sex?

Not really, many married men who are still in love with and are having sexual relations with their wives often engage in looking at pornography or visit prostitutes or have affairs, if they are enjoying sex with their wives why would they also indulge in all this other stuff? I don't know of any statistical evidence to suggest celibate men are any more at risk of sinning because of their lack of sexual outlets than men who are married. In fact it maybe that those in religious life and priesthood are more likely to keep in check their sexual fantasies and desires either through frequent confession or spiritual direction something most married men probably don't have access to.

Furthermore, as I have mentioned previously, celibacy is a supernatural calling and if you are invited by God to live in such a way he will provide the graces sufficient for that life, however the will is also involved in this situation and we can always reject God's grace as well.

20. Are you more tempted by pornography now than before when you had planned that you would marry?

First of all I honestly try to keep away from pornographic imagery or even merely sensual imagery, even to the point of putting Net Nanny on my personal computer. That being the case even on the internet you often find suggestive pictures which seem to escape the filter and these are times of great temptation and sometimes I must admit I have delighted in it. Did I do the same before I entered religious life? Well being at university and at an all boys High School as a teenager, pornography was rife, did I use it? Yes I did. Am I proud of that, no I am not. At that age, certainly as a teenager and, later as a young adult, I did not sufficiently reflect on what kind of effect it would have on me. Gradually as I learnt about my faith I was able to make the connection between pornography and its effect on how I related to women. Pornography objectifies and presents women as submissive, ready and willing to do any explicit act and it makes the user of it believe this. The problem is that when pornography saturates the mind the fine line between reality and fantasy can get blurred, and this is where sexual attacks on women start. It is a known fact that the American serial killer Ted Bundy's pornography addiction assisted in his criminal activity. Now I am not saying that watching pornography will make you a mass murderer, what I am saying is that it may be a factor in painting a fantasy world which the individual fails to distinguish from the reality of the real world where women do not act as if they will submit to anything and everything.

At bottom I do not feel the temptation has got worse it has perhaps remained the same and it is always something I am keen to be on the defensive against.

21. Do you have female friends to talk to or is that too tempting?

Yes I have many female friends and I talk to them often. They are very respectful of my choice and many of them see my celibacy as helpful to their relationship with me because they know I am not out to hit on them. As I said before I have to be prudent about these relationships just as a married man would have to be prudent with relationships with women other than his wife. This means not being overly emotionally dependent on them or sharing with them information which may seem I desire a romantic involvement. Most of my female friends are Catholic and probably would not conceive of having a relationship with me, they know I suppose I am off limits.

22. Does celibacy get easier as time goes on?

I think like any lifestyle has its ups and downs, sometimes celibacy seems easy and at other times hard. Different situations can help or hinder the celibate lifestyle. However as long as I believe this is what I am called to, and ask for God's grace to live faithfully this call, then I have no fear of the future. It also depends on how you have lived your celibacy. If celibacy is lived out in a constructive and lifegiving way then celibacy will be healthy and positive, but if it is lived purely as a means of escaping responsibilities or for selfish motives it will end up backfiring, either you become bitter or you eventually forfeit celibacy and take up some other lifestyle.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

Appendix B: Interview

Date: 24th January 2010

Interviewee: Name removed at request of interviewee

Friar of the Order of Friars Minor (Capuchin)

Age: 32

Interviewer: Aaron Fischer, Elise Jackson (friend of both interviewee and interviewer)

AARON: Why did you choose a celibate life?

█: That's a broad one! I guess initially it is more thinking what does one want to do with their life, and the idea of serving God alone and serving others. And giving oneself totally in a sense part of it is giving up the married life in order to do that. So in a way it is the choice for the celibate life in a positive way because you are able to do so much but there is also the recognition that it is a sacrifice and there are things that you have to give up

AARON: Why did you decide to be a celibate man rather than pursue a different kind of ministry?

█: I guess it is the idea of the total giving. The example of why I chose this particular one is St Francis and the way that he just gave himself totally to what he was doing. When you are choosing a thing, this "big life choice" you just want to give yourself totally to God. And those things that you desire and wanted earlier, and still do, they don't get in the way as much because you are so focussed on giving yourself in that way.

AARON: So who is St Francis?

█: St Francis started the order of the Franciscans. He lived around 1200 and he had a normal upbringing. He wanted all of these great things, to be famous and all of those worldly things. But he realised that didn't satisfy him, so he gave up everything to the poor and went to serve God alone, And in a way my life is following the example of that, because that was his way of following Jesus and people have copied that since.

AARON: What happens in your daily life and how would that be different if you were married?

█: A lot of our life is dedicated to prayer, so set times of prayer and long periods of prayer. So I guess in that sense of being able to spend long periods in prayer alone would be a difficult thing if I Was married. But also being able to minister to people's needs at any time. There is an idea with celibacy of a universality of the giving. So the idea is that you are able to be there for

everybody else which I guess in practical things is different if you have a wife and family you can't do it in the same way. It is not to say that being married isn't a different way to life the Christian life but I am more able and freer to do that particular ministry.

AARON: Why do you think that the Catholic Church embraces celibacy as a lifestyle?

██████████: Mainly it would be from scripture – if you look at say where Jesus talks about in Matthew 19:10 in terms of some people giving their life – or some people giving their life completely and some people who can't be married.

ELISE: He is talking about eunuchs by nature and those who choose to be - both people who physically can't marry as well as those who choose not to marry.

██████████: He says that some people are born Eunuchs, and some people give their life in that way.

ELISE: Maybe it would be good to describe a few scriptures that you think are important

██████████: That one. But also St Paul in Corinthians. But in terms of the other side of it (marriage), you know the image of the bride and the bridegroom, So marriage is actually put up as the most fitting example of God's love for us. So when you are thinking of celibacy it is not that this is the main, or the most important way to be. So holding up celibacy doesn't mean that the Church doesn't think marriage is wonderful.

Another reason that the Church holds it up is the eschatological reason, which is looking towards the end. So the reason that people are celibate is that it is a sign that this is not all there is. In heaven there will be no marriage so it is a looking forward to that time where we will all be face to face with God

The other reason would be the practical reason of having that freedom (although freedom probably isn't the right word. It talks about those who are those who are dedicated, virgins who are worried about the things of heaven

ELISE: It talks about those who are married, that they are worried about things of the earth whereas the unmarried man can be concerned only with things of heaven

██████████: So there is that it is a sign, it is a witness – people see you and talk to you. We are a sign that this is not all there is, this world is not all there is. And the other thing is that you are free from the worry (not that it is a negative thing) and the practicalities, and you are able to just focus completely on God.

AARON: If you were allowed to be married would you get married

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

██████████: If tomorrow they came out with a big statement and changed all the rules? No I wouldn't. With the way that this life is it would be a different type of life. Celibacy is not just one part of it, being married would change everything and it would become a very different type of life. In this life you are not just choosing to be a social worker, we are living a life which is mean to be for others completely – and that is the major part of choosing this life in the first place.

ELISE: A follow-up question might be how practically do you live for others completely, what does that mean?

██████████: Well I guess simply things like – with Franciscans we serve the poor, that is our major work. The time aspect of being able to spend as much time out for other people is one important thing. But also the emotional thing with really caring for other people in sort of a disinterested love. With marriage and with children there is that concern and that stress (not in a negative sense) and that worry that there should be for family and spouse.

A disinterested love in a way is not being attached. Although even in married love there shouldn't be that attachment which would take one away from God, it should be the thing that brings someone to God. But a disinterested love is in a way, loving strangers in a way that you don't become attached in a way that it is a worry or a responsibility for you. The idea of my celibacy is no having any sort of attachments so that I can give to all.

ELISE: What kind of vows do you take?

██████████: Well the vows are poverty chastity and obedience

ELISE: So why wouldn't you be able to be married if you have taken those vows?

██████████: Well in our vows the chastity, obedience and not having anything of one's own. So the poverty means that you own everything in common. Obedience is listening to your superiors, and in a way giving up your own ambitions. Chastity for us is a celibate chastity; all people are called to live a life of chastity.

ELISE: I think celibacy and chastity might mean the same to Aaron right now – so perhaps you could cover the difference between the two words

██████████: Celibate chastity means that we wouldn't get married. The difference between the two is sometimes unclear. The common thought is that chastity is not getting married. When actually chastity or living a chaste life is to live out your sexuality in a way that is fitting to your way of life. So for a married person to be sleeping with seven women is not chaste, what is fitting for a married person is to have a wife and a partner (not both...) whereas for a celibate person for them to live chastely is to not do those things and to live out sexuality for others

ELISE: Aaron the way [REDACTED] is using the word chastity you might understand as the word purity. So chastity is living purity in your sexuality – so if you are married or unmarried you are still giving that to God

AARON: We have already talked a bit about the benefits of being celibate but can you list some of the things that you can do in your ministry that you couldn't do if you were married?

[REDACTED]: um... talk about celibacy? Ok, one thing is that some other people would be jealous of the fact. I don't know if you have ever been on a retreat, that time of going away and spending time with God. Not having any sort of cares and being able to be all caught up with God and wanting to serve God. We can do that in a way, which is – I want to say the words total but all Christians should love God in a total way. But being able to do it fully – it's not a job. And it incorporates living as a Christian but also my work as well is 100% of the time also serving God and serving others.

AARON: What are some of the things that you do, you mentioned helping the poor – so what are some of the things you do for the poor?

[REDACTED]: Practically? We have a van that visits and goes out and spends time with the poor giving out coffee and tea. Other things are visiting people, visiting the lonely and the poor. Which I guess is a thing that any Christian has the obligation to do, but to do that in a way that they can't – even the time we spend is not the kind of thing others can do if they have responsibilities. Mainly for Franciscans we help wherever there is a need, that might be visiting hospitals or teaching in poor areas, anywhere there is a need. Our tradition began working with the plague victims and doing things others wouldn't do. And that is our tradition, what we aspire to do. In a way we have a lot of famous friars in our history who have given their life in plagues or something – and in that sort of way of giving your life it takes on something different if you do have a family. We can be with the sick and be in dangerous situations like missionaries. IT is a different sort of thing if you do have other responsibilities

ELISE: So why is that it is much easier for you to give your life – that it is not too much of a stress to go and nurse the ill, but if you die then you do not have to worry about who is going to support your wife and children

[REDACTED]: Yes, that was it

ELISE: How do you become a friar, and how do you learn enough to be a priest and why is that different from training to be, say, a married Anglican minister

[REDACTED]: The way we do it is just by enquiring with the particular community. That might be for a normal priest (the one who wears the black and collar) or that

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

might be for a Religious like me. So you initially spend time just getting to know them. And then there is a stage of living in the community where you are not part of the community but you are just living with them. Then after that year there is a thing called a novitiate and that is a whole year basically spent on retreat where you don't go out much and you pray and discern if this is the life for you. And at the end of that year you take your first vows and you decide you are going to live poverty, chastity and obedience – but not for the rest of your life you just do it for three years. So anytime within those three years if the person leaves then it is not the life commitment it is like being engaged I guess. And so all of this time you are living with the community and you would start studies, not necessarily for the priesthood but all studies someone would do to be a Religious.

When I say be a Religious I mean like a friar

AARON: Like a friar or a priest

ELISE: No not like all priests – the kind that lives in a community, a friar or a monk or a nun

ELISE: What kind of things do you study?

██████████: Theology, scripture and philosophy would be the main things – the history of the Church. All those sorts of things – within that there are specific areas but those are the broad topics.

AARON: Would you be able to outline what an average day for you is?

██████████: Most days are a bit different but this is roughly what our day would be – we start with morning prayers – I will explain the type of prayers we do.

AARON: What time is that?

██████████: At six thirty – and then after that we have mass at seven. Then we eat breakfast together and midday prayer (at midday) followed by lunch at twelve thirty. Lunch is the main meal we have as a community with all the friars together. Then in the evening we have evening prayer from five until six. We have night prayer as well. Within that we have studies to do or classes to go to (at my stage) – some friars are always out saying funerals, or the work that friars do. So all of those things, lunch and things are not set – you can be absent but they always go on. So there is the rhythm of the community that you know that if you are not there then, say at the times for prayer, that the community is still praying together. So that would be what we do

ELISE: You were going to explain what kind of prayers you pray and why they are at certain times

██████████: So we have the prayers that all priests and Religious say which is something called the Divine Office, And it is basically reading through all of the psalms. So at Morning Prayer we would read through a set of psalms and then a scripture reading and then intercessions – so asking or praying for different things. And that is the prayer that all of the Catholic Church says together and has been saying forever.

ELISE: Since the New Testament – but it is modelled on the way the Jews prayed before that

██████████: And all of those prayers are set in a book for us

ELISE: Do you think it would be possible to pray those prayers if you were married?

██████████: Yes, and all can pray it – but it is particular for priests and Religious in that we are obliged to pray it.

AARON: And all Religious and priests across the world pray this in different languages at similar times?

ELISE: IT is how the Church fulfils the obligation to pray without ceasing – you know how the bible says to pray without ceasing – one of the ways that the body of Christ never stops praying is that through the whole world at these set times someone is always praying these prayers because of the time difference

AARON: What is the benefit of your celibate life for your relationship with God?

██████████: I guess the first thing would be recognised the amazing gift we have the God has given to be able to live this way. IT is always difficult in a way, not speaking negatively about married life, but wanting to serve God in a special way or a radical way and recognising that you have all of your existence dedicated to that one thing is quite a beautiful idea and it is something that when things are very difficult it is good to be able to remember that you have a special relationship, or a different relationship with God. IT is also a recognition that when things are difficult – in the sense that it is not a natural way to live – when you decide to be a celibate there is no “off switch” that gets triggered. In a way part of this life is the cross, although the whole point of it is not sacrifice or giving up – that we recognise the loss or the difference – but we also recognise that to love and to follow God means the cross – so sometimes when things seem easy because you have that freedom to serve - but also when things are difficult you have the cross and you think that this is good as well because you share the cross

ELISE: IS this life something that everyone could live or is this your special calling? IS this something everyone should try?

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

██████████: No, it is a specific calling so it is not for everybody. Especially in the world that we live in, which is not as Religious as it could be you are very much going against the world – so you have to be very sure about it

AARON: Do you think that is why they have the one-year period?

██████████: Yeah – well they have an eight-year period

ELISE: ██████████ is still in that period

██████████: Yeah, I am not out of that yet. So from the first year, then the novitiate – then three, four five years –all up it is seven or eight years. So that is exactly the point. Because it is so different in terms of the world we are in – there can be very different reasons for choosing it. It can be the wrong decision – you could take it as a refuge – so you could choose it not for positive reasons but for negative reasons

ELISE: What might they be?

██████████: Fear of married life? So if you are not good with relationships – it may be a seemingly good choice to run away from that – and that is why we have this long period of discernment and the community discerning whether it is right for a person.

ELISE: How might other people go about discerning if this is their calling? IS every boy who feels a calling to ministry, should they become a celibate or is this a special thing?

██████████: Well I think the most important thing about it is that it is a calling – it is not a choice necessarily just relying on yourself – it is something that starts from God. God calls somebody to this sort of a life

ELISE: Is that in the same way that God calls everyone to a state of life – is it only celibates who have a special calling?

██████████: No, everyone has a calling to whatever life they are called to – how you discover that...

AARON: Well how did you discover that?

██████████: You have that feeling – or the idea that other things wouldn't satisfy. Or the things that I thought before I started thinking about celibacy seriously – things that I thought would make you happy – I realised wouldn't be it or wouldn't satisfy me. In terms of who I really was or who I was called to be – I thought about what would make me truly happy in the end. I Wanted to be happy but when you strip all of those things away, what did I really want. For me those other things for many reasons wouldn't – even perhaps for this simple reason where celibacy is going so against the world, so me having that idea shows that I wasn't getting it from television. You don't get that idea from your peers or the pressure of the media – they are not saying "this is the life you should live" so

there is a hint there that if you really feel and desire to do this (celibacy) then there is a chance that it is from God... or it's just crazy...

AARON: You have mentioned before your community. How important is your community to your life of celibacy?

██████████: I guess that is the starting point, the basis for our life. You are living out your Christian way of being first of all with the people you are living with. There was a friar... Actually I think it was a Dominican. said that if you can't love the brothers that you live with how can you go out and tell people to love their enemies. So we pray together – and being in the chapel surrounded by these other men who have dedicated their lives to this same thing, it can be very encouraging. And the goodness of others can inspire you to be better yourself. But there are also difficulties in living with people that you don't choose to live with. You discover things about yourself, and think "how can I be a better person in this situation"? How can I deal with this"?

AARON: Do you find that difficult sometimes? Do you find that some people are too difficult?

██████████: That is one of the things in community life and that is one of the things that is there to bring you closer to God – forgetting about your own selfish desires and putting other people first – not just having your own ideas about how things should happen

AARON: How did your formation prepare you to be a celibate?

██████████: In novitiate we had a lot of lessons about what it means, what the vows are. What it means to be celibate. What it calls for. But I think the main thing in terms of formation is just living it, and you are living it before you make that final decision – so you are living it for many years always speaking to people about things. We speak to spiritual directors who help you with things, if you have any problems or thoughts then you have people to talk it over with. So that is the main thing. In community living it is sort of intensified because you are surrounded by it and are living celibacy out in a way which is controlled because others are also discerning or living celibacy

ELISE: What is being celibate – is it just getting married? Is it just not having sex? Is there an emotional aspect to it?

██████████: IT is all of the above. But what it is primarily is a way of giving yourself to God and giving your whole life to God. Historically in the early Church with the persecutions that were going on and people were giving their lives for God – being martyrs for God. And when things quietened down and Christianity was more accepted. People were still looking for a way to give up their life totally for God. These men wanted to go away and give their life somehow – so out of that came the desire to give your life in that different way.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

So it is being able to give up certain things of the world, in the sense that marriage is a worldly reality the way we know it, to be a sigh of what it is all about – of the eschatological reality where we will be with God face-to-face. In that sense it is that sign for being set aside for that role.

AARON: What are the main difficulties with being celibate?

██████████: Not being married...? I guess that one thing is the intimacy, which all people have a desire for, wanting to give oneself to the “other” (the opposite sex). Whereas a celibate we don’t look for that intimacy with others. That intimacy we must find is with Jesus. But being people who are not perfect we don’t have that perfect relationship which we should have with Jesus – so always trying to come back to that closeness with God is a difficulty because we still have these worldly desires and needs.

AARON: Do you still long for female company or miss it

██████████: As one of our friars (he’s 91 now) says “if you don’t have those feelings then you are not normal” – it is something that would be strange if you didn’t have that because we are made for the other – that complementarity which makes us the image of God. Which is why this particular life is unique because you are set apart – set aside for God

AARON: Do you still find that you are lonely?

██████████: there is that side of it, the loneliness in a sense. But not really also, because part of why you are living this life is in order to serve others, so that sort of thing which would be loneliness is filled up with that ability to serve others (and it is better to give than to receive).

