

Bishops on Celibacy Worth Studying

No subject but The Pill has come up so frequently in press articles and group conversations over the past year as priestly celibacy. The discussions have centered on the value of changing the long-standing discipline that priests may not be married.

The physical and psychological practicality of offering priests the option of marriage or bachelorhood has been emotionally pronounced as the only answer to the personal problems of many valuable men in the Church. The blessing of loving a woman and being loved so that the cleric may feel himself fully a man has been seriously glorified as necessary for a joyful and fruitful style of life.

The Vatican Council in 1965, Pope Paul VI in 1967 and the U.S. Bishops also in 1967 offered the Church very clear and firm statements that celibacy, although not of divine or Scriptural origin for the clergy, was a "revered tradition" to be accepted by all not only as "a requisite of Church law but as a precious gift which should be humbly sought of God."

But the clamor for change, chiefly in support of those priests who felt compelled to leave their vocation because they could not live happily any longer as celibates, has grown almost to a roar. Opinion polls have indicated that large numbers of clergy and laity are not convinced of the value of the prohibition of marriage.

Last week the U.S. Bishops gathered in their solemn semi-annual meeting produced a new document again defending celibacy and by a two-thirds majority vote issued it as binding on all dioceses. (Sections of the Bishops' statement are printed on this page.)

Bishops who leaked information about the discussion which preceded the voting revealed that there was a greater variety of opinion from the prelates than there had been during the celibacy debate in their assembly two years ago. A reading of the statement shows an awareness that national clerical uneasiness and the extra-church marriages of a steadily growing number of priests have produced a more vexing worry than the Bishops faced before.

But in the statement the hierarchy offers no hope that they will plead with the Holy Father or their brother bishops in the world for a change in the current discipline. ("The needs of the Church and the world today, far from persuading us to relinquish this tradition speak to us rather of the urgent need for the charismatic witness of priestly celibacy.") The statement insists, though, that they have no intention "to foreclose free and responsible discussion of these issues."

The Bishops firmly put their conviction on celibacy in terms that the general good of the Christian community must be served even at the sacrifice of some good men. They speak understandingly of the personal problems besetting the troubled priests but clearly believe that a man cannot give God "total availability" for the work of His kingdom without celibate unselfishness.

The Bishops say: "In the Western Church the link between priesthood and celibacy is not the result merely of theological reasoning, nor of law, but of the life experience of the Church. . . . The decision has survived several severe crises and has been reaffirmed with the general support of the faithful."

To be able to discuss this issue so vital for the happiness of many priests who may be wavering or have already gone, everyone should study the reasons the Bishops have presented reaffirming their commitment to this discipline. Their reasons, opposed to the much publicized actions of the priests who have chosen marriage invalidly, may clarify the bewildering confusion in the American public.

Stand Unchanged

Another much-asked question these days is: "Where does the Church stand on the Moratorium? Why didn't the Bishops' meeting produce a leadership statement on Vietnam?"

Cardinal Dearden of Detroit, speaking as president of the hierarchy, just as thousands of people were converging on Washington for the anti-Vietnam-war rally, declared last week that the U.S. Bishops had spoken twice on the subject of Vietnam and did not believe there were "any new elements to add to what we have already said." He added: "We don't feel that we need to pass a moral judgment on a matter that is in great part political policy."

Let the Cardinal be assailed too roughly for distinguishing between moral and political issues, let's reprint what the Bishops put in their collective pastoral, *Human Life in Our Day*, in November, 1968. They suggested that there are "moral lessons to be learned from our involvement in Vietnam that will apply to future cases". Included among these in their document were:

"Military power and technology do not suffice, even with the strongest resolve to restore order or accomplish peace. As a rule, internal political conflicts are too complicated to be solved by the external application of force and technology."

"The realization that some evils existing in the world, evils such as undernutrition, economic frustration, social stagnation and political injustices may be more readily attacked and corrected through non-military means, than by military efforts."

The bishops also asked poignantly in that same pronouncement: "May we not hope that violence will be universally discredited as a means of remedying human ills?"

