

# CELIBACY

Issue

COINCIDENTALLY BOTH REGULAR COMMENTARY PAGE COLUMNIST FATHER PAUL J. CUDDY AND GUEST CONTRIBUTOR ROCHESTER BUSINESSMAN, FRED SARKIS, USED PRIESTLY CELIBACY AS THE TOPIC OF THEIR ARTICLES. BECAUSE THEY REPRESENT HONEST AND DIVERGENT VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT, THE COURIER-JOURNAL PRESENTS THEM IN TANDEM FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

The obligation of celibacy comes into the life of a priest-to-be when he is ordained a sub-deacon, usually a year before he becomes a priest. Before he steps forward for the ceremony of subdiaconate (see photo, right) the seminarian hears the Bishop say: "After you have received this Order you will be free no longer to withdraw from the chosen course, but bound for life to the service of God. You will be under obligation, with His help, to observe chastity." In presenting himself freely for ordination, the subdeacon thus binds himself by a tacit vow to practice perfect purity and not to marry.



## A LAYMAN'S VIEW

### Christ Judges With Love

By Fred Sarkis

The Christ I know is the Christ I listen to in the New Testament. He is a Christ of love, mercy and charity. He is uncomplicated. His gospel is simple. He speaks to all men.

The Catholic Church I know was founded by Christ. It has stood the test of time. It has served to keep Christ alive in the minds and hearts of its members. The gospel of Christ is nurtured by His Church. Yet the Church, unlike Christ, is complex.

Can this Church ever fall its members? Can the Church ever fall Christ? Must one be versed in philosophy or theology to find these answers? Or can one find wisdom, love and peace in the simplicity of Christ's teachings?

As a layman, I hesitate to challenge the voices of authority in our Church. Yet, I am moved to speak. My message is simple.

If I were an apostle in the time of Christ, walking in His footsteps, serving His people, overwhelmed by His humility, fired by His love and charity, I would indeed, if I were a young man, be motivated to follow His example till my dying day. I

would make a total commitment.

But if, in time, I found that my work was impaired by my celibacy, if I began to lose my fervor, if I was overwhelmed to the point of mental anguish, I would ask Christ if I could be free to continue to serve His people as a married apostle.

The Christ I know experienced an agony in the garden which made the physical pain of crucifixion insignificant by comparison. He would know my emotional suffering, my nature, my intentions, my honesty, my sincerity, my maturity.

He would either refuse me with a new fortitude, wisdom or understanding, or He would say, "Go in peace my son, and together with your future loved ones, continue to serve Me people to the best of your human ability."

He would not file my petition in a cold cubicle in Rome, alongside thousands of other cubicles. He would not take one, two or several years to free me from my commitment.

He would not delegate my petition to an authority who has no time to touch my soul or feel my anguish.

He would not forget my once beautiful and total dedication to His service.

Our Bishops should be our Christs. They should know their sheep. Bishops should be empowered to leave the flock, as Christ did, freeing as love and charity demanded, that most lovable of all sheep, a man-priest, caught in the brush of uncertainty, frustration and unhappiness.

Of all the suffering I have witnessed on this earth, there is nothing more tragic to me than the emotional suffering of a priest who seeks the release of his vow of celibacy. The celibate priest who succeeds in giving all for Christ is a man to be praised.

The priest who can no longer live as a celibate is a man who deserves our love, understanding and charity.

The simplicity of the charity of Christ is magnificent in its humility and forgiveness. The charity of the authority of our Church must be matched by the charity of Christ. Charity must not be reserved for the next generation. Charity and love is forever with Christ, an act of today, not tomorrow.

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### Priesthood: The Most Prized Gift

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Our people are hurt in the heart, and Christ is hurt in His Body every time a priest abandons his priesthood. No wonder. The people regard the priesthood as an apex of holy vocations. They reverence the priesthood as from Christ, and their priests as men set apart for the things of God.

Some time ago I met briefly a thirtyish priest from another diocese. The well advertised fact of priests leaving their priesthood and their people was discussed. With a congenial directness which irritates some people and encourages others, I commented: "It's an interesting fact that the theological difficulties most of our priests have who leave their people, are tied up with a skirt."