ELISE: You talked about having that detached kind of love which you can love people universally without expecting love back from them, or having to be responsible for them, Does that add to the difficulty

██████████: Not really – because I guess if you are wanting that love back then that is probably a sign that you are not very happy. That sort of need for that is a sign that you might be lonely. I wouldn’t say that is a difficulty. Obviously in some sense it is because we are not perfect and we do like to be wanted but recognising that calling is a lot deeper than that – sometimes it is good to remember (actually good to remember for any Christian person) that when things get difficult that it is “not about me” this life or this calling, if I really want to be happy what will fulfil me is to give up and to give

AARON: Was it difficult for you to give up the idea of having a wife and children?

██████████: Initially not really – in the sense that when you first feel this calling you are caught up in this feeling or this desire for this thing that you see and you don’t really see anything else – similar to when you see someone and you fall in love with them you don’t see other people and thing “aw, I wish I could have that

person” when you are in that moment – so when you are caught up in wanting to follow God in a radical way and loving that idea you are not looking at other things. But in another sense, it is difficult that if you don’t recognise that it is a difficulty then you are not recognising the seriousness of it. So if you say, “oh no this is easy, this is nothing” then you perhaps don’t recognise that it isn’t normal in a sense. I remember one friar talking about how it is important to grieve the fact, that there is that loss. So it is important to recognise the difficulties. IT is naive to think that it is all perfect – because part of the reason we choose this life is the cross.

AARON: Men have the inherent desire to be a husband, father or lover – do you have an outlet for those feelings?

██████████: For a celibate the sexuality is not just switched off – a celibate lives out their sexuality in a specific way which means being there for other people in a universal way. So that is the outlet – also being able to dedicate my life to prayer in a specific way is an outlet in desiring that intimacy with Jesus in the same way that people have that intimacy with a spouse – Celibates are called to have that intimacy with Jesus, So there is the relationship with God but also the relationship with God’s people which is an outlet.

AARON: Do you think it should be a personal choice to be celibate or should the Church require it?

██████████: First of all for Religious we live in a community, the practicalities of having a wife and children are not ideal, so it is a different sort of a vow as it is for a priest. And for priests it is not – well maybe Elise will explain it better

ELISE: So we don’t think it is a rule like you could never change it – in fact for the first thousand years of the Church priests were able to marry. You know that St Peter was married and some of the other apostles also. And the Catholic church under the pope has a few different groups, who all have the same beliefs but there are some cultural differences, so obviously the Church and the liturgy evolved slightly differently in the middle east than it did in Rome. And so in those churches (like the Lebanese Catholic church) we have all of the same doctrine, we believe all of the same things, however they allow their priests to marry – well they don’t allow their priests to marry but what they do allow is for married men to become priests. The rule has always been that once you are ordained the state of life you are ordained in is the one you stay in, And that is the same for a deacon. We don’t think as is as much of a rule as much as it is a discipline – so it is something that the Roman church requires of its priests and therefore it is a calling that you need to discern – we say that if the Church asks you to do it (celibacy) then God works within the church and so if he is going to call you into that special kind of ministry then he is also going to give you the grace to be celibate. But for someone whose life is like ██████████ since the beginning of that kind of lifestyle they have lived that way because it would be a strange circumstance to have a monastery filled with wives and children – so we don’t think it is in scripture saying that priests MUST be celibate – but for practical

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reasons as well as for the reasons of a celibate man's close relationship with God the Church thinks its better

██████████: In the transcript you can write that as mine.

AARON: You quoted before some scriptures talking about celibacy and the benefits of it. What do you think of the command to “go forth and multiply” and when he talks about it not being good for man to be alone? Does your life contradict that?

██████████: Celibate people are life giving in a different way. So it is not in the sense that married people are but celibate people are still called to bring forth life in different ways. So it is not in the sense of going forth and literally multiplying – but I think in terms of Genesis that is an explanation of humanity, of who we are – we are made for the other – that is how God made people – he made humanity man and woman, but a celibate is set apart.

ELISE: Additionally to that, that command is also for humanity – as part of the body of Christ each person does not need to fulfil every job, there are some things that are for all of us like giving life, which ██████████ does in a slightly more abstract way – but that command to humanity means that each person does not need to do it individually, but that the Church as a whole is life giving. ██████████ may encourage life giving by taking care of orphans or by raising money for women to keep their unplanned pregnancies – so by being celibate he still contributes to the command

AARON: What would happen if you met someone that you liked or that you fell in love with?

██████████: One simple thing would be that it would be the same situation as for a married person. A married person could meet someone that they could fall in love with. So we were talking in the novitiate about falling in love, but you can fall in love with a person and you are not forced to act on it.

AARON: So you would choose to just ignore it? Just like someone who was married? Well ignore is probably not just the best word, but?

██████████: Well it is the same sort of commitment. You make a commitment to a particular life then that is what you decide to do, and basically things happen when they come about. Perhaps ignore is not ideal, but acknowledge. They say that these are the things that have to be faced, but I guess they have to be faced.

AARON: If you finished those seven or eight years of formation and you came to a point where you did fall in love with someone and you decided that you wanted to marry them, I guess that means you would leave? Are you allowed to do that?

██████████: Well it is the same sort of thing as marriage – but there are dispensations that people have from their vows for whatever reasons. So practically it does happen sometimes but I am not sure of what sort of things you need to go through

AARON: Do you think that celibacy can be a cause of sin and do you think that men (or women) are putting themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation by choosing that lifestyle?

██████████: In the first sense does celibacy lead to sin, and the answer would be no. But there is that importance of knowing why you are living a particular life and choosing it for the right reasons, choosing it for positive reasons. Say that idea of celibacy, most people do it most of the time – and it is perhaps a wrong way of thinking to say that married life, or sexual relations, is an outlet for something. Because that could turn to using one's partner. You can't think of marriage as in "you put yourself into a married situation and after that you can do whatever you want" that's not the way marriage is either. But in another sense, relating to the idea that there is that natural desire. There has to be a definite close ness with God to know that you are doing it for specific reasons, you are doing it for God and you are doing it for pure reasons. I am not sure there is any more of a desire or temptation in the celibate life. For a married person they still have that desire and temptation. IT is just as difficult to live the married life in the right way. I think a person who is living the celibate life in the right way would have more of a need to express their sexuality if they are also expressing it in the right (celibate) way.

For a married person I think that the fact that they are married means they never think about those things – they still have those desires. For a celibate person it is still a similar thing. A married person can still have sinful thoughts and can still have difficulties.

ELISE: Does having no physical outlet for your sexuality mean that the concupiscence is exacerbated?

██████████: I would say that if that is the case then the person is not called to that life – the reasons that it is a problem might be because the person is not called to that state of life

AARON: Do you feel that if someone was called to live that life then you are there not because you have to be – but because you are someone who is set apart

██████████: Yes and if you are there then God gives you what you need to live that state of life

ELISE: Do you think if you are not called to live that state of life and for some reason or another you choose it anyway – does that mean it is ok to cause

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

scandal or would it then be ok, say if in five years you fell in love and left – is the fact you weren't called a good enough reason to do that?

██████████: I think it is similar to a married couple, maybe years down the track things are not perfect and down the track they think it wasn't the best idea to get married – does that mean it is ok to divorce? No. You have to say that you are in that situation and you need to make the most of it.

ELISE: I think a possible implication of what you said was that not being called means it is ok to abandon your vows

██████████: Oh, no well I think it means that it might have been a wrong decision initially (to marry the wrong person or take vows etc) but it is still a sin. Just like if you married the person you weren't called to that doesn't mean you can have an affair, but it may be the reason why.

ELISE: Do you think that God gives you the grace to live the life you chose even if it not his plan A for you?

██████████: God is with us no matter what we choose, and he looks after things and he doesn't abandon us – so he does give us what we need to live the Christian life

ELISE: I think that maybe we need to communicate how concrete these decisions to get married or make vows are – that in a Catholic understanding you cannot decide that you married the wrong person and then marry someone else – that our understanding of a decision of state of life means forever. IT can be a little bit floaty to say “oh what am I called to” and all of that discernment is very important – but the thing that you *know* is that “I made my vows” or “I got married” and you know after that that God is asking you to serve him in that life even if you didn't have a great decision making process up that point.

AARON: Would you say that you making your final vows similar to someone making vows to their husband or wife when they get married?

██████████: Yes that would be the closest thing

AARON: Are you more tempted by pornography or sexual sin now that you know you won't be married?

██████████: Less now, perhaps because of a better understanding of sexuality and a closer relationship with God, an understanding of who people are

AARON: So the closer you become to God the less you want to sin?

██████████: Yeah and I guess the clearer you see things, and in terms of pornography you see it as it is and you see the ugliness of it and the lack of

attraction to it. Whereas if you don't have that understanding perhaps it is more attractive.

AARON: Do you think that celibacy gets easier the longer you are celibate. IS it harder at the beginning?

██████████: Don't know – I would say that it never becomes easy; there are always things that are difficult to deal with. The older friars are still normal people, they still have normal feelings and they are an inspiration, to see that they have given their life and they are so happy and so content at that stage of life. Also something I have found about older priests or older friars, there is sort of a youthfulness about them. They seem like they are the same now as they were 50 years beforehand.

Appendix C: Interview with Br. Paul Rowse:

Interviewee: Br. Paul Rowse

Interview: conducted via email 02/02/2010

1. Why did you choose a celibate life?

In many ways this celibate life I have is a gift from God. I am coming to believe more and more that this is what God wants of me for my life as a Dominican friar. I chose celibacy over marriage because I accept God's gift of a vocation to religious life and priesthood.

2. Why did you decide to be a celibate man rather than pursue another kind of ministry

To be honest I didn't explore non-celibate options for ministry. I didn't need to do so. During discernment before I joined the Order in 2003 I came to experience the peace which comes from active ministry and a celibate life, beautifully and faithfully exemplified by many good priests and religious. Their example was a great witness to me that I could, with the grace of God, do this too.

3. What is your daily life like? How would it be different if you were married?

Well, there are no nocturnal calls from cots for one thing! But I am accountable to my superiors for my movements, as much as any husband and father would be for the sake of the whole family. We have daily prayer as a community in the morning, midday, evening and night, as well as daily Mass together. We also have half an hour's private mental prayer and a rosary to pray each day. All up, prayer and preparation for prayer (say if I'm preparing a homily) could be as much as four or five hours a day. Sometimes it feels like a lot of prayer, other times all too little.

4. Why do you think that the Catholic Church embraces celibacy as a lifestyle?

Historical reasons, such as problems with bequests of dead priests' wills, are cited all too often to be true. In the first place a celibate life was the disciples' life. The Lord Jesus never married; his disciples left everything and followed him; many thousands of saints and sinners after them have been celibate in imitation of their one Lord. All other considerations about a celibate life flow from what celibacy offers a man or woman in their relationship with God. Celibacy is a

great gift which enables those who make the promise or vow to spend their lives in the nuptial company of the Lord Jesus. Celibate men have the potential to image Christ laying down his life for the Church, as St Paul called on husbands to do. Celibate women present themselves to Christ as his bride, the Church, after the pattern of the Virgin Mother of God.

5. If you were allowed, would you get married? Why/Why not?

My celibate vocation is a gift from God, so I probably wouldn't. The Lord calls me into this state in life to make me a certain kind of disciple among disciples. When the Lord calls in a particular way we can but answer, "I am the servant of the Lord. O that it would be done to me as you have said!" It is also worth keeping in mind that my celibate vocation is lived in community, so it would be all but impossible on a practical level to have a community like ours made up of the families of priests and religious.

6. Did you choose to become a celibate man because you didn't meet a girl that you wanted to marry?

On the contrary! There were some fine Catholic women with whom I was involved at one point or another and who I hope will make great wives some day. But even during those relationships I came to appreciate where else I was being drawn.

7. What are the benefits of being celibate?

My celibacy is lived in the context of a community of celibate men. Community life is very important to me, a constant in a life which promises modern forms of itinerancy and unpredictability. Opportunities open up which would not be available to married men in my life, such as full-time postgraduate study down the track and mobility for pastoral assignments.

8. What are the things that you can do in your ministry that you couldn't do if you were married?

One big thing I notice at this time, and it comes from having married friends, is that I can attend late night evening functions without the consideration that there are at home a wife to love and support and children I would have to put to bed. Many of the Church's events for people my age are evening ones, because they work or study most of the day long. Were I married I wouldn't have that same pastoral contact with those people.

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9. What is the benefit of your celibate life for your relationship with God?

There is the constant joy and challenge of making God more and more the centre and totality of my life. In this my prayer life, communal and personal, is where the relationship is built up and maintained and developed. Personal friendships with men and women and apostolic work in our parishes also contribute to a stronger relationship with God, because God works through others. My life and ministry in a married state would not be open to these possibilities

10. How important is community to your life of celibacy?

Vital! The community is not only a practical arrangement, but it is also a school of charity and a place where my rough edges are knocked off. The company of the brethren is marvellous, and they truly hope for good for the others, even if they don't always show it!

11. How did your formation prepare you to be celibate?

An important part of formation for celibacy is actually living it, and living it with others. This is why the Church asks diocesan seminarians to live together in a seminary situation. So too religious also live in community. So celibacy isn't something which can be trained for at a distance, while having "practice" relationships, which is morally bankrupt anyway. Celibate men and women get better at it by living it, sharing the light-filled and shadow times with others who have the same gift.

12. How does not being married mean you relate to female members of the Church in your ministry? – do you relate better or worse with them?

Generally, better. For one, being celibate enables me to enter equally well pastoral situations and relationships with people of both sexes. Observing, working with and benefiting from the contribution of women to our Catholic life also instills in me a reverence for the opposite sex, a greater respect and love for the sacrament of Marriage, and a desire to maintain and guard celibacy as a gift which witnesses to the desire of every human heart, male or female, for communion with God.

13. What are the negatives/difficulties with being celibate

14. Are you lonely?

15. Do you miss or long for female company?

I'll take these three questions together. There are lonely times in a celibate vocation, that's for sure. But it is also true to say that the potential for loneliness is a human thing, not a celibate thing. A man can be lonely in his marriage, a woman lonely in a crowd. So too celibate men and women experience their share of loneliness. It is remedied by close personal friendships and strong community life, with both of which I have been richly blessed. I seek the company of men and women more or less equally; I don't have an inordinate number of female friends to "compensate".

16. Was it difficult to give up the idea of having a wife and children? (what about the command in Genesis to "Go forth and multiply" "it is not good for man to be alone" (Adam and Eve)).

It wasn't especially difficult to give up the dream of marriage and family life, given I had become aware of this gift of celibacy from a young age. The Lord did indeed bless us and command us to "Go forth and multiply", and in my celibate vocation, fruitfulness is lived in other ways, most especially in community life, prayer, study, the sacred liturgy and preaching, and personal friendships. The difficulties which might flow from being celibate are more than matched by God in the rich blessings he bestows which make us fruitful in other ways.

17. Many men seem to have the inherent desire to be a husband and a father – where is your outlet for those feelings/desires?

In many ways my apostolic work, study and preaching are outlets for the paternal instinct. A great love for the people I work with and preach to is deeply paternal and pastoral in its purpose. I also have friends with young kids, friends who are more like family to me, and I love spending time with the family watching their kids grow up and share their home life in small ways.

18. Does being celibate make it difficult to control your sexuality? Where/what is the outlet for your sexuality?

The unfortunate tendency to see sexuality as something which will 'pop up' elsewhere if not given an outlet or expression is a consequence of a sex-saturated society. The divine nature of the gift of human sexuality means that with God's help and firm personal faith and hope my sexuality need not be controlled by individual toil so much as mastered through good habits called

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virtues, less confined and more honed for a good purpose. In my case, as a celibate man, I am to master through grace and virtue my sexuality is being honed towards being a good father to the people entrusted to my care. Being celibate has its challenges, but nothing which any ordinary man, celibate or married, wouldn't face. The virtue of chastity is difficult to acquire but worth it.

19. Do you think it should be a personal choice to be celibate or should the Church require it?

In some ways personal choice does not enter the discussion, and the reason for this is the source of celibacy. The Church requires the discipline of celibacy for her priests because God does; he is the source of every gift, including celibacy, which he enjoins on those who accept his gentle and generous invitation to follow him as priests and religious.

20. What would happen if you met a girl you liked or fell in love? What would you do?

Much like a married man is expected to maintain chaste fidelity in marriage, so too my first loyalty and love is to my celibate vocation which I am to guard with prudence and strong faith in God who makes all things possible. If I fell in love with a woman I would have to take steps to prevent her being hurt in the situation and look to prudent contact with her in the future. One help in this kind of predicament is the wisdom of a seasoned spiritual director with whom regular contact would be required in any case.

21. Do you think that celibacy is a cause of sin? Are men putting themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation rather than allowing themselves to marry and enjoy sex?

It does not follow that because we forgo something innate, like giving expression to sexual desire, that sin results. Sin and sexual desire are in different camps; celibacy seeks a path to God which makes good use of and transforms sexual desire for God's own purposes. Sins against chastity in the case of celibate men and women are then the oversight of the purposes of God for one's life, not necessarily the bad fruit of sexual repression. Celibacy in itself is a discipline not unlike a healthy diet and exercise routine, requiring not only personal discipline but help from outside to get the balance right. When the balance is out of kilter with celibacy or one's diet, it is often the result of not taking proper care of oneself.

22. Are you more tempted by pornography now than before when you had planned that you would marry?

Not at all, quite the contrary. While I had never planned to marry, I've noticed in myself a great personal and moral growth in the six years I've been with the

Order, not just sexually though it is true there but also in my relationships with men and women more generally speaking. I find myself better able to appreciate a person's inherent goodness and dignity through being celibate. I'm pleased to say as I continue in this great vocation that celibacy empowers and enables properly-ordered contact with others.

22. Do you have female friends to talk to or is that too tempting?

I am blessed with many good friends of both sexes, and thankfully my female friends seek my company for what it is not what else might come of a relationship with an apparent bachelor. I have female friends who are married and unmarried, and I am pleased to say I find myself equally untempted by them and joyfully seek their company too!

23. Does celibacy get easier as time goes on?

Thankfully, yes it does get easier. Training in prudence and close personal friendships in community and further afield all contribute to the joyful living out of the divine gift of celibacy.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

Appendix D: Interview with Lewi Bakarat:

Interviewee: Lewi Bakarat

Interview: Via email. Conducted on the 20/02/2010

Interview transcript removed for copyright reasons

Appendix E: Interview with Fr. Michael Destoop:

Interviewee: Michael Destoop

Interview: Conducted Via email on the 19/02/2010

1. Why did you choose a celibate life?

I chose to pursue a celibate vocation not because it was primarily my initiative to do so, but in response to God's call. When I first perceived my calling I did not want to be celibate, but since a common characteristic of a calling is that it is like a dripping tap I got to a stage where I knew I could not run from my vocation any longer. I began to ponder that when men and women are discerning a possible vocation to marriage, they often contemplate the joys they will take up in marriage. But when men or women are discerning a celibate vocation, society conditions them to think about the things they will have to "give up," not the things they can legitimately look forward to enjoy. I realised that there is something grossly unreasonable about this way of thinking because it means that celibacy is defined by what it is *not*, rather than what it *is*, namely, an espousal with the Bride of Christ (for consecrated men) and an espousal with Christ (for consecrated women).

