

Son of Man is seated on his throne of glory, will yourselves sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life." (Mt. 19:27-29)

"Jesus said, 'Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands...and eternal life in the age to come.'" (Mk. 10:29-30)

"[Jesus] said to them, 'Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive (back) an overabundant return in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.'" (Lk. 18:29-30)

Furthermore, it should be noted that the abolition of priestly celibacy may be detrimental to souls and to the Church at large. Even on a "practical level", it would potentially cause much harm. For example:

- ✦ Should a priest marry, the faithful may find that his family would distract him from his religious obligations and prayer.
- ✦ Should a priest marry, the faithful may find that they would now come second - since his wife and children would come first. Rare would be the priest that would focus on his flock rather than his family. In fact, should he do so, he would probably be a neglectful husband and father.
- ✦ Should priests marry, they would have less time for good works, visiting the sick, dispensing Sacraments, providing spiritual advice, etc.
- ✦ Celibate priests should consider us - the faithful - their children and treat us accordingly. If priests marry, they will probably have their own children and there will be a distinction between us and their natural children.
- ✦ If priests were married, the faithful may find it difficult to receive critical, life-giving Sacraments if the hour was late, if it was the wife's or child's birthday, if the children or his wife had a special event or were sick, etc. *This alone could cause the eternal loss of souls!* [Note that even if a priest indicated that he didn't mind interruptions, many persons would still feel uncomfortable bothering him if they knew he was with his family.]
- ✦ It would be impossible for a married priest to be wholly dedicated to his flock and to God.
- ✦ A married priest may discuss difficulties concerning his parishioners or bishop with his wife. She (or his children) may also talk to him regarding difficulties concerning parishioners. In any case, the parishioners may be likely to suffer a loss of privacy.
- ✦ If priests were married, they would require a larger salary to support their wives and children. If the couple was fertile, he, being a good Catholic, would be likely to have numerous children. Not only would this require more financial support, his growing family would require much of his time and dedication.
- ✦ Priests marrying unworthy women might find that they attempt to violate the seal of the confessional, access personal information, gossip about parishioners, etc.
- ✦ Married priests may tend to view the priesthood more as a job than a vocation.
- ✦ If priests were married, numerous "political" or otherwise bothersome matters may arise (e.g. if the priest's wife didn't like someone, if the priest's wife tried to control access to him, if his wife became jealous of his talking with other women, if his in-laws weren't friendly towards parishioners, if his wife was gossipy, if his children caused trouble, if priests' wives talked to each other about parishioners, their husbands, etc.).

✦ **If priests married, they might involve the Church in numerous scandals.** For example: Adultery (him or her); Abuse (him or her); Problems with children or spouse; Issues regarding 'divorce' / annulment; His family's rejection of or change of faith; His family's setting a bad example; His wife's rejection of her primary role as mother in favor of her desire to be a 'career woman', leaving his children to be raised by paid caregivers; His wife's use of contraception or her seeking of an abortion; Etc. In fact, if you think there's scandal now - just wait! A married priesthood - especially in our wayward age - would likely bring a torrent of scandals to the Church. And, in any event, the loss of celibate priesthood would lead to the loss of grace to the Church, the loss of souls, the weakening of chastity, and it would likely mean that many priests would place "profane" hands on the Holy Eucharist.

It is clear that all good Catholics should do precisely what the Second Vatican Council calls for: *"This holy synod asks not only priests but all the faithful that they might receive this precious gift of priestly celibacy in their hearts and ask of God that He will always bestow this gift upon His Church."* Surely, the loss of this precious gift would be nothing short of dreadful.

Note: Although the Church has made some provision for married priests (e.g. in Eastern Rites), virginity is always esteemed. The above does not intend to disparage married clerics who worthily exercise their ministry with the Church's full approval. As Pope Paul VI stated: "[I]t 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."