Thanksgiving Idea

Next Thursday many parishes will hold special Thanksgiving Day Masses, encouraging parishioners to sanctify this holiday of our awareness of God's blessings by beginning the day with the Eucharist. A new set of prayers and readings never before offered for worship on this annual feast will do much to lift participants' minds to the meaning of their grateful relationship with God.

Instead of having only the chalice and hosts and wine and water cruets brought to the sanctuary at the Offertory in the Thanksgiving Day Masses, wouldn't it be better to have material presents representing our fortunate affluence presented to the Church for the poor of the community?

Between now and Christmas there will be laudable concern about bringing some Christmas joy to the underprivileged and lonely and unfortunate. Thanksgiving time, when we traditionally count our blessings and revel in God's largesse through nature, would be an appropriate occasion for beginning to pile up for later giving away not simply the extras but even what we might sacrifice from our homes.

The Thanksgiving Day Mass could be the opportunity for bringing to church canned goods, staples in cartons, used clothing, athletic equipment, toys for children: anything and everything that next month would help the poor of our respective communities. Distribution of this "offertory" could be done by the high school students of the parish giving them an opportunity to see the homes and the living conditions of the families they visit with the parish gifts.

There would be no last minute concern to remember the poor if parishes began this early to stockpile their gifts, preparing them from Thanksgiving time in the consciousness of how good God has been to so many of us.

U.S. Bishops' Statement on Celibacy

(Part 1 of 2 part series)

Following are major excerpts from the text of the Statement on Celibacy adopted (Nov. 13) by the bishops of the United States at their semi-annual meeting in Washington, D. C.

We are well aware of the developments of recent years and months which have led to confusion regarding celibacy in the Church of today. More and more priests have been withdrawing from the ministry and marrying, some without dispensation from their lawful obligations.

Small groups have affirmed that they consider themselves free to exercise their priestly ministry even after marriage. Opinion polls are publicized to indicate that significant numbers of American priests and lay people favor "optional celibacy."

All these developments receive such sensational coverage in the news media that a calm and objective handling of these problems has become difficult.

In our dedication to the common good of the Church, we see two problems of especially grave pastoral concern:

The first is the deep anguish of those priests who — in varying circumstances — find themselves in a personal crisis over their commitment to celibacy and continuation of their ministry in the Church.

The second is the bewilderment of large numbers of the Catholic clergy and laity, who are saddened and confused when they hear that priests, some of them personal acquaintances, have left the ministry and married.

At the same time it appears that a growing number of both clergy and laity, especially among the young, are not convinced of the value of the present discipline.

These troubling developments require of us both pastoral teaching and action.

In the present statement it is not our intention to foreclose free and responsible discussion of issues which seriously concern all Catholics. We believe, however, that much of the current discussion is not sufficiently illumined by the Christian faith seen in its historical development in the Church.

And too often discussion centers on the personal problems of the clergy, rather than on the general good of the Christian community in its mission to the world.

An example of the oversimplification of the question in recent discussions is the slogan, "optional celibacy." The issues as to whether the Church should require commitment to celibacy as a condition of priestly ordination, whether she should in some cases permit the ordination of men already married, and whether she should permit a celibate priest to marry and yet continue to exercise his ministry — these are distinct issues.

In the Western Church the link between the priesthood and celibacy is not the result merely of theological reasoning, nor of law, but of the life experience of the Church.

The decision to require unmarried candidates for the priesthood to commit themselves to celibacy as a condition of ordination emerged only after a long struggle, and only as the Christian consciousness discerned between priesthood and celibacy a certain affinity of major import for the life of the Church. This decision has survived several severe crises and has been reaffirmed with the general support of the faithful.

Our own intention in the present statement is to reaffirm our commitment to this discipline.

POSITIVE VALUES OF CELIBACY
As bishops, our function is to bear witness to the Christian tradition of celibacy rather than to construct a theological defense of it. We must nevertheless, as part of this witness, call attention to several theological principles.

In this exposition we presuppose and reaffirm the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, of Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *On Priestly Celibacy*, and our own earlier statement of November, 1967.

It is essential that our reflection on priestly celibacy not be isolated from the mystery of Christ and the Church and the needs of mankind. The theological and pastoral principle which should guide this reflection is the truth that the priest exists for the Church, and the Church exists for the world.