Upon praying about my vocation I became more in touch with how the celibate life would be a great way of responding to God's love and even became humbled by the prospects that God wanted my undivided attention.

2. Why did you decide to be a celibate man rather than pursue another kind of ministry?

There are a number of reasons why I chose to be involved in a ministry in which I would be celibate. These are best described in terms of some defining moments that put me in touch with my calling. As you will see, all of these experiences are grounded in what I perceived to be how the Lord is calling me to respond to His love.

The first defining moment took place upon asking Fr Ron Hickman to provide me with some spiritual direction. (He was the Parish Priest of Balmain at the time. He died in January 2010. I have never been to a more moving funeral because he was a very holy priest.) As you may know, spiritual direction is usually only as helpful as what the one seeking direction discloses, unless the one providing

guidance is gifted by the Holy Spirit to sense what the one seeking direction has not himself seen within his own heart. Fr Ron indeed had this gift, no doubt due to the wisdom he had accrued over the years because he asked me: “Does it worry you that you think you would be a good *husband* and *father*?” And with a twinkle in his eye he said, “...and a good *lover*?”

At that moment I thought, “Uh-oh, where is taking me with this?” Then I thought to myself, “Maybe he’s right. Maybe he can see what I cannot see. Maybe I’m not discerning my vocation correctly. Perhaps the Priesthood is just a starry-eyed deliberation and that my real vocation is marriage because he perceives in me what I know to be true: that I have all the natural desires for marriage.” So I was honest with him and said, “Yes, it does worry me.” Upon hearing this, he lent forward, his eyes lit up and his face became visibly excited and he said, “GOOD! That means you will be a great priest!” He went on to say that a priest is not called a “father” for nothing and that just as a husband dedicates himself totally to his bride a priest dedicates himself totally to the Church which is the Bride of Christ.

I could identify with what he was saying as it affirmed the true nature of my calling. I also felt that his guidance gave me an insight into his own fatherly heart. Having encountered Christ in him in such a tangible way I was moved to consider what a privilege it would be if Our Lord could use me as his instrument to help others too.

The second defining moment took place towards the end of my studies for the Priesthood. At that time I heard a talk on the Priesthood by another priest known for his sanctity who asked, “Why did God give us the Priesthood?” We all tried to answer his question. One person put his hand up and said, “To represent Christ.” Another said, “To reveal God the Father.” Others: “To save us.” “To give us the sacraments.” “To sanctify us...” Our answers were not incorrect, but he drew to our attention that we had not yet identified the main reason. He then went on to explain: “Because,” he said, “Christ wants to identify Himself with humanity.” I took what he said to prayer and said to Our Lord, “Yes, of course. If You did not want to identify yourself with humanity, you would have sent an angel instead.”

Not long after that I read what St John of the Cross said about desire: “*In the first place it should be known that if anyone is seeking God, the Beloved is seeking that person much more*” (*Living Flame of Love*, stanza 3, no. 28). Having being illuminated by these two things I felt God was saying to me: “If your desire to portray my fatherly love by representing my Son is so great, imagine what his desire to identify himself with *you* is like in the first place.” Needless to say, I was very humbled by what the Lord had shown me. How could I not respond?

As you can see, I wanted to pursue a celibate vocation because it makes spiritual fatherhood possible. My answer to next question gives further explanation to the beauty of this kind of fatherhood.

3. Why do you think that the Catholic Church embraces celibacy as a lifestyle?

The Catholic Church receives her authority from Christ. Since Jesus spoke about celibacy, the Catholic Church would be contradicting his teaching if she did not embrace it. The reasons why Jesus calls some people to be celibate are as follows:

(i) Celibacy gives testimony to the origins of our true birth and to whom we ultimately belong

In the Old Testament, what was important was generation. It was a terrible thing not to have a progeny. Take Hannah for example (see 1 Sam 1:2-16). She was praying in the Temple – barren – afraid that she was despised by her husband, because another woman with whom he was living had brought forth a child. As for the succession of the Priesthood, it was always in the carnal order because priests could only come from the tribe of Levi and priests were always married. As you can see, in the order of nature *generation* is all important. This old order ends in the beginning of Matthew and Luke's Gospels as they give us the long genealogy of Christ, one tracing it back to Abraham, and the other tracing it back to Adam himself.

Then the emphasis upon generation ends because when you get to the New Testament, what matters, is not *carnal* generation and having children of the flesh. What matters is having children according to the *Spirit*. Therefore, in this new order we have Our Lord speaking of another kind of progeny. This spiritual progeny can be seen in Christ's response to His mother. Remember when she was worried about him and sent message to him? Here Jesus responded by saying, "*Who is my mother?*" Can you imagine anyone saying that about his mother, unless he was trying to make a point? Jesus was making it clear that relationships in the order of blood are subordinate to the order of the spirit: "*He who does the will of my Father is my brother and sister and mother*" (Mt 12:48-50; Mk 3:34-35).

Now do not get me wrong. Marriage still has a very special place in the world. We would soon become extinct if it did not! Furthermore, a married couple's love is a sign of Christ's love for the Church. That is why Jesus defended the sanctity of marriage, telling the Pharisees that a man must be faithful to his wife lest he commit the sin of adultery (for how could an unfaithful marriage be a sign of Christ's faithful love for us?) In saying that, the Apostles said to the Lord, "*If that's*

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

the position of husband and wife, it's better not to marry!" (Mt 19:10). Imagine, the Apostles telling our Lord that! *"Why get married at all?"* What kind of men must they have been? So our Lord says to them:

"Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can" (Mt 19:11-12).

If you were a eunuch, you would be someone who was either born with defective genitals, or if you had genitals, they would be castrated. Jesus was referring to the latter. When a King defeated his enemies, he would often capture the survivors and make them into his slaves. Some of these he would make into eunuchs. By doing this, he would be able to entrust his bride (or his harem if he had more than one wife) to the care of his eunuch, knowing only too well that he would not be able to mess around!

Having drawn his disciples' attention to these kinds of eunuchs, Jesus then told them that there is another type of eunuch. They too would serve their king, however, while this kind of physical mutilation was repugnant to the Jews, Jesus is using the word "eunuch" here metaphorically. Just as a eunuch was a high official who exclusively served the king, so too, *"the eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven"* are those who are called to dedicate their lives in an exclusive love for Christ our King.

Here Christ's teaching on celibacy is clearly taken to mean a way of life that is a committed and dedicated life of love, because Christ taught us about celibacy just after teaching about the total dedication and love that is required for couples in marriage. Therefore, by asking his Apostles to become eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of God it is very clear that Jesus was asking them to renounce marriage to look after His Bride, the Church. There is a lovely parallel in this which helps us to see that celibacy is not *repression*, but an *expression*. That is, it is an expression of love for Christ's Bride.

Furthermore, progeny is now going to be ultimately *spiritual*. That is why Jesus called his Apostles, *"my children."* They were not his children! How could he call James and John His children? Because we are no longer living in the *carnal order of physical* generation, but in the *Kingdom of God order of spiritual* generation. Notice how St John in his letter calls his converts his own children countless times, and St Paul in his letter to the Galatians said, *"You are my children and I was in labour with you over and over again until you took the shape of Christ"* (Gal 4:19).

Likewise, when he wrote to Philemon about the runaway slave St Paul said, *“I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment”* (Phile 1:10). Yes, St Paul describes his converts as the fruits of his fatherhood: *“It was I that begot you in Jesus Christ, when I preached the gospel to you”* (1 Cor 4:15). Likewise, he addressed Timothy as *“my own son in the faith”* (1 Tim 1:2), and again as his *“well beloved son”* (2 Tim 1:2).

So it is not now carnal birth, but there is to be ‘virgin births.’ That is to say, of conversions that come about through the proclamation of the Word of God. St Paul was even emphatic about this, for he said: *“For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel”* (1 Cor 4:15).

The Apostle St John knew only too well of these ‘virgin births’ because he said:

“to all who received him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn 1:12-13).

Likewise, the Apostle, St Peter preached about this spiritual progeny: *“Your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God.”* (1 Pet 1:23).

Therefore, those who we priests and Religious ‘beget’ through the conversions that result from the proclamation of the Word are our children. This was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. For example, as regards women first of all, he proclaimed:

“Sing aloud oh barren woman who never bore a child. Break into cries of joy you who have never been in labour. For you shall have more sons than she who lives in wedlock” (Isaiah 54:1).

How beautiful these words are for consecrated women! And for all others who consecrate their lives to Christ. The Prophet Isaiah provided some encouraging words too. Here he foretells how the eunuchs of God’s Kingdom would not be fruitless:

“...do not let the eunuch say: “Behold, I am just a dry tree.” For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give to them in my house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, a name imperishable for all times” (Isaiah 56:3-5).

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

Having looked at the Scriptures, what then is celibacy? Celibacy is recognition of a 'virgin birth'; that we ultimately belong to the Kingdom of God and not to nature.

(ii) Celibacy gives witness to the ultimate destiny that awaits us

God's plan from all eternity is to "marry" us (see Hosea 2:19). This plan was foreshadowed "from the beginning" (Mt 19:4) by our creation as "*male and female*" (Gn 1:27) and our call to become united in "*one flesh*" (Gn 2:24). Everyone, no matter what his or her vocation, is called to a life of holiness by responding to the call to marital love symbolised in his very own body. You only have to look at the bodies of a male and female to realise that we are made for union. Pope John Paul II said that the human body has a "nuptial meaning" because it proclaims and reveals God's plan for marital union between man and woman and, analogously speaking, between Christ and his Church. If you think Pope John Paul II was making this up, listen to St Paul. Firstly, he quotes Genesis, "*For this reason a man shall leave father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*" Without taking a breath St Paul goes on to say, "***This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and his Church***" (Eph 5:31-32).

While we can readily understand this in terms of marriage, it also helps us to comprehend celibacy. Jesus does not call some of his followers to embrace celibacy for the sake of celibacy, but "*for the sake of the kingdom*" (Lk 18:29). And what is the kingdom? Ultimately, it is the marriage in heaven. But hang on... did not Jesus say that there are no marriages in Heaven?

"Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection" (Lk 20:34-36. See also Mt 22:25-30 and Mk 12:20-25).

So, why is no one married in Heaven? Because ultimately there is only *one* marriage in Heaven: the marriage between Christ and his Church, that is, between God and his People. That is why Jesus raised marriage on earth as a sacrament. It is a *physical sign* of a *spiritual reality* that awaits us.

Would you believe me if I told you that without this understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage, celibacy would make little or no sense? Unfortunately

many people often think of marriage and celibacy as two totally different things; things that negate from each other. So how does our understanding of marriage help us to understand celibacy? Let me explain it this way. Do you remember what St John the Apostle describes in the Apocalypse (otherwise known as the Book of Revelation)? This occurs at the very end of the Bible. St John the Apostle is writing what he saw in his vision of what will happen at the end of time:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men...” (Rev 21:1-3).

What is this “new Jerusalem”? In order to understand what the new Jerusalem is, we need to recall what was significant about the *old* Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the place where God asked the Temple to be built. In it was an inner-most sanctuary called the Holy of Holies. It was the place where God dwelt. God had signified his presence there by the manifestation of a glory cloud (cf. Ex 40:35; 1 Kings 8:6-11). Here the Hebrew word, “*Shekinah*” is used to describe this “*glory cloud*” or the “*glory of the Lord*,” the same word used to describe the pillar of smoke by day and the pillar of fire by night that led the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt into the promised land (see Ex 16:10; 24:16; 40:34; Num 16:42; Ezek 1:28; 10:4). It was seen to be so holy that the only one who could enter it was the High Priest. And he could only ever enter it once a year.

Despite being so sacred, King Ptolemy, who lived at least one-hundred years before Christ, was so arrogant that he tried to enter the Holy of Holies. He was not a priest, but he considered that since he was King of Israel that he would be worthy to enter. God struck him so hard, “*that his body was shaken like a reed is shaken in the wind*,” (see 3 Macc 2:22), and he lay helpless on the ground, permanently paralyzed in the limbs for the rest of his life.

Even before the time of King Ptolemy it was common practice that whenever the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies, a length of rope was always tied around his ankle. That way, if he had a heart attack and died, the people outside praying would not have to go in. They could drag him out by pulling on the rope! That is how holy this inner-most sanctuary was deemed to be. So it is significant that St

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

John recognises that God would come down onto the new earth like a new Jerusalem fashioned on the old.

John later goes on to provide further imagery which further helps to describe the extent of this union we will have with God. Even though John sees this “*new Jerusalem*” (which contains the Temple) “*come down out of Heaven,*” he later goes on to say: “*I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb*” (Rev 21:22).

How wondrous! Here on earth, God lives in our bodies as His temple, but in the life to come, we will live in God through the humanity of Christ, the Lamb who has redeemed us. We will live in God because *he* will be our Temple! But there’s more... This imagery is multi-layered. As God is coming to dwell with his redeemed and resurrected people, John sees that God is intimately uniting himself with us. How intimately? He is uniting himself with humanity just a bridegroom unites himself with his bride! In other words, God wishes to reveal his holiness to us just as a married couple reveal themselves to each other.

Here God will unite himself to us like a married couple is intimately united in their marital union! This is not to say that God wishes to love us sexually, but that the Sacrament of Marriage on earth provides us with a symbol of how we will be intimately united to God in the life to come. This is a radical change because the old Temple, the place where the Lord dwelt, was *unapproachable* and too holy to enter, but now, at the end of time, God is coming to dwell *intimately* with his People.

Now if marriage is a foreshadowing; an image; a symbolic foretelling of our eternal unity with God in the life to come, what then is celibacy? Celibacy is a foreshadowing of how all marriages will be subordinate to the one marriage that will exist between God and humanity.

Let me help you to understand this with an analogy. Think of marriage as a road sign. Life on earth is the road that leads us to Heaven. To get there, we need to follow the road signs. Marriage is one of the most beautiful road signs because unity in the flesh is a sacramental sign of the unity between Christ and His Church, and the ecstasy that accompanies the consummation of marriage is a foretaste of the joy that we will experience in our heart and soul when we possess God in Heaven.

But what happens when, please God, we get to Heaven? Do we need any road signs when we get there? If we are already there why would we need a sign? Even if there is a sign in Heaven saying, “H-E-A-V-E-N” would you run up and embrace it and say, “Look, I found Heaven!” This would be absurd because a sign is no longer needed when you come to the reality. This is not to say that each married couple will no longer be known as “husband and wife” in Heaven. However, the intimacy and ecstasy of their love will no longer be *exclusive*, for in Heaven they will love everyone else with the same level of intimacy that they loved one another on earth, in fact, even more so.

This will happen because in Heaven we will not need one person to fulfil our need for love, because love is perfect in Heaven. We will know and love one other so closely in virtue of what it is to be united to God who is the source of love itself. It is for this reason that the celibate vocation gives witness *here and now* on earth to what loving one another will consist of in Heaven. Marriage can only symbolise what Heaven will consist of in the future. The consecrated celibate lives what love in Heaven consists of *now*. As you can see, consecrated celibacy is not a rejection of sexuality and marriage. It is a participation in the ultimate truth and meaning of sexuality and marriage.

Some people are trying to make out that we can do without celibacy today; that priests should marry; that celibacy is outdated and that we should move with the times. But I cannot think of a time where celibacy is more greatly needed. If you mention the word, “sex” today, most people will think of the Red Light District! Or they will think of images that can be seen on the internet and in pornographic magazines. Or maybe they will think of what the movies often depict: couples jumping into bed before marriage. Think about it... The media – and our society in general – conditions us to think of sex in terms of self-gratification; something that is devoid of God; devoid of marriage; devoid of commitment; and devoid of its significance as a sign of a higher reality – that is – our marriage with God in the life to come.

We are living in a promiscuous age. This does not make celibacy ‘behind the times’! If anything, it means that celibate men and women are ‘in front of the times’ for it is a sign of our eternal unity with God at the end of time. It is counter-cultural, yes, but relevant! For it gives witness to the ultimate destiny that awaits us! In Heaven we will all be united in and with the Lord as his Bride. Celibacy “leapfrogs” the earthly marriage (so to speak) so as to anticipate the reality of what marriage on earth can only symbolise, namely, the marriage between God and Humanity in Heaven.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

(iii) Celibacy is historical

The following quote is from the website of the *Catholic Education Resource Centre*:

Most people assume that the celibate priesthood is a convention introduced by the Church fairly late in history. On the contrary, there is evidence that even the earliest Church fathers, such as St Augustine, St Cyril, and St Jerome, fully supported the celibate priesthood. The Spanish Council of Elvira (between 295 and 302) and the First Council of Aries (314), a kind of general council of the West, both enacted legislation forbidding all bishops, priests, and deacons to have conjugal relations with their wives on penalty of exclusion from the clergy. Even the wording of these documents suggests that the councils were not introducing a new rule but rather maintaining a previously established tradition. In 385, Pope Siricius issued the first papal decree on the subject, saying that “clerical continence” was a tradition reaching as far back as apostolic times. While later councils and popes would pass similar edicts, the definitive promulgation of the celibate, unmarried priesthood came at the Second Lateran Council in 1139 under Pope Gregory VII. Far from being a law forced upon the medieval priesthood, it was the acceptance of celibacy by priests centuries earlier that eventually led to its universal promulgation in the twelfth century.

(www.catholiceducation.org/articles/facts/fm0014.html).

4. What is your daily life like? How would it be different if you were married?

If I was married I would not have the same amount of time to pray. Priests celebrate Mass every day, spend an hour in meditation, pray the Divine Office (the prayers of the Church which consist of Morning Prayer, Office or Readings, Prayer During the day, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, all of which takes about 45 minutes). I also pray the Rosary every day and spend 15 to 30 minutes doing some spiritual reading every day. Priests also have an annual retreat where they go away for a week to be in silence and solitude to pray. Much of the inspiration I receive from these things would not be possible on account of the demands a wife and children would place upon me.

What is more, if I was married I would not have the time I have to fulfil my pastoral responsibilities in administering the sacraments, providing instruction to

those wanting to become Catholic, visiting the sick, etc. Many of these duties go well beyond the working hours of the day.