The young priest explained: "You haven't any right to say that."

"I think I have," I said, "and I regret that my judgment is an honest conclusion from my own study and observation."

We parted; he with dangerously high blood pressure; I with low blood pressure from a daily sorrow over departed priests, who are my special brothers.

It is treading on delicate ground, but I think that the people — and these include priests as well as parents, relatives and men who have loved their former shepherds — are

entitled to the candor of a priest who loves the Church, reverences the priesthood, and regards the priests who have left our diocese so earnestly that he offers Mass every week for them.

To begin with, the priesthood is to me what Isaac's blessing was to Jacob: the most prized gift. Anything else by comparison is Esau's mess of pottage.

1. What is the priesthood? It is a special sacrament which both separates and joins together a priest and his people. It gives awesome powers, graces — and responsibilities. No man is worthy of the priesthood. But God calls men through the bishops.

The ordaining bishop calls out: "Let those who are to be ordained to order of priesthood come forward." (Ordination Rite.) The bishop continues: "One does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, as Aaron was."

2. What is a priest? "The priest is another Christ" since he enacts His role according to these words: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." (John xx:21).

"Such powers are not fleeting and transitory, but stable and permanent. The priest, if he will faithfully comply with these heavenly gifts by his free and personal cooperation, will

be able worthily and with no dejection of spirit to meet the hard duties of his priesthood." (Pius XI—Encyc: Ad Catholicos, Sacerdotii)

3. What is the function of the priest? He is a mediator between God and man because he takes on Christ. (Heb. V:1) His greatest mediatorship is in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. "Let a man so account us as of the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. IV:1). At Mass Christ speaks to the Church through His Word. He intercedes before the Father for us sinners. During Mass the priest's self, in a manner, dissolves as Christ works within and through him.

Of other functions the priest has, some are uniquely his, as the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick; others he can share with the priesthood of the laity, as baptism, teaching, works of charity, counseling.

4. Why do priests leave? Mostly, I think, through discontent. What are they discontented about? We reply: "What are married people discontented about? What are factory workers, or men in the military, or students in school, or Sisters in religious life, or farmers and sailors discontented about?"

Next week we will consider priestly discontent, where it comes and how some react to it.

## NOW HEAR THIS...

### Another Tragedy of Vietnam War

By Father Richard Torrey

The victims of war who are killed, wounded, burned, orphaned, or made homeless in Vietnam are justifiably the sympathy targets of the American "doctors". If you look exclusively and humanly at that one side of the war issue there is no defense against the charge that U.S. arms have brought bitter personal tragedies to families in Vietnam.

But it often seems to me that peace-urgers and war protesters dramatize the bloodshed of the Vietnamese people suffering under U.S. air attacks and napalm and pacification programs more than they do the war's desolation caused right here in American homes.

The cold telegrams reporting death or wounds for loved ones so far away somehow do not make dramatic news-pictures like a burned-out village or a covey of native children crouching in a ditch under U.S. strafing.

A special pain of war almost unnoticed by all of us is the desolation felt by thousands of members of families of a new kind of unknown soldier that the Vietnam War has produced—the 1,332 men listed as missing in Southeast Asia.

In only 346 cases are there any real clues that these men have sur-

vived, are prisoners in Vietcong compounds or are still hiding in the jungles. The other 1,000 "exist" only in the aching souls of their families.

In heartless contradiction of the Geneva conventions covering the treatment of military personnel who are found by the enemy, the North Vietnamese refuse to publish a complete list of living or dead prisoners.

Fewer than 100 of the 1,332 listed in the U.S. records as "missing" have ever been permitted to write home—although the Geneva rules order this right for all prisoners. And over the last six months the normally thin flow of mail from behind the enemy lines has virtually ceased.

The pain and terror of not knowing, in some cases for several years, whether a "missing" husband or son is dead or alive, is compounded by the frustration of not being able to do anything about it. Departments of State and Defense in Washington hear the pleas of the worried families respectfully but in the cold language of officialese they reply: "American negotiators have been unable to get a list of living captives. Our hands are tied either to repatriate our men or contact them for you."

