

# Excerpts from Pope Paul's Letter on the Celibacy Issue

Following is a translation of the letter of Pope Paul VI to Jean Cardinal Villot, papal secretary of state, on the subject of priestly celibacy.

My Lord Cardinal,

The declarations made public in Holland recently about ecclesiastical celibacy have profoundly affected us and have raised in our mind a number of questions. They regard the reasons for such a grave attitude, contrary to the holy laws in force in our Latin Church, the repercussions it brings about among the people of God as a whole, particularly among the clergy and the young men who are preparing for the priesthood, and the repercussions it provokes among all Christians and even among other members of the human family.

Such declarations create a great deal of trouble and uncertainty. Therefore, it is for us a grave and urgent duty to state precisely and very clearly our attitude, for us on whom a mysterious design of Divine Providence has placed in this difficult hour "the care of all the Church" (2 Corinthians, 11, 28).

The reasons advanced to justify so radical a change of the Latin Church's age-old rule, bearer of so many fruits of grace, sanctity and of missionary apostolate, are well-known. But these reasons, we must state it unequivocally, do not seem to us convincing. In fact, they seem to omit a fundamental and essential consideration which it is of paramount importance not to

forget and which is of a supernatural order: they seem in fact a lowering of the authentic concept of the priesthood.

The only perspective to be considered is, in fact, that of the evangelic mission of which—with faith and in the hope of the kingdom—we are herald and witnesses. The mission of the bishop and of the priest is to announce the Gospel of grace and truth (cf. John, 1, 14), to bring the message of salvation to the world, to make it aware of its sin and at the same time of its redemption, to urge it to hope, to tear it away from ever re-emerging idols and to convert it to Christ the Saviour.

One should therefore repeat tirelessly that evangelical values can be understood and experienced only in faith, prayer, penitence, charity and not without struggles and humiliations, and not without giving rise at times—following in the footsteps of Christ and the Apostles—to the world's mockery and contempt and lack of understanding to the point of persecution.

The total gift to Christ goes as far as the folly of the cross. It is the evermore profound understanding of these considerations—providentially matured in the course of a history which has experienced so many efforts and so many struggles in order to affirm the Christian ideal—that has led the Latin Church to make the renunciation already spontaneously practiced by so many servants of the

Gospel,—the valid condition for the admission of candidates to the priesthood.

The bond, established for centuries by the Latin Church between priesthood and celibacy, constitutes for her an extremely precious and irreplaceable good. It would be gravely foolhardy to underestimate or to let fall into disuse this traditional bond, the incomparable sign of total attachment to the love of Christ (cf. Matthew, 19, 29), which so clearly manifests the essential missionary exigency for any priestly life in the service of the resurrected Christ, ever living, to whom the priest has consecrated himself in a total readiness for the kingdom of God.

Regarding priests who for reasons recognized as valid find themselves unfortunately in the radical impossibility of persevering—it is a matter of a small number, we know, the immense majority wanting to remain faithful, with the aid of grace, to the sacred commitments taken before God and before the Church—it is with much sorrow that we resolve to accept their pressing petition to be set free from their promises and dispensed from their obligations after an attentive examination of their individual cases.

But the profound understanding which we wish to have for their persons, in a spirit of fatherly charity, must not prevent us from deploring an attitude which conforms so little with what the Church must legiti-

mately expect from those who have definitely consecrated themselves to its exclusive service.

That is why, by a decision taken after mature examination, we clearly affirm our duty does not allow that the priestly ministry be exercised by those who, after having put the hand to the plow, looked back (cf. Luke 9, 62).

In view of an extreme insufficiency of priests and solely for the regions concerned, they ask us if the possibility could not be envisaged of ordaining for the holy ministry men of mature age who have spread around them the good testimony of an exemplary family and professional life.

We cannot conceal the fact that such an eventuality raises grave reservations on our part. In fact, would it not be a very dangerous illusion, among other things, to believe that such a change in traditional discipline could be limited in practice to

local cases of real and extreme necessity, would it not be for others a temptation to seek here an apparently easier answer to the present lack of vocations?