5. If you were allowed, would you get married? Why/Why not?

No. Christ's own words, "some make themselves eunuchs," demonstrates the voluntary character of this vocation. It is not something forced upon me. If it was, I simply would not have chosen to become a priest. Some people have the misconception that my free will is not involved when such words a "mandatory celibacy" are used by the Church. Not recognising my free will in responding to my vocation is just as incongruous as thinking that a married man is 'forced' to refrain from sexual relations with women to whom he is not married. If he did not want to be chaste he simply would not have chosen to marry. Likewise, if I did not want to be celibate I would not have chosen to become a priest.

As you can see, for me, celibacy is not about what I am allowed, or not allowed to do. Rather, it is what I feel called to do. Nor do I see celibacy as something to endure. Rather, I see it as something to give. In its turn it gives great joy and freedom, and it is the source of God's blessings on my ministry.

6. Did you choose to become a celibate man because you didn't meet a girl that you wanted to marry?

On the contrary, I was very close to a girl in the parish in which I was living before I entered the seminary. We were both active in the parish's youth group. We had even talked about getting married. For this reason it came as a tremendous surprise that God would use this very person to whom I was attracted to help me respond to my vocation. For on one occasion when I was driving her home she turned to me and said to be inquisitively, "Michael, I hope you don't mind me asking you this, but have you ever thought of becoming a priest?"

What she said really challenged me. I am sure it was a big challenge for her to ask this question too. It was so easy to 'palm off' the comments of others, including my friends, grandmother, etc when they told me I should be priest. But when the last person I ever expected to ask this question in my life said this it really made me stop and think.

So the short answer to your question is: No, the Priesthood was not a 'consolation prize.' I had every opportunity to marry, but I freely chose to respond to my calling to the Priesthood. Surprised? That this happened even surprises

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

me, but I think it gives testimony to how attractive and beautiful God's love truly is. I considered that human love and intimacy – as beautify as it would be – owes its existence to the very source of love itself, namely, God.

7. What are the benefits of being celibate?

1. Celibacy helps those who embrace it to become more like Christ on account that he chose to espouse himself to the Church. It enables me adhere to Christ more easily with an undivided heart and to serve others without any hindrance or encumbrance.

2. Not being tied down to a wife and children means that I can more easily maintain a deep and regular prayer life. Consecrated celibacy is, therefore, not a great sacrifice when you take into account that it enables those who live it to experience the rewards of deep contemplation. St Thomas Aquinas explains this well:

“...the delight of contemplation surpasses every human delight. For spiritual delight is greater than carnal pleasure ... because the love whereby God is loved out of charity surpasses all other love. Thus we read in Psalms, *Taste and see that the Lord is sweet*” (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, 180, 7).

3. Since most consecrated celibates live in presbyteries, monasteries, convents, religious houses, etc., they have the great joy of living under the same roof as Our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament.

4. It is not uncommon for God to place in the hearts of priests and Religious Brothers and Sisters a great love for those who are entrusted to their care. This is certainly consistent with St Teresa of Avila's experience of spiritual motherhood. She wrote the following words which articulate how she had a burning desire to love others for God's own sake:

“I've experienced this for some years: as soon as I see a [religious] person who greatly pleases me, with longings I sometimes cannot bear, I want to see him give himself totally to God. And although I desire that all serve God, the longings come with very great impulses in the case of these persons I like; so I beg the Lord very much on their behalf.” (*The Book of her Life*, ch. 37, no. 7).

5. Celibacy demonstrates to others that I am a priest not for myself, but for those

to whom I am called to serve. It also enables me to be more effective in assuring others that heaven is greater than what all the earth can offer; that Christ deserves everything; that he means more than anything or anyone else; and that I really believe what I preach because I have staked my life on it. Celibacy also enables me to encourage others to be chaste no matter what their own state is in life without asking them to do more than what I myself am doing to be faithful. If I was not celibate, whenever I try to encourage others in the Confessional to avoid occasions that lead to sins against chastity for example, perhaps they would tend to excuse themselves from such advice by saying, "Father, you don't know what you are asking!"

6. Jesus said to Peter when he was questioned about the joys he could expect if he left his wife and laid down his life:

"Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life" (Lk 18:27-30).

Jesus also said that celibates will "*receive a hundred times as much in this present age*" (Mk 10:29-3). This is certainly consistent with my experience. Although the hundred-fold I receive in return is not always in material things, but spiritual, they provide a joy beyond comparison to them.

8. What are the things that you can do in your ministry that you couldn't do if you were married?

This question does not appear to be asking anything more than what you asked above, namely, "What is your daily life like? How would it be different if you were married?"

9. What is the benefit of your celibate life for your relationship with God?

A glass that is filled with sand will not be able to hold as much water as a glass that is empty. Likewise, celibacy creates an incomprehensible capacity to grow in intimacy with God; to yearn for His presence, His love, strength, support and inspiration. All the qualities of God are yearned for all the more as a celibate, because in our emptiness, we know more of our need for God.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

What is more, when it comes to centering your life on Christ and focusing upon the things of the Spirit, the celibate person is more likely to be attracted, not distracted! That is why St Paul said:

“I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord” (1 Cor 7:32-35).

Freedom *from* something usually leads to having freedom *for* something else. St Paul reasons that by providing freedom from anxiety and a divided heart, celibacy enables those who are consecrated to God to be unhindered in their devotion. This devotion not only consists of a more fervent love for God as it also consists of a more ardent love of neighbour. St Paul articulates these joys in his letter to the Philippians: “*It is only natural that I should feel like this towards you all, since you have shared the privileges which have been mine*” (Phil 1:7). What are the privileges he is referring to here that provide his heart with such warmth? The privilege of spiritual fatherhood; to love everyone inclusively, rather than a spouse exclusively. St Paul continues: “*You have a permanent place in my heart, and God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you*” (Phil 1:8. See also 1 Thess 2:8, 13; 2 Tim 1:1-7; Rom 9:1-3).

10. How important is community to your life of celibacy?

My celibacy enables me to be freely available to *all* people when they need me (rather than be limited by an exclusive relationship with a spouse) and it even allows me to have deep relationships (on account of the confidence those entrusted to my care invest in me as a spiritual father). This depth and inclusivity of my pastoral care creates ever greater capacities for me to reach out and make myself available to an ever widening circle of people.

My life is overflowing with communal life because in addition to the parish entrusted to my care is the larger community of the Archdiocese of Sydney to whom I belong, my Archbishop, my brother priests, my family and my friends.

The central task of human and Christian living is to become persons of charity capable of deep, intimate relationships, for in doing so we truly live according to the image and likeness of God who is a Communion of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Celibacy is, therefore, the most radical way a person can reflect God's all embracing love in the world. It is tremendously enriching both for me and those to whom I relate because celibacy is fundamentally and essentially about relationship, not isolation. Therefore, a celibate person like me would not be able live out my vocation without community just as a married man could not live his vocation without his wife.

11. How did your formation prepare you to be celibate?

The seminary prepared me in the following ways: (i) lectures; (ii) a seminar which went for a week every year during which a psychologist would give talks, guide us through case studies and facilitate discussion; (iii) studying guidelines and various Church documents such as *Integrity in Ministry* so that we would be aware of important protocols; and (iv) seeing a priest to be my Spiritual Director and Confessor who I saw every fortnight.

12. How does not being married mean you relate to female members of the Church in your ministry? – do you relate better or worse with them?

I am not married, so I cannot comment on whether marriage would make me relate to women better or not. However, I do know that I relate to women well on account of knowing not just one woman, but many given that my ministry puts me in regular touch with their feminine gifts, needs, emotions, unique ways of knowing and communicating, and their God-given dignity.

I also attribute my ability to relate to women to my own personal development. Being married does not guarantee that a man will relate better to a woman as many wives will testify! It has more to do with a person's maturity than their vocation. Jesus, the perfect man demonstrated this for he had relationships with women that transformed them deeply, even in situations that others deemed inappropriate, such as speaking to the woman at the well in Samaria and defending the woman caught in adultery. In turn, Jesus allowed his own humanity to be enriched by women as many followed him among his inner circle of disciples throughout the course of his ministry.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

Pope John Paul II has contributed very deep insights into human relationships in his masterful works entitled, *Love and Responsibility* and *Theology of the Body*, and yet he was not married.

Furthermore, being a spouse is not the only way a man relates to a woman. Pope John Paul II stated in his *Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 1995* (emphasis added):

“Thanks to the Redemption, the priest shares in a special way in the relationship of brotherhood offered by Christ to all the redeemed ... In order to live as a celibate in a mature and untroubled way it seems particularly important that the priest should develop deep within himself the image of women as sisters ... This is a universal bond, thanks to which the priest can be open to every new situation, even the most foreign from an ethnic or cultural standpoint, knowing that he must exercise towards the men and women to whom he is sent a ministry of authentic spiritual fatherhood, which gains him “sons” and “daughters” in the Lord (cf. 1 Thes 2:11; Gal 4:19).” (no. 4).

“If the priest, with the help of divine grace and under the special protection of Mary, Virgin and Mother, gradually develops such an attitude towards women, he will see his ministry met by a sense of great trust ... If this relationship develops in a serene and mature way, women will find no particular difficulties in their contact with priests. For example they will not find difficulties in confessing their faults in the Sacrament of Penance. Even less will they encounter any in undertaking various kinds of apostolic activities with priests. Every priest thus has the great responsibility of developing an authentic way of relating to women as a brother, a way of relating which does not admit of ambiguity. **In this perspective, Saint Paul exhorts his disciple Timothy to treat “older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity” (1 Tm 5:2)”** (no. 5).

“The relationship of priests to women as mothers and sisters is enriched, thanks to the Marian tradition ... that of service in imitation of Mary the Handmaid. If the priesthood is by its nature ministerial, we must live it in union with the Mother who is the Handmaid of the Lord. Then our priesthood will be kept safe in her hands, indeed in her heart, and we shall be able to open it to everyone” (no. 8).

It is certainly my experience that upon treating women as daughters and sisters that they are able to relate openly and charitably in their own turn on account of knowing that Christ is central to my relationship with them. It also enables me to express affection for them or receive it from them which is appropriate for my state in life, and to gain a mutual trust, encouragement and reminder of their worth as well as mine.

13. What are the negatives/difficulties with being celibate?

In addition to the obvious joys being celibate does not include, such as the intimate sexual relationship with a wife and fathering my own biological children, there is a very fine line between my professional life and personal life. This has its challenges, especially given that the demands placed on celibate priests are ferociously higher than married clergy. This means that I seldom have opportunities to relax in the evenings, watch TV, etc.

14. Are you lonely?

No. I actually look forward to being alone. I value the company other others, but my longing to spend time with God in prayer also increases in proportion with each time my pastoral demands increase. Furthermore, I often feel God's presence in moments of silence and solitude. In this sense I agree with St Ambrose who said, *"I am never more accompanied than when I am alone."* I see that this experience of mine confirms that I have discerned my vocation correctly.

15. Do you miss or long for female company?

I probably would if women were not already part of my life. My mother is still alive, I have three sisters, many women are employed in the Church, and I do not minister exclusively to men. If your question relates to being intimate with women, rather than their company in general, then the answer is yes. If I did not long for intimacy with the opposite sex I would not be human! How impoverished I would be if this was not the case given what the Church teaches about celibacy (see my answer to the question, "Why do you think that the Catholic Church embraces celibacy as a lifestyle?")

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

16. Was it difficult to give up the idea of having a wife and children? (what about the command in Genesis to “Go forth and multiply” “it is not good for man to be alone” (Adam and Eve).

Yes, it was extremely difficult. It took many, many hours of prayer. Once I allowed my response to my vocation to move beyond a mere openness to it to being prepared to embrace it an incredible ecstatic joy flooded into my heart.

As for God’s command to Adam and Even to “*go forth and multiply,*” this needs to be understood with the overall context of Sacred Scripture. Every time God established a covenant with his people, whether it was with Adam (Gn 1:28), Noah (Gn 9:1), Abraham (Gn 17:2-6), Jacob, (Gn 35:10-12), or Moses (Lv 26:9), God called them to be “fruitful and multiply.” Even Jesus was to come from Abraham’s seed. For this reason the Jews saw eunuchs (that is, those who could not engage in sexual union) as cursed by God, and even excluded from God’s kingdom.

So far, there is nothing within the context of Sacred Scripture to inform us that men and women should be doing anything else other than having babies. However, Moses asked the Jews to abstain from sex while he ascended Mount Sinai. Although priests in the Old Testament were married, they had to observe continence while they served in the Temple. Furthermore, the Prophet Jeremiah was forbidden by God to take a wife in order that he might fulfil his ministry.

To top it all off, Jesus said that that some men and women who are perfectly capable of sexual union would actually choose to abstain from sex “*for the sake of the kingdom*” (Mt 19:11-12). Christ’s words mark a dramatic shift in God’s revelation. What is more, St Paul actually recommends the celibate life:

“Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage ... Those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that ... The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided” (1 Cor 7:27-34).

This is not to say that *all* men should be celibate. St Paul explains that celibacy is a calling for some and not for others by saying, “*Each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another*” (1 Cor 7:7).

As you can see, God’s command to “*go forth and multiply*” is a general precept for the human race; it does not bind each individual. To consider otherwise would be to overlook numerous other passages in the Bible that refer to the celibate life, including the fact that Jesus himself freely chose to be celibate. If you exempt him because of his divinity, you still accuse John the Baptist and most of the Apostles, along with all other good single people sinning by not marrying. Finally, heaven itself testifies to how celibacy fits within God’s plan because St John the Apostle sees consecrated celibates in there (see Rev 14:4).

Another reason why there is no contradiction to the Lord’s command to “*go forth and multiply*” is this: this is a law of *celibate life* no less than biological life. Fulton Sheen explains this well:

“The production of new life is generation, a function that does not pertain exclusively, or even primarily to the flesh. God is the source of all generation. Begetting is not an impulse from below, but a gift from above; rather than an evolution from animals, it is a descent from deity.” *The Priest is Not his Own* (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 2005), p. 57.

Priests are called to give divine life to souls and restore it, just as Jesus did. This we have also seen by the testimony of the Apostles Peter, Paul and John in my answer to the question, “Why do you think that the Catholic Church embraces celibacy as a lifestyle?”

17. Many men seem to have the inherent desire to be a husband and a father – where is your outlet for those feelings/desires?

When a man naturally fathers, he begets a child physically. He does not communicate the soul when he fathers. He communicates the physical side of nature, but God alone creates the human soul. So biological fatherhood is real, but partial. The fact that priests do not ‘father’ the physical side of human nature actually serves to emphasise that the importance of something that those

attached to the material world can often take for granted, namely, divine grace. This priests communicate when we administer the Sacrament of Baptism, restore it if it lost through the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, and make an increase of God's grace available through the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Since we participate in Christ's Priesthood, priests 'father' the life of the soul. By remaining celibate priests thereby remind others that our fatherhood is *supernatural* and that one's birth is ultimately of God, not of nature. Thus, Christians who encounter me as a celibate priest are reminded that they were, as the Apostle John said, "*born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God*" (Jn 1:13).

My supernatural fatherhood takes the fullness of my sexuality as a man seriously, it does not deny it. When I freely and willingly consecrated myself to God in response to his love he took it, elevated it and supernaturalised it so that my natural desire to give myself in a communion of love with a woman is not denied, nor is it undermined or suppressed or repressed, but rather channelled and redirected to the Bride of Christ, the Church so that my love for her may be both passionate and fruitful.

**18. Does being celibate make it difficult to control your sexuality?
Where/what is the outlet for your sexuality?**

I think being celibate makes it easier to have sexual integrity for the following reason described by St John of the Cross. He said that when God is known by desire and understanding, carnal knowledge withers. But getting to this point requires constant work to resist the "siren songs" of the world and the flesh. As St John of the Cross writes in

The Dark Night:

".....For when the friendship is purely spiritual, the love of God grows with it; and the more the soul remembers it, the more it remembers the love of God, and the greater the desire it has for God; so that, as one grows, the other grows also. For the spirit of God has this property, that it increases good by adding to it more good, since there is likeness and conformity between them. But when this love arises from the vice of aforementioned sensuality, it produces the contrary effects; for the more the one grows, the more the other decreases, and the remembrance of it similarly. If that sensual love grows, it will at once be observed in the soul, the other love [for sensuality] becomes cold and is forgotten; for, as the two are contrary to the other, not only does the one no longer aid the other, but the one

which predominates quenches and confounds the other and becomes strengthened in itself" (Bk 1, ch IV).

As for the outlets that I find helpful they are as follows. By way of introducing them, St Thomas Aquinas said that a lack of spiritual pleasure can lead one to seek after carnal pleasures (see *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 142, 2,). Hence, I find the most effective outlets are those which help maintain (i) a balance between work and leisure; and (ii) my spiritual life.

(i) Balance between work and recreation

If I work hard for too long without attending to needs for legitimate pleasure (such as adequate rest, exercise, recreation, hobbies, etc) this can sometimes lead to temptations for illegitimate pleasure. On the other side of the coin, ascetic practices are also helpful as it leads to a healthy mastery of my mind and heart, imagination and memory, emotions and instincts. Pope John Paul II wrote about this in *Vita Consecrata*, no. 88.

(ii) Spiritual Life

- Maintaining time for daily contemplative prayer, including devotion to Our Lady, Liturgical Prayer and spiritual reading despite the demands of pastoral work
- Frequent reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist
- Being transparent with my Spiritual Director
- Avoiding friendships based mainly on sensuality and sentiment, and the cultivation of friendships based on cultural and spiritual interests.
- Avoiding all occasions of sin (including proximate and unwilled occasions).
- implementing strategies that help undermine carnal temptations. These strategies consist of:

Being attentive to the interior movements and emotions within my heart. Being aware of these helps me to check whether or not they may be compensatory responses to situations that I find difficult to cope with, or situations of repressed emotions such as a feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, humiliation, over-work, unappreciation, or from personal stresses and suffering, such as disappointments, etc. Being aware of my own emotional responses is important because when a person struggles sexually it is usually stems from an emotional problem, not from one's sexuality itself. Pope John Paul II recognised this: "*The vocation to celibacy*

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

needs to be consciously protected by keeping special watch over one's feelings"
(Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday 1995, no. 5).

Humility is the most important virtue that I think is required here because without it a person can tend to think, "I don't need to be attentive to what is going on inside me because these things won't lead to anything." Humility, on the other hand prevents us from being *blind* to human weakness or *presumptuous* about what strength we have gained, and thus ensures that the necessary precautions are taken.

19. Do you think it should be a personal choice to be celibate or should the Church require it?

From my experience I think the Church does well to require it of her priests because I found it extremely difficult to respond to my vocation during the beginning stages. If celibacy was optional I may have gone ahead and got married which would mean that I would not experience the joys of celibacy as I do now.