Recently the wife of a Navy flier

shot down over North Vietnam in 1965 organized 61 other wives whose husbands are similarly listed as missing. They have begun a letter-writing campaign to rouse concern for the release of prisoner information. They have bombarded congressmen with pleading mail, have cabled the Vietnamese negotiators in Paris, distributed bumper stickers and poured letters upon editors begging for public recognition of their pitiful ignorance about their lost husbands.

What they hope to achieve is a wave of public sentiment in support of the prisoners and those missing in action. They believe that rising public opinion about this inhumanity by the military of North Vietnam will speak more forcibly to that government than do U.S. negotiators.

Administration officials distressed by the Communist intransigence on prisoners have not abandoned the families whose men are missing. In the past three months aides from the Defense and State Departments have visited 15 sections of the nation to confer with families of missing men in unpublicized group meetings.

They claim they met personally with 800 different families to reassure them that "the question of prisoners and missing men has priority consideration" in Washington.



## COMMENTARY

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## ALL IN THE FAMILY

### The Genteel Art of Housekeeping

By Sarah Child

There are women who are excellent housekeepers. I am not one of them.

Besides being generally disorganized, I have an overt tendency toward untidiness. I procrastinate with gleeful abandon. And my lack of aptitude for some of the simplest of homemaking skills is profound.

For example I cannot wax a kitchen floor properly. No matter how carefully I watch those super homemakers in the floor commercials on television, I end up with linoleum that is either streaked, blobbed or spotty.

I did not come by my inadequacy honestly. I mean I did not inherit it.

My mother, something of a demon when it comes to energy, has been known to vacuum her rugs twice a day, start making a cake at midnight and exhaust herself so totally during spring housecleaning as to require a doctor's care.

Once when she complained about the ironing amount of ironing she did weekly, I asked her why she did not save herself a little.

She pulled herself up mightily to denounce the idea: "I'm running a house my dear, not camping out."

After visiting her I frequently resolve to become a better housewife.

(Once I overheard her telling my father that if I didn't wash my windows more often my husband might be driven to other pursuits. Men had been known to do so.)

Thus, I will leave no ironing in the basket to be added to next week's batch.

I will not forget the cobwebs in the dining room until just before our dinner guests sit down.

I will throw leftovers away promptly and stop growing penicillin in the refrigerator.

I will stop relying on summer breezes to blow dust balls from under the bed into one corner for easy disposal.

Most important I will ask all my friends who are superior housekeepers for tips. Some have already professed hints.

Jeannie, for example, never leaves the kitchen in the morning until it is shipshape. Then she heads immediately for the bedrooms to straighten them. By 10:30 a.m. she can sit and have the milk-moments milk break the doctor recommended for her and survey a spotless house.

Marta says a precise schedule is the key. It is a comfort to know that at exactly 8:45 a.m. every Monday she will be rearranging the medicine cabinet in the downstairs powder room. And that at 1:30 p.m. Saturdays she will be polishing the chil-

dren's shoes for 9 o'clock Mass the following day.

Marta, incidentally, cries in place as some people jog in place. She says she does not like to interrupt her schedule for a good cry and besides she would mess up the bedspread if she flung herself across it.

Ruth never allows newspapers in her living room. She has a white sofa and you know what newspaper can-do-to light fabrics. Now that plastic garbage bags are so cheap she has been thinking of cancelling their subscription.

Peggy had her husband fix up their garage and they entertain there. The sign she has at the front door asking guests to use the back entrance is small and not at all offensive.

Anne Mary sends a bar of soap with her kids to the swimming pool. They can use the showers there and the tile in her bathroom is as sparkling as when it was installed.

Mitzi may be the smartest of all. When they bought a new stove and refrigerator she had her husband look up the old one in the cellar. At first she only cooked there in the heat of the summer and brought the food upstairs. Last winter they added table and chairs, and just the other day she told me her husband has been looking for Army surplus cots. Her kitchen upstairs is a picture. She changes the bowl of fruit on the table a couple of times a week.



## SMART MONEY

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