Refuting Objections

Although Catholics may see the benefit to celibacy, they often have many legitimate concerns regarding celibate priests or (wrongly) think that relaxing the law of celibacy would bring more vocations or reduce priestly sandals. Such concerns may be easily answered when one examines the facts. One must remember that much misinformation is put out there and promoted by those with an agenda to change the Church to suit their fancy. Unfortunately, such persons may have little concern for the good of souls, for the good of the Church, or for the pleasing of God - in fact, they might seek the very opposite. Those promoting this agenda bring may bring forth various arguments such as those below. Knowledgeable Catholics should be able to easily refute such arguments.

✦ **Relaxing of celibacy would bring in more vocations.** Unfortunately, this argument is often used by this misinformed. What such people do not know is that there has not been a "vocations crisis". It is well known that many good, orthodox men have answered their calling to the priesthood only to be rejected due to their orthodoxy. If the good men were not rejected, there would be enough priests, and there would be no "vocations crisis". God has not left His Church without laborers - instead, those with an agenda to refashion the Church have simply rejected (and even abused) the ones they don't like - the most orthodox of all candidates. Thus, the "vocations crisis" is really a "manufactured crisis". This sad state of affairs has been well-documented. Also, as Pope Paul VI has said, the decrease in vocations may be attributed to a loss of the sense of God. This loss of the sense of God may be especially pronounced since the Second Vatican Council.

"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 [others who 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, and their esteem for the Church as the institution of salvation through faith and the sacraments. The problem must be examined at its real source." (Pope Paul VI, 1967 A.D.)

Continued On Next Page...

"Our Lord and Master has said that 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.' In the world of man, so deeply involved in earthly concerns and too often enslaved by the desires of the flesh, 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'; it proclaims the presence on earth of the final stages of salvation 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." (Pope Paul VI, 1967 A.D.)

✦ **Virginity is Christ-like. Christ gave an example of celibacy, recommended celibacy, and was born of a Virgin into a chaste home.**

"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." (Pope Paul VI, 1967 A.D.)

"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." (Pope Paul VI, 1967 A.D.)

"And so priestly celibacy should not be considered just as a legal norm or as a totally external condition for admission to ordination, but rather as a value that is profoundly connected with ordination, whereby a man takes on the likeness of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd and spouse of the Church, and therefore as a choice of a greater and undivided love for Christ and his Church, as a full and joyful availability in his heart for the pastoral ministry. Celibacy is to be considered as a special grace, as a gift, for 'not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given' (Mt. 19:11)." (Pope John Paul II)

"It is especially important that the priest understand the theological motivation of the Church's law on celibacy. Inasmuch as it is a law, it expresses the Church's will, even before the will of the subject expressed by his readiness. But the will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the link between celibacy and sacred ordination, which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the head and spouse of the Church. The Church, as the spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her head and spouse loved her. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the priest's service to the Church in and with the Lord." (Pope John Paul II)

"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'. 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. 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. Like Christ Himself, His minister is wholly and solely intent on the things of God and the Church, and he imitates the great High priest who lives ever in the presence of God in order to intercede in our favor." (Pope Paul VI, 1967 A.D.)

"As for those men 'who were not defiled with women, being virgins', the Apostle John asserts that, 'they follow the Lamb wherever he goes.' Let us meditate, then, on the exhortation Augustine gives to all men of this class: 'You follow the Lamb because the body of the Lamb is indeed virginal... Rightly do you follow Him in virginity of heart and body wherever He goes. For what does following mean but imitation? Christ has suffered for us, leaving us an example, as the Apostle Peter says 'that we should follow in his footsteps.' Hence all these disciples and spouses of Christ embraced the state of virginity, as St. Bonaventure says, 'in order to become like unto Christ the spouse, for that state makes virgins like unto Him.' It would hardly satisfy their burning love for Christ to be united with Him by the bonds of affection, but this love had perforce to express itself by the imitation of His virtues, and especially by conformity to His way of life, which was lived completely for the benefit and salvation of the human race. If priests, religious men and women, and others who in any way have vowed themselves to the divine service, cultivate perfect chastity, it is certainly for the reason that their Divine Master remained all His life a virgin. St. Fulgentius exclaims: 'This is the only-begotten

Son of God, the only-begotten Son of a virgin also, the only spouse of all holy virgins, the fruit, the glory, the gift of holy virginity, whom holy virginity brought forth physically, to whom holy virginity is wedded spiritually, by whom holy virginity is made fruitful and kept inviolate, by whom she is adorned, to remain ever beautiful, by whom she is crowned, to reign forever glorious." (Pope Pius XII, "Sacra Virginitas", 1954 A.D.)