20. What would happen if you met a girl you liked or fell in love? What would you do?

I can tell you what I would do on the basis of what I have already done in the past. I fell in love before I made my application to study for the Priesthood. The fact that I was not married back then meant that I was called to be celibate then as I am now, with the difference that celibacy *before* marriage is transient, whereas *consecrated* celibacy is permanent. When I fell in love I was transparent with my Spiritual Director. Since my Spiritual Director was also my Confessor I confessed any affections and interior movements in my heart where Christ was not the centre so that I could benefit from the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I also discussed with him how she appealed to my ego. This enabled me to deal with being entranced with the idea that an attractive woman was romantically inclined towards me, rendering me less vulnerable. Being candid with my Spiritual Director enabled me to be objective, especially in becoming more aware that my worth comes from being a child of God and his noble calling to the Priesthood and that all the women in the world could not match that.

Being chaste does not simply pertain to refraining from genital activity. It also involves sexual integrity in one's thoughts and emotions. For this reason, each time I thought of her, even if such thoughts were not impure, I would say an aspiration to Jesus through Our Lady instead, such as the prayer St Louis De Montfort frequently said: "*I am all thine, all I have is thine, O Most Loving Jesus,*

through Mary, Thy Holy Mother”, thus transforming a temptation into a moment of grace.

By not cultivating the feelings I had for her, they went away in a relatively short period of time. Detachment was key to this. This is a time-honoured virtue in the spiritual life which is often misunderstood. It does not mean being cold toward others, or toward things you like. It means never coming to depend on them for your happiness. Exercising detachment also takes into account how easy it is for us in our human weakness to become attached. Would you touch a drop of quick setting glue if you knew it would be terribly difficult to get it off your finger? For this reason I did not phone her, write to her, or read any letters she sent me. Can you imagine a married man doing otherwise in his effort to remain faithful to his wife?

If I fell in love with someone now that I am a priest I would take the same measures I have described above. In addition to them, I would not invite her to be involved in any particular program or do anything else which would involve seeing her regularly. In doing so, however, I definitely would not say anything that lets on there are any strong feelings in my heart for her, such as, “I don’t think we should see each other so much.” This would sound like I really like to see her all the time, but am trying to do what is right. Although that may very well be the case, that is just asking for trouble as this may heighten her interest.

21. Do you think that celibacy is a cause of sin? Are men putting themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation rather than allowing themselves to marry and enjoy sex?

If a person considered celibacy to be cause of sin, especially consecrated celibacy, I would say to that person that he or she is degrading human dignity because such an idea reduces men to animals who cannot live without their sexual urges being gratified. Unlike animals, humans are not *instinctual* creatures, but *rational* creatures. We have the capacity for our mind and heart, not merely our ‘instincts’ to govern our behaviour. Why do people de-sex their pets? Because animals cannot say, “No” to their urge to mate. Despite what numerous TV shows would have us believe, human beings can. If a person is not convinced of this, then he or she has a degraded view of our human dignity because what sets us apart from animals is the freedom we possess to determine our own actions.

It is precisely because we have the capacity to determine our own actions that celibacy is not the cause of sexual temptation. Rather, one’s sinfulness is, for as the Apostle St James said, *“Everyone who is tempted is attracted and seduced*

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

by his own wrong desire. Then the desire conceives and gives birth to sin" (Jam 1:14-15). If celibacy was a cause of sin, why would Jesus want to call and encourage some people to accept it? Furthermore, why would he say that those who receive it would do so *"for the sake of the kingdom"*(see Mt 19:11-12)? Far from being a cause of sin, celibacy in these words of our Lord are said to bring benefits to his kingdom. This is consistent with St Paul's experience of celibacy because he refers to it as a *"gift"* (1 Cor 7:7) and he recommends it so that celibates *"may be holy in body and spirit"* (1 Cor 7:34).

What is more, if celibacy is a cause of sin, why does St John the Apostle see consecrated celibates in heaven? Moreover, he even says that they *"follow the Lamb wherever he goes"* and that they have been *"redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God"* (Rev 14:4)? *"First fruits"* occurs twenty-six times elsewhere in the Bible. Every single time it refers to the offering of a sacrifice. Celibacy is therefore a pleasing sacrifice to God. This could not be true if it was a cause of sin because *"nothing unclean will enter heaven"*(Rev 21:27).

What is more, it is not just unmarried men who commit sexual sins. Many married men also sin against chastity. I can hardly be said to be mistaken about this because of the thousands of confessions I have heard. So, it is clear that marriage is not the solution. Rather, God's grace is the solution. Christopher West writes:

"There's also a dangerously misguided approach to marriage inherent in the idea that marriage is the solution to the sexual scandal of some priests. Marriage does not provide a "legitimate outlet" for disordered sexual desire. Married people, no less than celibates, must come to experience the redemption of their sexual desires in Christ. Only then can they love each other in God's image. If a man were to enter marriage with deep-seated sexual disorders, he would be condemning his wife to a life of sexual objectification.

Celibacy does not cause sexual disorder. Sin does. Simply getting married does not cure sexual disorder. Christ does. The only way the scandal of sexual sin (whether committed by priests or others) will end is if people experience the redemption of their sexuality in Christ." (www.catholiceducation.org/articles/sexuality/se0114.html).

22. Are you more tempted by pornography now than before when you had planned that you would marry?

This has not been my experience. While it is true that I am attracted to the opposite sex, the temptation to view pornography or to objectify women in any other way has not become any greater since making my promise of celibacy. My answer to this question is consistent to the question above, that is, celibacy is not the cause of disordered sexual desire, rather, one's sinfulness is.

23. Do you have female friends to talk to or is that too tempting?

Just because I am celibate, it does not mean that I am androgynous. I have female friends, but I relate to them no differently to how a married man would. That is, I do not go into a woman's home if she lives alone or eat out with a woman unaccompanied. If I ever have a question as to whether the way I relate to any particular woman is appropriate for me I do not decide the answer to this on my own. Rather, I bring this to prayer and to my Spiritual Director.

24. Does celibacy get easier as time goes on?

Yes, this has been my experience. Chastity is a virtue and like all other virtues, it becomes easier to live on account of the habits established and the greater openness to God's grace that emerges as knowledge of self increases. This does not mean that my sexuality is totally redeemed. If I ever began to think to myself, "I am not capable of being unchaste because I'm above all that now", I would be in for a disaster!

From my experience, celibacy not only becomes easier, but more rewarding. The Priesthood is better than I ever thought it would be.

Appendix F: Interview with Dr. Allan Meyer:

1. What research have you done in the area of men's sexuality?

I wrote a doctoral thesis relating to male sexuality and created a program to assist men restore and fortify their moral and spiritual vitality. While I devoted a year to research and writing the process unfolded over about 10 years.

2. What was your reasoning behind developing the course Valiant Man?

The need to provide men with education, discipleship and life strengthening. I have been aware of my own struggles to live a moral life. I lost 4 friends in ministry in a single year, 3 of them to mismanaged sexuality. 95% of all sex crimes are committed by men against women and children. I took over the church I pastored for 26 years after the adultery of the previous minister. The suicide of a man attending one of our support groups for sexual addiction – he was being investigated by the police for previous behaviour and feared going to prison. I could go on and on and on – life is filled with stories of men and their struggle to manage sex appropriately.

3. What does your course valiant man involve?

It is a 10 week experience. Every week the men hear a 45 minute presentation covering an aspect of male sexuality followed by an hour of small group processing where closed groups share their stories and their journey with each other. The manual allows the men to read more after the evening is done, and they are challenged to engage in a written devotional experience every morning and every evening for 55 days. You can see the outline of the course on our web site at www.careforcelifekeys.org.

4. 'Most men seem to have the inherent desire to be a husband and a father and lover.' What is your opinion on this statement?

I think that is probably true. There is no question that we have been biologically and psychologically created as a sexual being. There are sociological and biological factors that can disrupt that natural progression to seek heterosexual union, but the vast majority of individuals in any normal society will desire and seek out sexual union – the appropriate expression of that desire is found in marriage.

5. Do you think that being celibate makes it difficult for men to control their sexuality?

Celibacy is a challenge – yet a challenge everyone must face for at least a season of life. I believe sex belongs in marriage and sometimes marriage does not unfold according to an easily embraced program. Sometimes it does not unfold at all. Celibacy is a moral and spiritual challenge everyone must face for at least a season of life. It is a challenge but not an unmanageable one.

6. Do you feel that celibacy is a cause of sin? Do you feel that men are putting themselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation by choosing this lifestyle?

What is wrong is enforced celibacy. Choosing celibacy as a lifestyle is a legitimate choice. What is not is demanding celibacy in order to serve God. God never made it a requirement. When you artificially create a “religious” lifestyle that is more demanding than God’s requirements the outcome cannot be helpful. The bible says “it is better to marry than to burn” “come together again lest you be tempted by Satan” To demand that men deny their sexual passions for a lifetime to qualify as a minister of Christ is to put some of those men in a place which strains their self control beyond that which God himself would have required of them.

7. Can you see any benefits for men being celibate?

Freedom from the concerns of family life and the ability to totally focus energies on a project. Jesus did that – but his journey was a relatively short one. Paul did that – and believed his celibacy was a gift to enable him to focus on the unique calling God had on his life.

8. Are your views on celibacy purely theoretical, or have you had interactions with men who are celibate?

I had to be celibate until I was married. My journey was short as I was married at the age of 20. Everyone is called to celibate until they are married or unless they are married. My Senior Minister, Hal Oxley lost his first wife – she died young. He lived the next 17 years as a celibate man until he remarried. He shared with us as leaders the challenge that presented to him having had a happy sexual relationship for years and then to have lost it. He said sometimes he would find his sexuality aroused and it would take days to bring it back under control again. It can be tough but it can be done.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

9. The Catholic Friars and Priests I have spoken with believe their lifestyle and devotion to God help them focus on and encourage other areas of their life i.e., spirituality, compassion, self control; this, in turn, helps maintain their sexual purity.

I'm sure it does some of the time. I'm sure it results in periods of distraction as well. As Hal Oxley said – something would stir sexual passion and it would take days to bring it under control. I'm certain for at least some of them there is considerable energy exerted from time to time to restore sexual equanimity.

10. Do you think people who are celibate have any more or less struggles in the area of sexual morality?

Hard to say. It seems logical that applying a stress to an area of deep human need unnecessarily must result in a backlash at some point. If the celibate person manages their sexuality by truly exalting the ministry they do as precious to God, and if they maintain an inner purity – not just holding back their passions – then they can manage their sexuality every bit as successfully as the married and sexually active person. If on the other hand there is a secret life of lust that boils away within there is a great danger it will ultimately be expressed in an unhelpful way.

SECONDARY DATA:**Appendix G - Sacerdotalis Caelibatus:****SOURCE:**

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_24061967_sacerdotalis_en.html

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SACERDOTALIS CAELIBATUS
 ENCYCLICAL OF POPE PAUL VI
 ON THE CELIBACY OF THE PRIEST
 JUNE 24, 1967

To the Bishops, Priests and Faithful of the Whole Catholic World.

Priestly celibacy has been guarded by the Church for centuries as a brilliant jewel, and retains its value undiminished even in our time when the outlook of men and the state of the world have undergone such profound changes.

Amid the modern stirrings of opinion, a tendency has also been manifested, and even a desire expressed, to ask the Church to re-examine this characteristic institution. It is said that in the world of our time the observance of celibacy has come to be difficult or even impossible.

2. This state of affairs is troubling consciences, perplexing some priests and young aspirants to the priesthood; it is a cause for alarm in many of the faithful and constrains Us to fulfill the promise We made to the Council Fathers. We told them that it was Our intention to give new luster and strength to priestly celibacy in the world of today. (1) Since saying this We have, over a considerable period of time earnestly implored the enlightenment and assistance of the Holy Spirit and have examined before God opinions and petitions which have come to Us from all over the world, notably from many pastors of God's Church.

Some Serious Questions

3. The great question concerning the sacred celibacy of the clergy in the Church has long been before Our mind in its deep seriousness: must that grave, ennobling obligation remain today for those who have the intention of receiving major orders? Is it possible and appropriate nowadays to observe such an obligation? Has the time not come to break the bond linking celibacy with the priesthood in the Church? Could the difficult observance of it not be made optional?

Would this not be a way to help the priestly ministry and facilitate ecumenical approaches? And if the golden law of sacred celibacy is to remain, what reasons are there to show that it is holy and fitting? What means are to be taken to observe it, and how can it be changed from a burden to a help for the priestly life?

4. Our attention has rested particularly on the objections which have been and are still made in various forms against the retention of sacred celibacy. in virtue of Our apostolic office We are obliged by the importance, and indeed the complexity, of the subject to give faithful consideration to the facts and the problems they involve, at the same time bringing to them—as it is Our duty and Our mission to do—the light of truth which is Christ. Our intention is to do in all things the will of Him who has called Us to this office and to show what we are in the Church: the servant of the servants of God.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST PRIESTLY CELIBACY

5. It may be said that today ecclesiastical celibacy has been examined more penetratingly than ever before and in all its aspects. It has been examined from the doctrinal, historical, sociological, psychological and pastoral point of view. The intentions prompting this examination have frequently been basically correct although reports may sometimes have distorted them.

Let us look openly at the principal objections against the law that links ecclesiastical celibacy with the priesthood.

The first seems to come from the most authoritative source, the New Testament which preserves the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. It does not openly demand celibacy of sacred ministers but proposes it rather as a free act of obedience to a special vocation or to a special spiritual gift. (2) Jesus Himself did not make it a prerequisite in His choice of the Twelve, nor did the Apostles for those who presided over the first Christian communities. (3)

The Fathers of the Church

6. The close relationship that the Fathers of the Church and ecclesiastical writers established over the centuries between the ministering priesthood and celibacy has its origin partly in a mentality and partly in historical circumstances far different from ours. In patristic texts we more frequently find exhortations to the clergy to abstain from marital relations rather than to observe celibacy; and the reasons justifying the perfect chastity of the Church's ministers seem often to be based on an overly pessimistic view of man's earthly condition or on a certain notion of the purity necessary for contact

with sacred things. In addition, it is said that the old arguments no longer are in harmony with the different social and cultural milieus in which the Church today, through her priests, is called upon to work.

Vocation and Celibacy

7. Many see a difficulty in the fact that in the present discipline concerning celibacy the gift of a vocation to the priesthood is identified with that of perfect chastity as a state of life for God's ministers. And so people ask whether it is right to exclude from the priesthood those who, it is claimed, have been called to the ministry without having been called to lead a celibate life.

The Shortage of Priests

8. It is asserted, moreover, that the maintaining of priestly celibacy in the Church does great harm in those regions where the shortage of the clergy—a fact recognized with sadness and deplored by the same Council (4)—gives rise to critical situations: that it prevents the full realization of the divine plan of salvation and at times jeopardizes the very possibility of the initial proclamation of the Gospel. Thus the disquieting decline in the ranks of the clergy is attributed by some to the heavy burden of the obligation of celibacy.

9. Then there are those who are convinced that a married priesthood would remove the occasions for infidelity, waywardness and distressing defections which hurt and sadden the whole Church. These also maintain that a married priesthood would enable Christ's ministers to witness more fully to Christian living by including the witness of married life, from which they are excluded by their state of life.

Human Values

10. There are also some who strongly maintain that priests by reason of their celibacy find themselves in a situation that is not only against nature but also physically and psychologically detrimental to the development of a mature and well-balanced human personality. And so it happens, they say, that priests often become hard and lacking in human warmth; that, excluded from sharing fully the life and destiny of the rest of their brothers, they are obliged to live a life of solitude which leads to bitterness and discouragement.

So they ask: Don't all these things indicate that celibacy does unwarranted violence to nature and unjustifiably disparages human

values which have their source in the divine work of creation and have been made whole through the work of the Redemption accomplished by Christ?

Inadequate Formation

11. Again, in view of the way in which a candidate for the priesthood comes to accept an obligation as momentous as this, the objection is raised that in practice this acceptance results not from an authentically personal decision, but rather from an attitude of passivity, the fruit of a formation that neither is adequate nor makes sufficient allowance for human liberty. For the degree of knowledge and power of decision of a young person and his psychological and physical maturity fall far below—or at any rate are disproportionate to—the seriousness of the obligation he is assuming, its real difficulties and its permanence.

12. We well realize that there are other objections that can be made against priestly celibacy. This is a very complex question, which touches intimately upon the very meaning of being alive, yet is penetrated and resolved by the light of divine revelation. A never-ending series of difficulties will present themselves to those who cannot "receive this precept" (5) and who do not know or have forgotten it is a "gift of God," (6) and who moreover are unaware of the loftier reasoning, wonderful efficacy and abundant riches of this new insight into life.

Testimony of the Past and Present

13. The sum of these objections would appear to drown out the solemn and age-old voice of the pastors of the Church and of the masters of the spiritual life, and to nullify the living testimony of the countless ranks of saints and faithful ministers of God, for whom celibacy has been the object of the total and generous gift of themselves to the mystery of Christ, as well as its outward sign. But no, this voice, still strong and untroubled, is the voice not just of the past but of the present too. Ever intent on the realities of today, we cannot close our eyes to this magnificent, wonderful reality: that there are still today in God's holy Church, in every part of the world where she exercises her beneficent influence, great numbers of her ministers—subdeacons, deacons, priests and bishops—who are living their life of voluntary and consecrated celibacy in the most exemplary way.

Nor can we overlook the immense ranks of men and women in religious life, of laity and of young people too, united in the faithful

observance of perfect chastity. They live in chastity, not out of disdain for the gift of life, but because of a greater love for that new life which springs from the Paschal mystery. They live this life of courageous self-denial and spiritual joyfulness with exemplary fidelity and also with relative facility. This magnificent phenomenon bears testimony to an exceptional facet of the kingdom of God living in the midst of modern society, to which it renders humble and beneficial service as the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth." (7) We cannot withhold the expression of Our admiration; the spirit of Christ is certainly breathing here.

The Law of Celibacy Confirmed

14. Hence We consider that the present law of celibacy should today continue to be linked to the ecclesiastical ministry. This law should support the minister in his exclusive, definitive and total choice of the unique and supreme love of Christ; it should uphold him in the entire dedication of himself to the public worship of God and to the service of the Church; it should distinguish his state of life both among the faithful and in the world at large.

15. The gift of the priestly vocation dedicated to the divine worship and to the religious and pastoral service of the People of God, is undoubtedly distinct from that which leads a person to choose celibacy as a state of consecrated life. (8) But the priestly vocation, although inspired by God, does not become definitive or operative without having been tested and accepted by those in the Church who hold power and bear responsibility for the ministry serving the ecclesial community. It is, therefore, the task of those who hold authority in the Church to determine, in accordance with the varying conditions of time and place, who in actual practice are to be considered suitable candidates for the religious and pastoral service of the Church, and what should be required of them.