The mission of the Church, like the mission of Christ himself, is a mission on behalf of man. It aims to serve the human person, his dignity, his freedom, his fulfillment. And it is a mission on behalf of the community of mankind.

The work of building that Church as the community of persons united in Christ is the task of all her members. Still, Christ has provided his Church with the special ministry of leadership; to be exercised in preaching the word, celebrating the mysteries, and forming the Christian community.

Priests are called as brothers and helpers of the bishops to share in this role of leadership. This is their ministry, their service, their witness; and it is always with reference to this distinctive service of priests to the Church and to mankind that the question of celibacy must be considered.

The revolutionary character of our times is placing grave strain on traditional values and institutions and bringing anguish to those charged with responsibility for them. The crisis of self-identity afflicts others besides priests. Educators, scientists, civil leaders, are increasingly confronted with the same kind of searching questions as to how they are to conceive and fulfill their role in a constantly changing world.

Nor is it only the celibate vocation which is under grave pressure today. The vocation to marriage is, in at least as serious a crisis. The percentage of marriages which end up in separation or divorce is far higher



Priests lie prostrate during ordination rites symbolizing their renunciation of worldly pursuits, including marriage.

than the percentage of priests or religious who do not persevere in their celibate call.

Celibacy is ordinarily viewed in relation to marriage, and there is a striking parallelism in the changes affecting both forms of life today. In both, there is a shifting from an institutional emphasis towards a personal one. While marriage is still esteemed for its role of continuing the race of man and his traditions, the partners in marriage are more and more regarded from the viewpoint of personal dignity and fulfillment.

The celibate vocation likewise is passing from a largely institutional to a more personal emphasis. Its validity for the priest is increasingly seen in the degree to which it enables him to realize himself as a man.

In a special way the priest is the man fully and sacrificially identified with the kingdom of God. He has accepted priestly ordination in order to proclaim that kingdom, to celebrate it in the midst of the People of God, and to guide his fellow Christians in their individual and corporate pilgrimage toward its consummation.

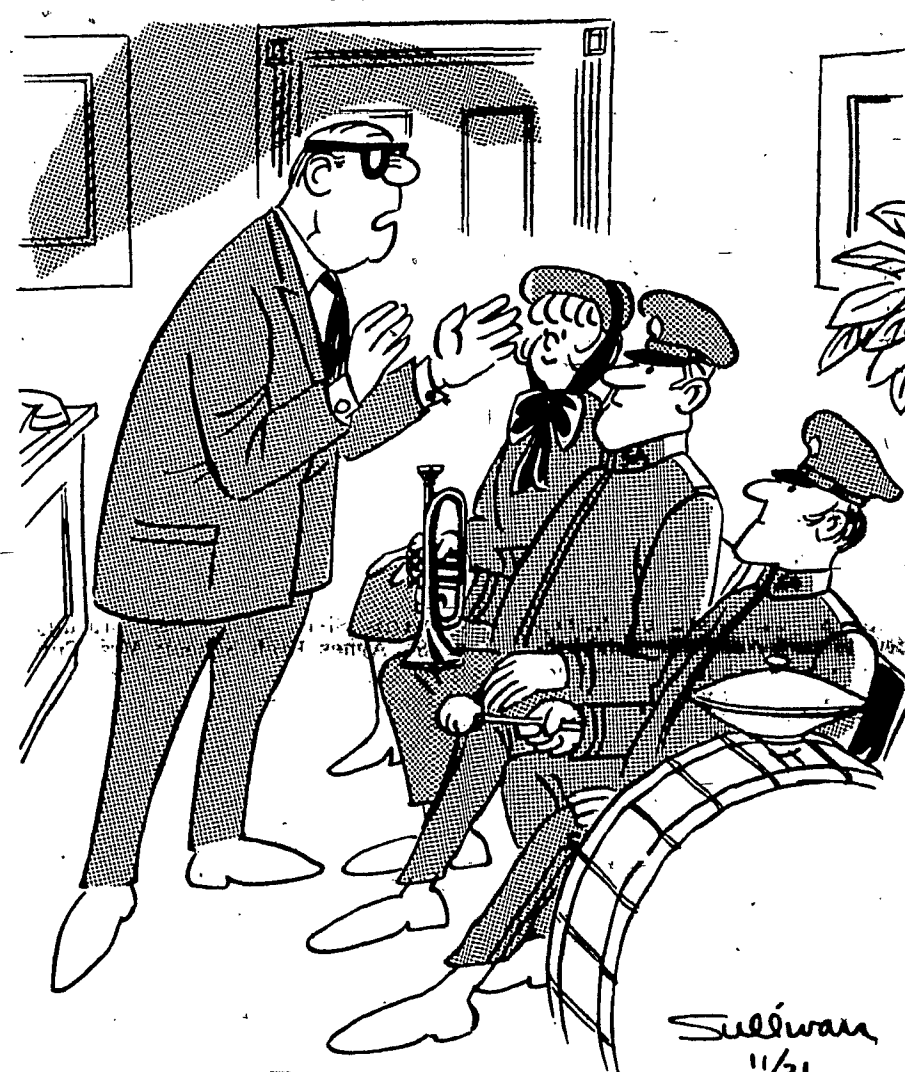
This role of furthering the kingdom, however, does not remove the priest from the secular concerns of his fellow men. On the contrary, it is precisely in the name of the kingdom that he is called to be totally available for the work of building the community of mankind on earth today.