✦ **Priestly celibacy allows the priest to focus on God and service to the Church.**

✦ **Priestly celibacy helps keep a priest's thoughts chaste.**

✦ **Virginity brings a priest nearer to God and pleases Him.**

"If our Redeemer so loved the flower of unimpaired modesty that not only was He born from a virginal womb, but was also cared for by a virgin nurse even when He was still an infant crying in the cradle, by whom, I ask, does He wish his Body to be handled now that He reigns immense, in heaven?" (St. Peter Damian, Doctor of the Church)

"Virginity brings us nearer to God. It seeks for a model in God Himself, says St. Ambrose, for the eternal Father is virgin and Father. God, also wishing to become Incarnate, willed that He should be born of a virgin. God has also an extraordinary love and tenderness for pure souls; it is to these, in particular, that He confers or reveals His secrets, or on whom He deigns to bestow His favors. Jesus Christ bestowed many graces on Peter on account of his zeal; but it was the virgin St. John who was permitted to lean on the breast and heart of Jesus; it was he who had the privilege of entering His divine sanctuary, and it was he from whom He hid none of His most important secrets. Confessors, martyrs, and apostles have great privileges; but it appears that to virgins only He has entrusted the privilege of following the Lamb (Rv. 14:4)... Virginity is that precious treasure to guard which so many generous souls have sacrificed their lives. The preservation of this treasure is difficult, but the loss of it is irreparable; one may recover grace when lost by sin, but virginity once lost can never be restored. Nevertheless, nothing is more easy to lose, and we so readily expose ourselves to lose this treasure, nay, it seems to me that we seek to lose it, and we even make a merit of losing that which ought to be a subject of the most poignant grief." (St. Astore)

✦ **Consecrated virginity is a sacrifice of love for God and for our neighbor.**

"Are not consecrated virgins, who dedicate their lives to the service of the poor and the sick, without making any distinction as to race, social rank, or religion, are not these virgins united intimately with their miseries and sorrows, and affectionately drawn to them, as though they were their mothers? And does not the priest likewise, moved by the example of his Divine Master, perform the function of a good shepherd, who knows his flock and calls them by name? Indeed it is from that perfect chastity which they cultivate that priests and religious men and women find the motive for giving themselves to all, and love all men with the love of Christ." (Pope Pius XII, "Sacra Virginitas", 1954 A.D.)

✦ **Priestly celibacy frees priests from many temporal cares.**

"It is that they may acquire this spiritual liberty of body and soul, and that they may be freed from temporal cares, that the Latin Church demands of her sacred ministers that they voluntarily oblige themselves to observe perfect chastity." (Pope Pius XII, "Sacra Virginitas", 1954 A.D.)

"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." (Pope Paul VI, 1967 A.D.)

"Thus the Catholic priest is freed from the bonds of a family and of self-interest - the chief bonds which could bind him too closely to earth. Thus freed, his heart will more readily take flame from that heavenly fire that burns in the Heart of Jesus; that fire that seeks only to inflame apostolic hearts and through them 'cast fire on all the earth.' This is the fire of zeal. Like the zeal of Jesus described in Holy Scripture, the zeal of the priest for the glory of God and the salvation of souls ought to consume him. It should make him forget himself and all earthly things. It should powerfully urge him to dedicate himself utterly to his sublime work, and to search out means ever more effective for an apostolate ever wider and ever better." (Pope Pius XI, "Ad Catholici Sacerdotii", 1935 A.D.)

Continued On Next Page...