Purpose of the Encyclical

16. In a spirit of faith, therefore, We look on this occasion afforded Us by Divine Providence as a favorable opportunity for setting forth anew, and in a way more suited to the men of our time, the fundamental reasons for sacred celibacy. If difficulties against faith "can stimulate our minds to a more accurate and deeper understanding" of it, (9) the same is true of the ecclesiastical discipline which guides and directs the life of the faithful.

We are deeply moved by the joy this occasion gives Us of contemplating the richness in virtue and the beauty of the Church of

Christ. These may not always be immediately apparent to the human eye, because they derive from the love of the divine Head of the Church and because they are revealed in the perfection of holiness (10) which moves the human spirit to admiration, and which human resources cannot adequately explain.

1. REASONS FOR PRIESTLY CELIBACY

17. Virginity undoubtedly, as the Second Vatican Council declared, "is not, of course, required by the nature of the priesthood itself. This is clear from the practice of the early Church and the traditions of the Eastern Churches." (11) But at the same time the Council did not hesitate to confirm solemnly the ancient, sacred and providential present law of priestly celibacy. In addition, it set forth the motives which justify this law for those who, in a spirit of faith and with generous fervor, know how to appreciate the gifts of God.

18. Consideration of how celibacy is "particularly suited" (12) to God's ministers is not something recent. Even if the explicit reasons have differed with different mentalities and different situations, they were always inspired by specifically Christian considerations; and from these considerations we can get an intuition of the more fundamental motives underlying them. (13) These can be brought into clearer light only under the influence of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ to His followers for the knowledge of things to come (14) and to enable the People of God to increase in the understanding of the mystery of Christ and of the Church. In this process the experience gained through the ages from a deeper penetration of spiritual things also has its part.

Christological Significance

19. The Christian priesthood, being of a new order, can be understood only in the light of the newness of Christ, the Supreme Pontiff and eternal Priest, who instituted the priesthood of the ministry as a real participation in His own unique priesthood. (15) The minister of Christ and dispenser of the mysteries of God, (16) therefore, looks up to Him directly as his model and supreme ideal. (17) The Lord Jesus, the only Son of God, was sent by the Father into the world and He became man, in order that humanity which was subject to sin and death might be reborn, and through this new birth (18) might enter the kingdom of heaven. Being entirely consecrated to the will of the Father, (19) Jesus brought forth this new creation by means of His Paschal mystery; (20) thus, He introduced into time and into the world

a new form of life which is sublime and divine and which radically transforms the human condition. (21)

Matrimony and Celibacy

20. Matrimony, according to the will of God, continues the work of the first creation; (22) and considered within the total plan of salvation, it even acquired a new meaning and a new value. Jesus, in fact, has restored its original dignity, (23) has honored it (24) and has raised it to the dignity of a sacrament and of a mysterious symbol of His own union with the Church. (25) Thus, Christian couples walk together toward their heavenly fatherland in the exercise of mutual love, in the fulfillment of their particular obligations, and in striving for the sanctity proper to them. But Christ, "Mediator of a superior covenant," (26) has also opened a new way, in which the human creature adheres wholly and directly to the Lord, and is concerned only with Him and with His affairs; (27) thus, he manifests in a clearer and more complete way the profoundly transforming reality of the New Testament.

Christ's Example

21. Christ, the only Son of the Father, by the power of the Incarnation itself was made Mediator between heaven and earth, between the Father and the human race. Wholly in accord with this mission, Christ remained throughout His whole life in the state of celibacy, which signified His total dedication to the service of God and men. This deep concern between celibacy and the priesthood of Christ is reflected in those whose fortune it is to share in the dignity and mission of the Mediator and eternal Priest; this sharing will be more perfect the freer the sacred minister is from the bonds of flesh and blood. (28)

The Motive for Celibacy

22. Jesus, who selected the first ministers of salvation, wished them to be introduced to the understanding of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," (29) but He also wished them to be coworkers with God under a very special title, and His ambassadors. (30) He called them friends and brethren, (31) for whom He consecrated Himself so that they might be consecrated in truth; (32) He promised a more than abundant recompense to anyone who should leave home, family, wife and children for the sake of the kingdom of God. (33) More than this, in words filled with mystery and hope, He also commended an even more perfect consecration (34) to the kingdom of heaven by means of celibacy, as a special gift. (35) The motive of

this response to the divine call is the kingdom of heaven; (36) similarly, this very kingdom, (37) the Gospel (38) and the name of Christ (39) motivate those called by Jesus to undertake the work of the apostolate, freely accepting its burdens, that they may participate the more closely in His lot.

23. To them this is the mystery of the newness of Christ, of all that He is and stands for; it is the sum of the highest ideals of the Gospel and of the kingdom; it is a particular manifestation of grace, which springs from the Paschal mystery of the Savior. This is what makes the choice of celibacy desirable and worthwhile to those called by our Lord Jesus. Thus they intend not only to participate in His priestly office, but also to share with Him His very condition of living.

Fullness of Love

24. The response to the divine call is an answer of love to the love which Christ has shown us so sublimely. (40) This response is included in the mystery of that special love for souls who have accepted His most urgent appeals. (41) With a divine force, grace increases the longings of love. And love, when it is genuine, is all-embracing, stable and lasting, an irresistible spur to all forms of heroism. And so the free choice of sacred celibacy has always been considered by the Church "as a symbol of, and stimulus to, charity": (42) it signifies a love without reservations; it stimulates to a charity which is open to all. In a life so completely dedicated and motivated, who can see the sign of spiritual narrowness or selfseeking, and not see rather that celibacy is and ought to be a rare and very meaningful example of a life motivated by love, by which man expresses his own unique greatness? Who can doubt the moral and spiritual richness of such a life, consecrated not to any human ideal, no matter how noble, but to Christ and to His work to bring about a new form of humanity in all places and for all generations?

Invitation to Study

25. This biblical and theological view associates our ministerial priesthood with the priesthood of Christ; the total and exclusive dedication of Christ to His mission of salvation provides reason and example for our assimilation to the form of charity and sacrifice proper to Christ our Savior. This vision seems to Us so profound and rich in truth, both speculative and practical, that We invite you, venerable brothers, and you, eager students of Christian doctrine and masters of the spiritual life, and all you priests who have gained a supernatural insight into your vocation, to persevere in the study of

this vision, and to go deeply into the inner recesses and wealth of its reality. In this way, the bond between the priesthood and celibacy will more and more be seen as closely knit—as the mark of a heroic soul and the imperative call to unique and total love for Christ and His Church.

Ecclesiological Significance

26. "Laid hold of by Christ" (43) unto the complete abandonment of one's entire self to Him, the priest takes on a closer likeness to Christ, even in the love with which the eternal Priest has loved the Church His Body and offered Himself entirely for her sake, in order to make her a glorious, holy and immaculate Spouse. (44)

The consecrated celibacy of the sacred ministers actually manifests the virginal love of Christ for the Church, and the virginal and supernatural fecundity of this marriage, by which the children of God are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh." (45 46)

27. The priest dedicates himself to the service of the Lord Jesus and of His Mystical Body with complete liberty, which is made easier by his total offering, and thus he depicts more fully the unity and harmony of the priestly life. (47) His ability for listening to the word of God and for prayer increases. Indeed, the word of God, as preserved by the Church, stirs up vibrant and profound echoes in the priest who daily meditates on it, lives it and preaches it to the faithful.

The Divine Office and Prayer

28. Like Christ Himself, His minister is wholly and solely intent on the things of God and the Church, (48) and he imitates the great High priest who lives ever in the presence of God in order to intercede in our favor. (49) So he receives joy and encouragement unceasingly from the attentive and devout recitation of the Divine Office, by which he dedicates his voice to the Church who prays together with her Spouse, (50) and he recognizes the necessity of continuing his diligence at prayer, which is the profoundly priestly occupation. (51)

A Full and Fruitful Life

29. The rest of a priest's life also acquires a greater richness of meaning and sanctifying power. In fact, his individual efforts at his own sanctification find new incentives in the ministry of grace and in the ministry of the Eucharist, in which "the whole spiritual good of the Church is contained": (52) acting in the person of Christ, the priest unites himself most intimately with the offering, and places on the altar his entire life, which bears the marks of the holocaust.

30. What other considerations can We offer to describe the increase of the priest's power, his service, his love and sacrifice for the entire people of God? Christ spoke of Himself when He said: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (53) And the Apostle Paul did not hesitate to expose himself to a daily death in order to obtain among his faithful glory in Christ Jesus. (54) In a similar way, by a daily dying to himself and by giving up the legitimate love of a family of his own for the love of Christ and of His kingdom, the priest will find the glory of an exceedingly rich and fruitful life in Christ, because like Him and in Him, he loves and dedicates himself to all the children of God.

31. In the community of the faithful committed to his charge, the priest represents Christ. Thus, it is most fitting that in all things he should reproduce the image of Christ and in particular follow His example, both in his personal and in his apostolic life. To his children in Christ, the priest is a sign and a pledge of that sublime and new reality which is the kingdom of God; he dispenses it and he possesses it to a more perfect degree. Thus he nourishes the faith and hope of all Christians, who, as such, are bound to observe chastity according to their proper state of life.

The Pastoral Efficacy of Celibacy

32. The consecration to Christ under an additional and lofty title like celibacy evidently gives to the priest, even in the practical field, the maximum efficiency and the best disposition of mind, mentally and emotionally, for the continuous exercise of a perfect charity. (55) This charity will permit him to spend himself wholly for the welfare of all, in a fuller and more concrete way. (56) It also obviously guarantees him a greater freedom and flexibility in the pastoral ministry, (57) in his active and living presence in the world, to which Christ has sent him (58) so that he may pay fully to all the children of God the debt due to them. (59)

Eschatological Significance

33. The kingdom of God, which "is not of this world," (60) is present here on earth in mystery, and will reach its perfection only with the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus. (61) The Church here below constitutes the seed and the beginning of this kingdom. And as she continues to grow slowly but surely, she longs for the perfect kingdom and ardently desires with all her energy to unite herself with her King in glory. (62)

The pilgrim People of God are on a journey through the vicissitudes of this life toward their heavenly homeland, (63) where the divine sonship of the redeemed (64) will be fully revealed and where the transformed loveliness of the Spouse of the Lamb of God will shine completely. (65)

A Sign of Heavenly Treasures

34. Our Lord and Master has said that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven." (66) In the world of man, so deeply involved in earthly concerns and too often enslaved by the desires of the flesh, (67) the precious and almost divine gift of perfect continence for the kingdom of heaven stands out precisely as "a special token of the rewards of heaven"; (68) it proclaims the presence on earth of the final stages of salvation (69) with the arrival of a new world, and in a way it anticipates the fulfillment of the kingdom as it sets forth its supreme values which will one day shine forth in all the children of God. This continence, therefore, stands as a testimony to the ever-continuing progress of the People of God toward the final goal of their earthly pilgrimage, and as a stimulus for all to raise their eyes to the things above, "where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" and where "our life is hid with Christ in God" until it appears "with him in glory." (70)

CELIBACY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

35. Although it would be highly instructive to go through the writings of past centuries on ecclesiastical celibacy, this would take so long that We will let a brief account suffice. In Christian antiquity the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers testify to the spread through the East and the West of the voluntary practice of celibacy by sacred ministers (71) because of its profound suitability for their total dedication to the service of Christ and His Church.

36. From the beginning of the 4th century, the Church of the West strengthened, spread and confirmed this practice by means of various provincial councils and through the supreme pontiffs. (72) More than anyone else, the supreme pastors and teachers of the Church of God, the guardians and interpreters of the patrimony of the faith and of holy Christian practices, promoted, defended, and restored ecclesiastical celibacy in successive eras of history, even when they met opposition from the clergy itself and when the practices of a decadent society did not favor the heroic demands of virtue. The obligation of celibacy was then solemnly sanctioned by

the Sacred Ecumenical Council of Trent (73) and finally included in the Code of Canon Law. (74)

37. The most recent sovereign pontiffs who preceded Us, making use of their doctrinal knowledge and spurred on by ardent zeal, strove to enlighten the clergy on this matter and to urge them to its observance. (75) We do not wish to fail to pay homage to them, especially to Our well-loved immediate predecessor, whose memory is still fresh in the hearts of men all over the world. During the Roman Synod, with the sincere approval of all the clergy of the city, he spoke as follows: "It deeply hurts Us that . . . anyone can dream that the Church will deliberately or even suitably renounce what from time immemorial has been, and still remains, one of the purest and noblest glories of her priesthood. The law of ecclesiastical celibacy and the efforts necessary to preserve it always recall to mind the struggles of the heroic times when the Church of Christ had to fight for and succeeded in obtaining her threefold glory, always an emblem of victory, that is, the Church of Christ, free, chaste and catholic." (76)

The Church of the East

38. If the legislation of the Eastern Church is different in the matter of discipline with regard to clerical celibacy, as was finally established by the Council of Trullo held in the year 692, (77) and which has been clearly recognized by the Second Vatican Council, (78) this is due to the different historical background of that most noble part of the Church, a situation which the Holy Spirit has providentially and supernaturally influenced.

We Ourselves take this opportunity to express Our esteem and Our respect for all the clergy of the Eastern Churches, and to recognize in them examples of fidelity and zeal which make them worthy of sincere veneration.

39. We find further comforting reasons for continuing to adhere to the observance of the discipline of clerical celibacy in the exaltation of virginity by the Eastern Fathers. We hear within Us, for example, the voice of St. Gregory of Nyssa, reminding us that "the life of virginity is the image of the blessedness that awaits us in the life to come." (79) We are no less assured by St. John Chrysostom's treatise on the priesthood, which is still a fruitful subject for reflection. Intent on throwing light on the harmony which must exist between the private life of him who ministers at the altar and the dignity of the order to which his sacred duties belong, he affirmed: ". . . it is becoming that

he who accepts the priesthood be as pure as if he were in heaven." (80)

40. Further, it is by no means futile to observe that in the East only celibate priests are ordained bishops, and priests themselves cannot contract marriage after their ordination to the priesthood. This indicates that these venerable Churches also possess to a certain extent the principle of a celibate priesthood and even of the appropriateness of celibacy for the Christian priesthood, of which the bishops possess the summit and fullness. (81)

The Tradition of the Western Church

41. In any case, the Church of the West cannot weaken her faithful observance of her own tradition. Nor can she be regarded as having followed for centuries a path which instead of favoring the spiritual richness of individual souls and of the People of God, has in some way compromised it, or of having stifled, with arbitrary juridical prescriptions, the free expansion of the most profound realities of nature and of grace.

Particular Cases

42. In virtue of the fundamental norm of the government of the Catholic Church, to which We alluded above, (82) while on the one hand, the law requiring a freely chosen and perpetual celibacy of those who are admitted to Holy Orders remains unchanged, on the other hand, a study may be allowed of the particular circumstances of married sacred ministers of Churches or other Christian communities separated from the Catholic communion, and of the possibility of admitting to priestly functions those who desire to adhere to the fullness of this communion and to continue to exercise the sacred ministry. The circumstances must be such, however, as not to prejudice the existing discipline regarding celibacy.

And that the authority of the Church does not hesitate to exercise her power in this matter can be seen from the recent Ecumenical Council, which foresaw the possibility of conferring the holy diaconate on men of mature age who are already married. (83)

43. All this, however, does not signify a relaxation of the existing law, and must not be interpreted as a prelude to its abolition. There are better things to do than to promote this hypothesis, which tears down that vigor and love in which celibacy finds security and happiness, and which obscures the true doctrine that justifies its existence and exalts its splendor. It would be much better to promote serious

studies in defense of the spiritual meaning and moral value of virginity and celibacy. (84)

The Mind of the Council

44. Holy virginity is a very special gift. Nevertheless, the whole present-day Church, solemnly and universally represented by the pastors responsible for her welfare (with due respect, as We have said, for the discipline of the Eastern Churches), manifested her absolute faith "in the Holy Spirit that the grace of leading a celibate life, so desirable in the priesthood of the New Testament, will be readily granted by God the Father if those who by ordination share the priesthood of Christ humbly and earnestly ask it together with the whole Church." (85)

The Prayer of the People of God

45. We wholeheartedly call on the entire People of God to do their duty in bringing about an increase in priestly vocations. (86) We ask them fervently to beg the Father of all, the divine Spouse of the Church, and the Holy Spirit, her principle of life, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and of His Church, to pour out, especially at present, this divine gift, which the Father certainly does not wish to give stingingly. They should also fervently pray, in like manner, that souls may dispose themselves to receive this gift by a profound faith and a generous love. In this way, in our world which needs God's glory, (81) priests, ever more perfectly conformed to the one and supreme Priest, will be a real glory to Christ, (88) and, through them, "the glory of the grace" of God will be magnified in the world of today. (89)

46. Yes, venerable and well-beloved brothers in the priesthood, whom We cherish "with the affection of Christ Jesus," (90) it is indeed this world in which we live, tormented by the pains of growth and change, justly proud of its human values and human conquests, which urgently needs the witness of lives consecrated to the highest and most sacred spiritual values. This witness is necessary in order that the rare and incomparable light radiating from the most sublime virtues of the spirit may not be wanting to our times.

The Hidden Wisdom of God

47. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to confide the formidable task of evangelizing the then-known world to a handful of men to all appearances lacking in number and quality. He bade this little flock not to lose heart, (91) for, thanks to His constant assistance, (92) through Him and with Him, they would overcome the world. (93)

Jesus has also taught us that the kingdom of God has an intrinsic and unobservable dynamism which enables it to grow "without [man's] knowing it." (94) The harvest of God's kingdom is great, but the laborers, as in the beginning, are few. Actually, they have never been as numerous as human standards would have judged sufficient. But the heavenly King demands that we pray "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (95) The counsels and prudence of man cannot supersede the hidden wisdom of Him who, in the history of salvation, has challenged man's wisdom and power by His own foolishness and weakness. (96)

The Courage of Faith

48. Supported by the power of faith, We express the Church's conviction on this matter. Of this she is certain: if she is prompter and more persevering in her response to grace, if she relies more openly and more fully on its secret but invincible power, if, in short, she bears more exemplary witness to the mystery of Christ, then she will never fall short in the performance of her salvific mission to the world—no matter how much opposition she faces from human ways of thinking or misrepresentations. We must all realize that we can do all things in Him who alone gives strength to souls (97) and increase to His Church. (98)

49. We are not easily led to believe that the abolition of ecclesiastical celibacy would considerably increase the number of priestly vocations: the contemporary experience of those Churches and ecclesial communities which allow their ministers to marry seems to prove the contrary. The causes of the decrease in vocations to the priesthood are to be found elsewhere—for example, in the fact that individuals and families have lost their sense of God and of all that is holy, their esteem for the Church as the institution of salvation through faith and the sacraments. The problem must be examined at its real source.