In the light of this description of the priest as a man totally available for the kingdom of God already at work in all human community, priestly celibacy is revealed as profoundly "appropriate." For the celibate priest the call of the kingdom, the vocation to discipleship, the summons to vigilance and to eager expectation of the coming of the Master, have taken on the character of an imperative.

What then is the invitation being addressed to the Christian man to whom God offers the gift of the celibate priesthood? He is being asked if he is willing to identify himself in a special way with Christ's kingdom on earth, that is, with the service of God, mankind and the Church, through a dedication of himself to the deepest concerns of the human family.

His fellow Christians, through their bishop, are asking him if he is ready to carry his identification with the entire family of God to the point of renouncing a particular family of his own.

Celibacy does have both a symbolic



"GET THE PICTURE? WHAT THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WANTS IS YOUR CANDID VIEWS ABOUT LIFE IN A VOLUNTEER ARMY."

Word for Sunday

The World, a Bridge; Death, a Door

By Father Albert Shimon

The Gospel for the last Sunday of the Church year tells of the end of Jerusalem (Matt. 24:15-35). The pride of every Jew was the mountain-top city of Jerusalem, crowned with the golden Temple that was the wonder of the world.

One day the apostles boasted to our Lord about the massive strength and thrilling beauty of their Temple. Our Lord shocked them by simply saying, "There will not be left here one stone upon another." For the apostles this was tantamount to predicting the end of the world. Anxious they asked, "When are these things to happen? What will be the sign?"

"Our Lord did not answer their 'when'; yet He hinted at many signs. A last one would be, 'the abomination of desolation.'"

Very likely, this sign was given when the Roman legions invaded Palestine in 68 A.D., desolating it. The legion standards with their graven images were an abomination to the Jews. When this desolation and abomination occurred, the early Christians took the hint and fled for safety to Pella in Transjordan. They heeded not the false prophets who arose, promising all kinds of salvation from the invading Romans.

For none could stop the doom written down in heaven for Jerusalem. It was a carcass ripe for vultures. It would fall as did Nineveh and Babylon. This sun would be darkened, the moon would no more give her light, this star would fall from her heavens.

Such apocalyptic language was used by Matthew because God is the Lord of creation as well as the Lord of history. In consequence, not a few historians have felt that the events of history should find a resonance in nature. The prophets used apocalyptic language to describe the fall of Nineveh and Babylon; Matthew emu-

lated them when describing the fall of Jerusalem.

Shakespeare sensed this harmony between nature and history. On the night before Caesar is slain, Shakespeare pictures all the world as out of joint. "Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight. Most horrid sights were seen: graves yawning, and yielded up their dead, clouds drizzled blood; ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets." Similarly, all nature would lament the fall of Jerusalem.

And yet — death is the door of life, the seed must die to fruitify. The Temple must crash down to liberate Christianity from Judaism. As long as the Temple stood, the visibility of the Church was obscured — Jewish Christians still observed the Mosaic Law (that was why Matthew added that they pray their flight be not on the Sabbath; they would have delayed their flight a day when speed was imperative). Only after the Temple fell

total availability for the task of building human community will really be enhanced by a more domestic kind of existence. "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man has not whereon to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20).