CELIBACY AND HUMAN VALUES

50. As We said above, (99) the Church is not unaware that the choice of consecrated celibacy, since it involves a series of hard renunciations which affect the very depths of a man, presents also grave difficulties and problems to which the men of today are particularly sensitive. In fact, it might seem that celibacy conflicts with the solemn recognition of human values by the Church in the recent Council. And yet more careful consideration reveals that this sacrifice of the human love experienced by most men in family life and given

up by the priest for the love of Christ, is really a singular tribute paid to that great love. For it is universally recognized that man has always offered to God that which is worthy of both the giver and the receiver.

Grace and Nature

51. Moreover, the Church cannot and should not fail to realize that the choice of celibacy—provided that it is made with human and Christian prudence and responsibility—is governed by grace which, far from destroying or doing violence to nature, elevates it and imparts to it supernatural powers and vigor. God, who has created and redeemed man, knows what He can ask of him and gives him everything necessary to be able to do what his Creator and Redeemer asks of him. St. Augustine, who had fully and painfully experienced in himself the nature of man, exclaimed: "Grant what You command, and command what You will." (100)

52. A true knowledge of the real difficulties of celibacy is very useful, even necessary, for the priest, so that he may be fully aware of what his celibacy requires in order to be genuine and beneficial. But with equal fidelity to the truth, these difficulties must not be given greater value or weight than they actually have in the human or religious sphere, or be declared impossible of solution.

Celibacy Not Against Nature

53. Considering what contemporary scholarly investigation has ascertained, it is not right to continue repeating (101) that celibacy is against nature because it runs counter to lawful physical, psychic and affective needs, or to claim that a completely mature human personality demands fulfillment of these needs. Man, created to God's image and likeness, (102) is not just flesh and blood; the sexual instinct is not all that he has; man has also, and pre-eminently, understanding, choice, freedom, and thanks to these powers he is, and must remain, the chief work of creation; they give him mastery over his physical, mental and emotional appetites.

54. The true, profound reason for dedicated celibacy is, as We have said, the choice of a closer and more complete relationship with the mystery of Christ and the Church for the good of all mankind: in this choice there is no doubt that those highest human values are able to find their fullest expression.

An Exaltation of Man

55. The choice of celibacy does not connote ignorance of or contempt for the sexual instinct and man's capacity for giving himself in love. That would certainly do damage to his physical and psychological

balance. On the contrary, it demands clear understanding, careful self-control and a wise elevation of the mind to higher realities. In this way celibacy sets the whole man on a higher level and makes an effective contribution to his perfection.

The Development of Personality

56. We readily grant that the natural and lawful desire a man has to love a woman and to raise a family is renounced by the celibate in sacred orders; but it cannot be said that marriage and the family are the only way for fully developing the human person. In the priest's heart love is by no means extinct. His charity is drawn from the purest source, (103) practiced in the imitation of God and Christ, and is no less demanding and real than any other genuine love. (104) It gives the priest a limitless horizon, deepens and gives breadth to his sense of responsibility—a mark of mature personality—and inculcates in him, as a sign of a higher and greater fatherhood, a generosity and refinement of heart (105) which offer a superlative enrichment.

The Testimony of Total Dedication

57. All the People of God must give testimony to the mystery of Christ and His kingdom, but this witnessing does not take the same form for all. The Church leaves to her married children the function of giving the necessary testimony of a genuinely and fully Christian married and family life. She entrusts to her priests the testimony of a life wholly dedicated to pondering and seeking the new and delightful realities of God's kingdom.

If this means that the priest is without a direct personal experience of married life, he nevertheless will be able through his training, his ministry and the grace of his office, to gain even deeper insights into every human yearning. This will allow him to meet problems of this kind at their source and give solid support by his advice and assistance to married persons and Christian families.(106) For the Christian family, the example of the priest who is living his life of celibacy to the full will underscore the spiritual dimension of every love worthy of the name, and his personal sacrifice will merit for the faithful united in the holy bond of matrimony the grace of a true union.

The Priest and Solitude

58. By reason of his celibacy the priest is a man alone: that is true, but his solitude is not meaningless emptiness because it is filled with God and the brimming riches of His kingdom. Moreover, he has prepared himself for this solitude—which should be an internal and external plenitude of charity—if he has chosen it with full

understanding, and not through any proud desire to be different from the rest of men, or to withdraw himself from common responsibilities, or to alienate himself from his brothers, or to show contempt for the world. Though set apart from the world, the priest is not separated from the People of God, because he has been "appointed to act on behalf of men," (107) since he is "consecrated" completely to charity (108) and to the work for which the Lord has chosen him. (109)

The Loneliness of Christ

59. At times loneliness will weigh heavily on the priest, but he will not for that reason regret having generously chosen it. Christ, too, in the most tragic hours of His life was alone—abandoned by the very ones whom He had chosen as witnesses to, and companions of, His life, and whom He had loved "to the end" (110)—but He stated, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." (111) He who has chosen to belong completely to Christ will find, above all, in intimacy with Him and in His grace, the power of spirit necessary to banish sadness and regret and to triumph over discouragement. He will not be lacking the protection of the Virgin Mother of Jesus nor the motherly solicitude of the Church, to whom he has given himself in service. He will not be without the kindly care of his father in Christ, his bishop; nor will the fraternal companionship of his fellow priests and the love of the entire People of God, most fruitful of consolations, be lacking to him. And if hostility, lack of confidence and the indifference of his fellow men make his solitude quite painful, he will thus be able to share, with dramatic clarity, the very experience of Christ, as an apostle who must not be "greater than he who sent him," (112) as a friend admitted to the most painful and most glorious secret of his divine Friend who has chosen him to bring forth the mysterious fruit of life in his own life, which is only apparently one of death. (113)

II. PRIESTLY FORMATION

60. Our reflection on the beauty, importance and intimate fittingness of holy virginity for the ministers of Christ and His Church makes it incumbent on those who hold the office of teacher and pastor of that Church to take steps to assure and promote its positive observance, from the first moment of preparation to receive such a precious gift.

In fact, the difficulties and problems which make the observance of chastity very painful or quite impossible for some, spring, not infrequently, from a type of priestly formation which, given the great changes of these last years, is no longer completely adequate for the formation of a personality worthy of a "man of God." (114)

Carrying Out the Council's Norms

61. The Second Vatican Council has already indicated wise criteria and guidelines to this end. They are in conformity with the progress of psychology and pedagogy, as well as with the changed conditions of mankind and of contemporary society. (115) It is Our wish that appropriate instructions be drawn up with the help of truly qualified men, treating with all necessary detail the theme of chastity. They should be sent out as soon as possible to provide competent and timely assistance to those who have the great responsibility within the Church of preparing future priests.

Personal Response to the Divine Vocation

62. The priesthood is a ministry instituted by Christ for the service of His Mystical Body which is the Church. To her belongs the authority to admit to that priesthood those whom she judges qualified—that is, those to whom God has given, along with other signs of an ecclesiastical vocation, the gift of a consecrated celibacy. (116)

In virtue of such a gift, confirmed by canon law, the individual is called to respond with free judgment and total dedication, adapting his own mind and outlook to the will of God who calls him. Concretely, this divine calling manifests itself in a given individual with his own definite personality structure which is not at all overpowered by grace. In candidates for the priesthood, therefore, the sense of receiving this divine gift should be cultivated; so too, a sense of responsibility in their meeting with God, with the highest importance given to supernatural means.

63. It is likewise necessary that exact account be taken of the physical and psychological state of the candidate in order to guide and orient him toward the priestly ideal; so a truly adequate formation should harmoniously coordinate grace and nature in the man in whom one clearly sees the proper conditions and qualifications. These conditions should be ascertained as soon as signs of his holy vocation are first indicated—not hastily or superficially, but carefully, with the assistance and aid of a doctor or a competent psychologist. A serious investigation of hereditary factors should not be omitted.

Unsuitable Candidates

64. Those who are discovered to be unfit for physical, psychological or moral reasons should be quickly removed from the path to the priesthood. Let educators appreciate that this is one of their very grave duties. They must neither indulge in false hopes and dangerous illusions nor permit the candidate to nourish these hopes

in any way, with resultant damage to himself or to the Church. The life of the celibate priest, which engages the whole man so totally and so delicately, excludes in fact those of insufficient physical, psychic and moral qualifications. Nor should anyone pretend that grace supplies for the defects of nature in such a man.

65. After the capability of a man has been ascertained and he has been admitted to the course of studies leading to the goal of the priesthood, care should be taken for the progressive development of a mature personality through physical, intellectual and moral education directed toward the control and personal dominion of his temperament, sentiments and passions.

The Necessity of Discipline

66. This will be proved by the firmness of the spirit with which he accepts the personal and community type of discipline demanded by the priestly life. Such a regime, the lack or deficiency of which is to be deplored because it exposes the candidate to grave disorders, should not be borne only as an imposition from without. It should be inculcated and implanted as an indispensable component within the context of the spiritual life.

Personal Initiative

67. The educator should skillfully stimulate the young man to the evangelical virtue of sincerity (117) and to spontaneity by approving every good personal initiative, so that the young man will come to know and properly evaluate himself, wisely assume his own responsibilities, and train himself to that self-control which is of such importance in priestly education.

68. The exercise of authority, the principle of which should be maintained firmly, will be animated by wise moderation and a pastoral attitude. It will be used in a climate of dialogue and will be implemented in a gradual way which will afford the educator an ever deepening understanding of the psychology of the young man, and will appeal to personal conviction.

A Free Choice

69. The complete education of the candidate for the priesthood should be directed to help him acquire a tranquil, convinced and free choice of the grave responsibilities which he must assume in conscience before God and the Church. Ardor and generosity are marvelous qualities of youth; illuminated and supported, they merit, along with the blessing of the Lord, the admiration and confidence of the whole Church as well as of all men. None of the real personal and

social difficulties which their choice will bring in its train should remain hidden to the young men, so that their enthusiasm will not be superficial and illusory. At the same time it will be right to highlight with at least equal truth and clarity the sublimity of their choice, which, though it may lead on the one hand to a certain physical and psychic void, nevertheless on the other brings with it an interior richness capable of elevating the person most profoundly.

A Demanding Asceticism

70. Young candidates for the priesthood should be convinced that they cannot follow their difficult way without a special type of asceticism proper to themselves and more demanding than that which is required of the other faithful. It will be a demanding asceticism but not a suffocating one which consists in the deliberate and assiduous practice of those virtues which make a man a priest: self-denial in the highest degree—an essential condition if one would follow Christ; (118) humility and obedience as expressions of internal truth and of an ordered liberty; prudence, justice, courage and temperance—virtues without which it is impossible for true and profound religious life to exist; a sense of responsibility, fidelity and loyalty in the acceptance of one's obligations; a balance between contemplation and action; detachment and a spirit of poverty, which will give tone and vigor to evangelical freedom; chastity, the result of a persevering struggle, harmonized with all the other natural and supernatural virtues; a serene and secure contact with the world to whose service the young man will dedicate himself for Christ and for His kingdom.

In such a way the aspirant to the priesthood will acquire, with the help of a divine grace, a strong, mature and balanced personality, a combination of inherited and acquired qualities, harmony of all his powers in the light of the faith and in intimate union with Christ, whom he has chosen for himself and for the ministry of salvation to the world.

Trial Periods

71. However, to judge with more certainty the young man's fitness for the priesthood and to have successive proofs of his attained maturity on both the human and supernatural levels—for "it is more difficult to conduct oneself correctly in the service of souls because of dangers coming from outside" (119)—it will be advisable to have a preliminary trial period before the observance of holy celibacy becomes

something definitive and permanent through ordination to the priesthood. (120)

A Gift to the Lord and His Church

72. Once moral certainty has been obtained that the maturity of the candidate is sufficiently guaranteed, he will be in a position to take on himself the heavy and sweet burden of priestly chastity as a total gift of himself to the Lord and to His Church.

In this way, the obligation of celibacy, which the Church makes a condition of Holy Orders, is accepted by the candidate through the influence of divine grace and with full reflection and liberty, and, as is evident, not without the wise and prudent advice of competent spiritual directors who are concerned not to impose the choice, but rather to dispose the candidate to make it more consciously. Hence, in that solemn moment when the candidate will decide once and for his whole life, he will not feel the weight of an imposition from outside, but rather the interior joy that accompanies a choice made for the love of Christ.

THE PRIESTLY LIFE

73. The priest must not think that ordination makes everything easy for him and screens him once and for all from every temptation or danger. Chastity is not acquired all at once but results from a laborious conquest and daily affirmation. Our world today stresses the positive values of love between the sexes but has also multiplied the difficulties and risks in this sphere. In order to safeguard his chastity with all care and affirm its sublime meaning, the priest must consider clearly and calmly his position as a man exposed to spiritual warfare against seductions of the flesh in himself and in the world, continually renewing his resolution to give an ever increasing and ever better perfection to the irrevocable offering of himself which obliges him to a fidelity that is complete, loyal and real.

74. Christ's priest will daily receive new strength and joy as he deepens in meditation and prayer the motives for his gift and the conviction that he has chosen the better part. He will ask humbly and perseveringly for the grace of fidelity, never denied to those who ask it sincerely. At the same time he will use the natural and supernatural means at his disposal. In particular he will not disregard those ascetical norms which have been substantiated by the Church's experience and are no less necessary in modern circumstances than in former times. (121)

Intense Spiritual Life

75. The priest should apply himself above all else to developing, with all the love grace inspires in him, his close relationship with Christ, and exploring this inexhaustible and enriching mystery; he should also acquire an ever deeper sense of the mystery of the Church. There would be the risk of his state of life seeming unreasonable and unfounded if it is viewed apart from this mystery.

Priestly piety, nourished at the table of God's word and the Holy Eucharist, lived within the cycle of the liturgical year, inspired by a warm and enlightened devotion to the Virgin Mother of the supreme and eternal High Priest and Queen of the Apostles, (122) will bring him to the source of a true spiritual life which alone provides a solid foundation for the observance of celibacy.

The Spirit of the Priestly Ministry

76. In this way the priest, with grace and peace in his heart, will face with generosity the manifold tasks of his life and ministry. If he performs these with faith and zeal he will find in them new occasions to show that he belongs entirely to Christ and His Mystical Body, for his own sanctification and the sanctification of others. The charity of Christ which urges him on, (123) will help him not to renounce his higher feelings but to elevate and deepen them in a spirit of consecration in imitation of Christ the High Priest, who shared intimately in the life of men, loved and suffered for them, (124) and of Paul the Apostle who shared in the cares of all (125) in order to bring the light and power of the Gospel of God's grace to shine in the world. (126)

77. Rightly jealous of his full self-giving to the Lord, the priest should know how to guard against emotional tendencies which give rise to desires not sufficiently enlightened or guided by the Spirit. He should beware of seeing spiritual or apostolic pretexts for what are in fact dangerous inclinations of the heart.

Virile Asceticism

78. The priestly life certainly requires an authentic spiritual intensity in order to live by the Spirit; (127) it requires a truly virile asceticism—both interior and exterior—in one who, belonging in a special way to Christ, has in Him and through Him "crucified the flesh with its passions and desires," (128) not hesitating to face arduous and lengthy trials in order to do so. (129) In this way Christ's minister will be the better able to show to the world the fruits of the Spirit, which are "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity." (130)

The Brotherhood of Priests

79. Moreover, priestly chastity is increased, guarded and defended by a way of life, surroundings and activity suited to a minister of God. For this reason the "close sacramental brotherhood (131) which all priests enjoy in virtue of their ordination must be fostered to the utmost. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taught the urgency of the new commandment of charity. He gave a wonderful example of it when He instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist and the Catholic priesthood, (132) and prayed to His Heavenly Father that the love the Father bore for Him from all eternity should be in His ministers and that He too should be in them. (133)

80. So the unity of spirit among priests should be active in their prayers, friendship and help of all kinds for one another. One cannot sufficiently recommend to priests a life lived in common and directed entirely toward their sacred ministry; the practice of having frequent meetings with a fraternal exchange of ideas, counsel and experience with their brother priests; the movement to form associations which encourage priestly holiness.

Charity For Fellow Priests

81. Priests should reflect on the advice of the Council, (134) which reminds them of their common sharing in the priesthood so that they may feel a lively responsibility for fellow priests troubled by difficulties which gravely endanger the divine gift they have. They should have a burning charity for those who have greater need of love, understanding and prayer, who have need of prudent but effective help, and who have a claim on their unbounded charity as those who are, and should be, their truest friends.

82. Venerable brothers in the episcopacy, priest and ministers of the altar, by way of completing and leaving a remembrance of this written conversation with you, we should like to suggest this resolution to you: that on the anniversary of his ordination, or on Holy Thursday when all are united in spirit commemorating the mystery of the institution of the priesthood, each one should renew his total gift of himself to Christ our Lord; reviving in this way the awareness that He has chosen you for His divine service, and repeating at the same time, humbly and courageously, the promise of our unswerving faithfulness to His love alone in your offering of perfect chastity. (135)

LAMENTABLE DEFECTIONS

83. Now, with fatherly love and affection, Our heart turns anxiously and with deep sorrow to those unfortunate priests who always remain Our dearly beloved brothers and whose absence We keenly regret. We speak of those who, retaining the sacred character conferred by their priestly ordination, have nonetheless been sadly unfaithful to the obligations they accepted when ordained. Their sad state and its consequences to priests and to others move some to wonder if celibacy is not in some way responsible for such dramatic occurrences and for the scandals they inflict on God's People. In fact, the responsibility falls not on consecrated celibacy in itself but on a judgment of the fitness of the candidate of the priesthood which was not always adequate or prudent at the proper time, or else it falls on the way in which sacred ministers live their life of total consecration.

Reasons for Dispensations

84. The Church is very conscious of the sad state of these sons of hers and judges it necessary to make every effort to avert or to remedy the wounds she suffers by their defection. Following the example of Our immediate predecessors, We also have, in cases concerning ordination to the priesthood, been prepared to allow inquiry to extend beyond the provisions of the present canon law (136) to other very grave reasons which give ground for really solid doubts regarding the full freedom and responsibility of the candidate for the priesthood and his fitness for the priestly state. This has been done to free those who, on careful judicial consideration of their case, are seen to be really unsuited.

The Church's Concern

85. The dispensations which are granted after such considerations—a minimal percentage when they are compared with the great number of good, worthy priests—provide in justice for the spiritual salvation of the individual and show at the same time the Church's concern to safeguard celibacy and the complete fidelity of all her ministers. In granting such dispensations the Church always acts with heartfelt regret, especially in the particularly lamentable cases in which refusal to bear worthily this sweet yoke of Christ results from crises in faith, or moral weakness, and is thus frequently a failure in responsibility and a source of scandal to the Christian people.

86. If these priests knew how much sorrow, dishonor and unrest they bring to the holy Church of God, if they reflected on the seriousness and beauty of their obligations and on the dangers to which they are

exposed in this life and in the next, there would be greater care and reflection in their decisions; they would pray more assiduously and show greater courage and logic in forestalling the causes of their spiritual and moral collapse.

87. Mother Church takes particular interest in what befalls young priests who, no matter how great the zeal and enthusiasm with which they entered the sacred ministry, have nevertheless been troubled later on in performing their duties by feelings of hopelessness, doubt, desire, or folly. Hence, especially in these circumstances, it is the wish of the Church that every persuasive means available be used to lead our brothers from this wavering state and restore to them peace of soul, trust, penance, and their former zeal. It is only when no other solution can be found for a priest in this unhappy condition that he should be relieved of his office.

The Granting of Dispensations

88. There are some whose priesthood cannot be saved, but whose serious dispositions nevertheless give promise of their being able to live as good Christian lay people. To these the Holy See, having studied all the circumstances with their bishops or with their religious superiors, sometimes grants a dispensation, thus letting love conquer sorrow. In order, however, that her unhappy but always dear son may have a salutary sign of her maternal grief and a keener remembrance of the universal need of God's mercy, in these cases she imposes some works of piety and reparation .

Encouragement and Warning

89. Inspiring this discipline, which is at once severe and merciful, are justice and truth, prudence and reserve. It is without doubt a discipline which will confirm good priests in their determination to live lives of purity and holiness. At the same time it will be a warning to those aspiring to the priesthood. Guided by the wisdom of those who educate them, they will approach their priesthood fully aware of its obligations and entirely forgetfully of self, responding generously to divine grace and the will of Christ and His Church.

90. Finally, and with deep joy, We thank our Lord because many priests who for a time had been unfaithful to their obligations have again, with the grace of the High Priest, found the path and given joy to all by becoming anew exemplary pastors. With admirable good will, they used all the means which were helpful to ensure their return, especially an intense life of prayer, humility, persevering effort sustained by regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance.

THE BISHOP'S FATHERLINESS

91. There is an irreplaceable and very effective means to ensure for our dear priests an easier and happier way of being faithful to their obligations, and it is one which they have the right and duty to find in you, venerable brother bishops. It was you who called them and destined them to be priests; it was you who placed your hands on their heads; with you they are one in sharing the honor of the priesthood by virtue of the Sacrament of Orders; it is you whom they make present in the community of the faithful; with you they are united in a spirit of trust and generosity since, in as far as is compatible with their order, they take upon themselves your duties and concerns. (137) In choosing a life dedicated to celibacy they follow the ancient examples of the prelates of the East and West; this provides a new motive for union between bishop and priest and a sound hope that they will live together more closely.

92. The love which Jesus had for His Apostles showed itself very clearly when he made them ministers of His real and Mystical Body; (138) and even you in whose person "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the high priest, is present in the midst of those who believe," (139) know that you owe the best part of your hearts and pastoral care to your priests and to the young men preparing to be priests. (140) In no other way can you better show this conviction than in the conscious responsibility and sincere and unconquerable love with which you preside over the education of your seminarians, and help your priests in every way possible to remain faithful to their vocation and their duties.

A Bishop's Kindness

93. Your fraternal and kindly presence must fill up in advance the human loneliness of the priest, which is so often the cause of his discouragement and temptations. (141) Before being the superiors and judges of your priests, be their teachers, fathers, friends, their good and kind brothers always ready to understand, to sympathize and to help. Encourage your priests in every possible way to be your personal friends and to be very open with you. This will not weaken the relationship of juridical obedience; rather it will transform it into pastoral love so that they will obey more willingly, sincerely and securely. If they have a filial trust in you, your priests will be able in time to open up their souls and to confide their difficulties in you in the certainty that they can rely on your kindness to be protected from eventual defeat, without a servile fear of punishment, but in the filial

expectation of correction, pardon and help, which will inspire them to resume their difficult journey with a new confidence.

Authority and Fatherliness

94. Venerable brothers, all of you are certainly convinced that to restore to the soul of a priest joy in and enthusiasm for his vocation, interior peace and salvation, is an urgent and glorious ministry which has an incalculable influence on a multitude of souls. There will be times when you must exercise your authority by showing a just severity toward those few who, after having resisted your kindness, by their conduct cause scandal to the People of God; but you will take the necessary precautions to ensure their seeing the error of their ways. Following the example of our Lord Jesus, "the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls," (142) do not crush the "bruised reed" nor quench the "smoldering wick"; (143) like Jesus, heal their wounds, (144) save what was lost; (145) with eagerness and love go in search of the lost sheep and bring him back to the warmth of the sheepfold (146) and like Him, try until the end (147) to call back the unfaithful friend.

95. We are certain, venerable brothers, that you will leave nothing undone to foster, by your teaching, prudence and pastoral zeal, the ideal of consecrated celibacy among your clergy. We are sure too that you will never neglect those priests who have strayed from the house of God, their true home, no matter where their painful odyssey has led them; for they still remain your sons.

ROLE OF THE FAITHFUL

96. Priestly virtue is a treasure that belongs to the whole Church. It is an enrichment and a splendor above the ordinary, which redounds to the building up and the profit of the entire People of God. We wish therefore to address to all the faithful, Our children in Christ, an affectionate and urgent exhortation. We wish that they too feel responsible for the virtue of those brothers of theirs who have undertaken the mission of serving them in the priesthood for the salvation of their souls. They should pray and work for priestly vocations; they should help priests wholeheartedly, with filial love and ready collaboration; they should have the firm intention of offering them the consolation of a joyous response to their pastoral labors. They should encourage these, their fathers in Christ, to overcome the difficulties of every sort which they encounter as they fulfill their duties, with entire faithfulness, to the edification of all. In a spirit of faith and Christian love, they should foster a deep respect and a

delicate reserve in their dealings with priests, on account of their condition as men entirely consecrated to Christ and to the Church.

Invitation to the Laity

97. Our invitation goes out specially to those lay people who seek God with greater earnestness and intensity, and strive after Christian perfection while living in the midst of their fellow men. By their devoted and warm friendship they can be of great assistance to the Church's ministers since it is the laity, occupied with temporal affairs while at the same time aiming at a more generous and perfect conformity to their baptismal vocation, who are in a position, in many cases, to enlighten and encourage the priest. The integrity of his vocation, one that plunges him into the mystery of Christ and the Church, can suffer harm from various circumstances and from contamination by a destructive worldliness. In this way the whole People of God will honor Christ our Lord in those who represent Him and of whom He has said: "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me," (148) promising an assured reward to anyone who in any way shows charity toward those whom He has sent. (149)

CONCLUSION

98. Venerable brothers, pastors of God's flock throughout the world, and dearly beloved priests, Our sons and brothers: as We come to the end of this letter which We have addressed to you, We invite you, with a soul responsive to Christ's great love, to turn your eyes and heart with renewed confidence and filial hope to the most loving Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church, and to invoke for the Catholic priesthood her powerful and maternal intercession. In her the People of God admire and venerate the image of the Church, and model of faith, charity and perfect union with Him. May Mary Virgin and Mother obtain for the Church, which also is hailed as virgin and mother, (150) to rejoice always, though with due humility, in the faithfulness of her priests to the sublime gift of holy virginity they have received, and to see it flourishing and appreciated ever more and more in every walk of life, so that the army of those who "follow the divine Lamb wherever He goes" (151) may increase throughout the earth.

99. The Church proclaims her hope in Christ; she is conscious of the critical shortage of priests when compared with the spiritual necessities of the world's population; but she is confident in her expectation which is founded on the infinite and mysterious power of

grace, that the high spiritual quality of her ministers will bring about an increase also in their numbers, for everything is possible to God. (152)

In this faith and in this hope, may the apostolic blessing which we impart with all Our heart be for all a pledge of heavenly graces and the testimony of Our fatherly affection.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, June 24, 1967, the feast of St. John the Baptist, in the fifth year of Our pontificate.

PAUL VI

NOTES

LATIN TEXT: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 59 (1967), 657-97.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: *The Pope Speaks*, 12 (Summer, 1967), 291-319.

REFERENCES:

- (1) See letter of Oct. 10, 1965, to Cardinal Tisserant, read in the general session of the next day.
- (2) See *Mt* 19. 11-12.
- (3) See *1 Tm* 3. 2-5; *Ti* 1. 5-6.
- (4) See Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church*, no. 35: AAS 58 (1966), 690 [TPS XI, 195-96]; *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, no. 1: AAS 58 (1966), 837 [TPS XI, 119-20]; *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, nos. 10 ff.: AAS 58 (1966), 1007-08 [TPS XI, 455-56]; *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*, nos. 19, 38; AAS 58 (1966), 969, 984 [TPS XI, 426, 437-38].
- (5) *Mt* 19. 11.
- (6) *Jn* 4. 10.
- (7) See *Mt* 5. 13-14.
- (8) See above, nos. 5 and 7 [pp. 292-93].
- (9) Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today*, no. 62: AAS 58 (1966), 1082 [TPS XI, 300].
- (10) See *Eph* 5. 25-27.
- (11) *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015 [TPS XI, 461].
- (12) *Ibid.*
- (13) See Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, no. 8: AAS 58 (1966), 820 [TPS XI, 75-76.].
- (14) See *Jn* 16. 13.

- (15) Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 28: AAS 57 (1965), 33-36 [TPS X, 378-79]; *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 2: AAS 58 (1966), 991-93 [TPS XI, 442-44].
- (16) See 1 Cor 4. 1.
- (17) See 1 Cor 11. 1.
- (18) See Jn 3. 5; Ti 3. 5.
- (19) See Jn 4. 34; 17. 4.
- (20) See 2 Cor 5. 17; Gal 6. 15.
- (21) See Gal 3. 28.
- (22) See Gn 2. 18.
- (23) See Mt 19. 3-8.
- (24) See Jn 2. 1-11.
- (25) See Eph 5. 32.
- (26) Heb 8. 6.
- (27) See 1 Cor 7. 33-35.
- (28) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-17 [TPS XI, 461-62].
- (29) Mt 13. 11.; see Mk 4. 11; Lk 8. 10.
- (30) See 2 Cor 5. 20.
- (31) See Jn 15. 15; 20. 17.
- (32) *Ibid.*, 17. 19.
- (33) See Lk 18. 29-30.
- (34) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-17 [TPS XI, 461 -62].
- (35) See Mt 19. 11.
- (36) *Ibid.*, 19. 12.
- (37) See Lk 18. 29-30.
- (38) Mk 10. 29-30.
- (39) Mt 19. 29.
- (40) See Jn 3. 16; 15, 13.
- (41) See Mk 10. 21.
- (42) *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 42: AAS 57 (1965), 48 [TPS X, 388].
- (43) Phil 3.12.
- (44) See Eph 5.25-27.
- (45) Jn 1, 13.
- (46) See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 42: AAS 57 (1965), 48 [TPS X, 388]; *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-17 [TPS XI, 461-62].

- (47) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 14: AAS 58 (1966), 1013 [TPS XI, 459-60].
- (48) See *Lk 2.49*; *1 Cor 7.32-33*.
- (49) See *Heb 9.24*; *7.25*.
- (50) *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 13: AAS 58 (1966), 1012 [TPS XI, 458-59].
- (51) See *Acts 6. 4*.
- (52) *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 5: AAS 58 (1966), 997 [TPS XI, 447].
- (53) *Jn 12. 24-25*.
- (54) See *1 Cor 15. 31*.
- (55) See Second Vatican Council, *Decree on Training for the Priesthood*, no. 10: AAS 58 (1966), 719-20 [TPS XI, 23-24].
- (56) See *2 Cor 12.15*.
- (57) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-17 [TPS XI, 461 -62].
- (58) See *Jn 17. 18*.
- (59) See *Rom 1. 14*.
- (60) *Jn 18. 36*.
- (61) See *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today*, no. 39: AAS 58 (1966), 1056-57 [TPS XI, 282-83].
- (62) See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* , no . 5: AAS 57 (1965), 7-8 [TPS X, 361].
- (63) See *Phil 3. 20*.
- (64) See *1 Jn 3. 2*.
- (65) See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 48: AAS 57 (1965), 53-54 [TPS X, 391-92].
- (66) *Mt 22. 30*.
- (67) See *1 Jn 2. 16*.
- (68) Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of the Religious Life*, no. 12: AAS 58 (1966), 107 [TPS XI, 147].
- (69) See *1 Cor 7. 29-31*.
- (70) *Col 3. 1-4*.
- (71) See tertullian, *De exhort. castitatis*, 13: PL 2. 930; St. Epiphanius, *Adv. Haer. II*, 48.9 and 59.4: PG 41.869, 1025; St. Efrem, *Carmina nisibena*, XVIII, XIX: ed. G. Bickell, Leipzig (1866), p. 122; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Demonstr. evan.*, 1.9: PG 22.81; St. Cyril of Jerusalem. *Catechesis*, 12.25: PG 33.757; St. Ambrose, *De officiis ministr.*, 1.50: PL 16.97 ff.; St. Augustine, *De moribus Eccl. cath.*,

1.32: PL 32.1339; St. Jerome, *Adversus Vigilantium*, 2: PL 23.340-41; Bishop Synesius of Ptolemais, *Epist.* 105: PG 66.1485.

(72) First done at the Council of Elvira, c. 300, can. 33: Mansi II, 11.

(73) Sess. XXIV, can. 9-10.

(74) Can. 132, §1.

(75) See St. Pius X, apost. exhortation *Haerent animo*: AAS 41 (1908), 555-57; Benedict XV, letter to Francis Kordac, Archbishop of Prague: AAS 12 (1920), 57-58; consistorial address, Dec. 16, 1920: AAS 12 (1920), 585-88; Pius XI, encyc.letter *Ad catholici sacerdotii*: AAS 28 (1936), 24-30; Pius XII, apost. exhortation *Menti Nostrae*: AAS 42

(1950), 657-702; encyc.letter *Sacra virginitas*: AAS 46 (1954), 161-91 [TPS 1, 101-23]; John XXIII, encyc. letter *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*: AAS 51 (1959), 54-56 [TPS VI, 14-16].

(76) Second address, Jan. 26, 1960: AAS 52 (1960), 226.

(77) Can. 6, 12, 13, 48: Mansi XI, 944-48, 965.

(78) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-16 [TPS XI, 461-62].

(79) *De Virginitate*, 13: PG 381-82.

(80) *De Sacerdotio*, 1, 111: PG 48. 642.

22. 81 *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, nos. 21, 28, 64: AAS 57 (1965), 24-25; 33-36; 64 [TPS X, 372-73, 378-79, 398].

23. (82) See above, no. 15.

(83) See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 29: AAS 57 (1965), 36 [TPS X, 380].

(84) *Ibid.*, 47-49 [TPS X, 387-88]

(85) *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 16: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-16 [TPS XI, 462].

(86) See *Decree on Training for the Priesthood*, no. 2: AAS 58 (1966), 714-15 [TPS XI, 17-19]; *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 11: AAS 58 (1966), 1008-09 [TPS XI, 455-56].

(87) See *Rom* 3. 23.

(88) See *2 Cor* 8. 23.

(89) See *Eph* 1. 6.

(90) *Phil* 1. 8.

(91) See *Lk* 12. 32.

(92) See *Mt* 28. 20.

(93) See *Jn* 16. 33.

(94) See *Mk* 4. 26-29.

(95) *Mt* 9. 37-38.

Why has the practise of Clerical celibacy remained mandatory within the Catholic Church?

- (96) See 1 *Cor* 1. 20-31.
- (97) See *Phil* 4. 13.
- (98) See 1 *Cor* 3. 67.
- (99) See above, no. 10.
- (100) *Conf. X*, 29, 40: PL 32. 796.
- (101) See above, no. 10.
- (102) *Gn* 1. 26-27.
- (103) See 1 *Jn* 4. 8-16.
- (104) *Ibid.*, 3. 16-18.
- (105) See 1 *Thes* 2.11 1*Cor*.4.15; 1 *Cor* 6.13; *Gal* 4.19; 1 *Tm* 5.1-2.
- (106) See 1 *Cor* 2. 15.
- (107) *Heb* 5. 1.
- (108) See 1 *Cor* 14. 4 ff.
- (109) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 3: AAS 58 (1966), 993-95 [TPS XI, 444-45].
- (110) *Jn* 13. 1.
- (111) *Ibid.*, 16. 32.
- (112) See *ibid.*, 13. 16; 15. 18.
- (113) See *ibid.*, 15 15-16, 20.
- (114) See 1 *Tm* 6. 11.
- (115) See *Decree on Training for the Priesthood*, nos. 3-11: AAS 58 (1966), 715-21 [TPS XI, 19-24]; *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of the Religious Life*, no. 12: AAS 58 (1966), 721 [TPS XI, 147].
- (116) See above, no. 15.
- (117) See *Mt* 5. 37.
- (118) See *ibid.*, 16. 24; *Jn* 12. 25.
- (119) St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 184, a. 8 c.
- (120) See *Decree on Training for the Priesthood*, no. 12: AAS 58 (1966), 721 [TPS XI, 24-25].
- (121) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, nos. 16, 18: AAS 58 (1966), 1015-16, 1019 [TPS XI, 461-62, 463-64].
- (122) *Ibid.*, no. 18.
- (123) See 2 *Cor* 5. 14.
- (124) See *Heb* 4. 15.
- (125) See 1 *Cor* 9. 22; 2 *Cor* 11. 29.
- (126) See *Acts* 20. 24.
- (127) See *Gal* 5. 25.
- (128) *Ibid.*, 5. 24.
- (129) See 1 *Cor* 9. 26-27.

- (130) *Gal* 5. 22-23.
- (131) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 8: AAS 58 (1966), 1003 [TPS XI, 452].
- (132) See *Jn* 13. 15 and 34-35.
- (133) *Ibid.*, 17. 26.
- (134) See *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 8: AAS 58 (1966), 1003-05 [TPS XI, 452-53].
- (135) See *Rom* 12. 1.
- (136) See Code of Canon Law, can. 214.
- (137) See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 28: AAS 57 (1965), 34-35 [TPS X, 378-79].
- (138) See *Jn* chaps. 13-17.
- (139) *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, no. 21: AAS 57 (1965), 24 [TPS X, 372-73].
- (140) *Decree on the Priestly Ministry and Life*, no. 7: AAS 58 (1966), 1001-03 [TPS XI, 450-52].
- (141) See *ibid.*
- (142) 1 *Pt* 2. 25.
- (143) See *Mt* 12. 20.
- (144) See *Lk* 9. 11.
- (145) See *Mt* 18. 11.
- (146) See *Lk* 15.4 ff.
- (147) *Ibid.*, 22. 48.
- (148) *Mt* 10. 40.
- (149) See *ibid.*, 10. 42.
- (150) *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, nos. 63.64: AAS 57 (1965), 64 [TPS X, 398].
- (151) *Ap* 14. 4.
- (152) *Mk* 10, 27; see *Lk* 1. 37.