Is it not precisely the pilgrim spirit, the undomestic existence, which is needed, in this age of revolution, in those who identify themselves totally with the radical message of the Gospel? Does not the paradox of life through death in Christ, which is the very core of the word he proclaims and of the mystery he celebrates, find a special embodiment when it is verified in the person — in the very flesh — of the minister himself?

Is not his identification with Christ, high priest and victim, profoundly affected by the fact that his own body, through his consecration to celibacy, has been given over to the begetting of the body of Christ which is the Church? And is not the priest more strikingly identified with the family of God as such, with the community of mankind as such, by his willingness to forego a family of his own?

The needs of the Church and of the world today, far from persuading us to relinquish this tradition, speak to us rather of the urgent need for the charismatic witness of priestly celibacy.

But if this rich potential of celibate existence is to be more fully realized today, the factors which are quite clearly hindering its realization must be honestly faced. We can deal here with only a few of these factors.

If there is a relation, as we believe between celibacy, community, authority and faith itself, then a crisis in one area is bound to affect the others. No one today would doubt the existence of a crisis in each of these areas. Nor would anyone question that the crisis of priestly life in its totality is cultural as well as spiritual.

(Continued Next Week)

N.Y. To M

Father Patrick J. O'Malley, president of the National Council of Priests' Council and speaker at the second convention of Priests' Councils of New York, to be held in Rochester on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 24 and 25.

Father O'Malley, who addressed the semi-annual meeting of the nation's Catholic last week in Washington, speak here on "The Iss American Priests."

Representatives of priest and associations in the city of the New York State P

Father Pastor

Mass for repose of the late Joseph H. Lynch, 58, died Wednesday in St. Joseph's Hospital — the founder in 1905 and of a first pastor.

Father Lynch died in early Sunday morning, Nov. 15, in his rectory at 1262 St. Webster. He was an older brother of Leo E. Lynch, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Seneca Falls. His sisters are Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, principal celebrant of the Mass, and several classmates of Father Lynch.

Laymen of Holy Spirit served as pallbearers. Interment in the Holy Spirit Cemetery.

Father Joseph Lynch, Rochester, attended St. Joseph's School and Aquinas Institute, received a bachelor of science degree from Niagara University. He later received a master's degree from Canisius College.

He attended St. Andrew's Seminary and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop E. Kearney on Dec. 18, 1930. After a year's service as pastor of St. Ambrose Church, Father Lynch was assigned to the faculty of St. Andrew's. He was a professor there for 20 years.

In 1968 he was asked to head a new parish in Seneca Falls. He worked at this assignment.

A Nun

By SISTER KATHLEEN

Cardinal Mooney hits it — "Being at the right moment" is Sister Patricia MacDonal's her life at Cornell Univ.

Formerly a history teacher at activities moderator at Dame High School (1918) principal of Our Lady School in Elmira (1957-1) she was known as Sister Patricia MacDonal has been the Catholic chaplain at a life past 2 1/2 school years.

Students visit Sister her office at Anabel for counseling or just steam. Personal or academic religious or moral difficulties repeated in a variety of fresh poignancy each told for each time the crisis for a different pe other life is touched.

"The variety of our is fascinating," Sister s-

"A freshman girl is by the impersonality of math and science; should her program? A boy I high school cannot cope university milieu and w fer in January; would a letter of recommendation girls with problem preg a woman to relate to; trying to adjust to the need someone, with a ground who has gone same experience."

Sister Patricia serves friend, or just an intel willing to listen.

Sister Pat works actively of some 15 other disters in the Corne Religious Work (CURW) fold program of religious social action.

As a member of this helped to organize projects, e.g. inner city tul and visiting mentally ill was an advisor in the Co project; a student team to organize white people service based in White and in Ithaca in 1969.

Hired to be houseman Kappa Delta house on year, Sister serves as ad sophomore and senior members of the sorority.

"They run their own say, 'I am just available here present living actual joyable than previously; is part of a living unit a house is able to sustain over a period of time, is working with girls in five years."

For the past two y lived at Sage Hall, e

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