In any case, consequences would be so grave and would raise such new questions for the life of the Church that, should the occasion arise, they would have to be attentively examined by our brothers in the episcopate in unity with us and judged before God for the good of the universal Church which cannot be dissociated from the good of the local churches.

These problems confronting our pastoral responsibility are truly grave and we wished, My Lord Cardinal, to confide them to you. With us, you have been witness of the appeals that come to us from all sides. Many of our brothers and of our sons implore us not to make any changes in such a venerable tradition and at the same time they wish that our veneration

able brothers the bishops of Holland would open with the Apostolic See a new reflection, by means of a trusting and brotherly contact, matured in prayer and charity.

For our part, we are more than ever desirous to seek with the shepherds of the dioceses of Holland the means for the fitting solution of their problems in a similar way for the good of the entire Church. Consequently, we wish first of all, My Lord Cardinal, to assure the bishops, the priests and all the members of the Catholic community of Holland of our constant affection but, at the same time, also of our conviction that it is indispensable to reconsider, in the light of the reflections given above and in the spirit of an authentic ecclesial communion, the wishes expressed and the attitude adopted in a matter of such import for the universal Church.

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### Better Days are Coming

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Father Henry Adamski of Bradford-Campbell was my assistant for five years in Clyde-Savannah parishes. From him I learned many good things. One day he remarked, "Most people are materialists. They may be generous and even give large donations to the Church, but they want some material thing in return. It may be only a Sacred Heart Badge or a medal. But somehow it is a tangible token which people need."

I think of this each month when the Sacred Heart Fathers, Hales Corners, Wisconsin, 53103 send to priests a monthly calendar with the directions for the daily recitation of the Breviary—free. Occasionally they send a plastic card with liturgical prayers or changes—free. A month ago, they sent to all their patrons, a book worth one dollar. The title is The General Instructions and the New Order of Mass, effective in the States March 22, 1970—free.

Since I am as materialistic as the rest of men, I was pleased to have the book—free. That's the materialistic quirk in me. After looking through the book I said to myself: "This is ideal not only to help me with the changes, but also for our Sisters. Since we form the daily Mass Community, we should all be on the same liturgical and ritualistic wave length." So I ordered 50 copies, not free; one for each of our 25 Sisters in the hospital; one for the three teaching Sisters at St. Anne's School;

one for each of the 12 members of Our Lady of Mercy Praesidium of the Legion-of-Mary; and the rest for God knows whom! People always turn up who profit by spiritual books—and the Boy Scout slogan, BE PREPARED, is good in the spiritual struggle.

In the few years of experimenting with the "New" Mass, some things have disturbed many people. Among these are: 1) the uncertainty of what to expect in different parishes, which makes many ill at ease; 2) the corny translation of the Scriptures which is offensive to most literate people; 3) the third rate quality of the music, so often foisted by non-musicians who seem to think din and dissonance, newness and commotion a praiseworthy improvement on the musical majesty of the ages; 4) the ceaseless noise and commotion, so alien to communion with the Divine.

However the March 22nd Mass may help settle the nervous system of the disturbed. There will be variety, but more ordered and proper. There will be a wider use of Scripture, and hopefully a better living of the Word. With a settled format, perhaps real musicians will develop contemporary religious music worthy of the Mass. And, happily, provisions are made for some silence. Silence is necessary for God's Spirit to work in our souls.

The Instructions direct: "In planning the celebration, the priest should consider the spiritual good



of the assembly rather than his own desires. The pastoral effectiveness depends in great measure on choosing readings, prayers and songs which correspond to the needs, spiritual preparation, and attitude of the participants." (No. 313)

A good man wrote: "I used to go to Mass and was strengthened by the quiet dignity of the Mass. I knew Christ was offered to the Father, and I tried to be united with Him. The Mass gave me strength to find Christ in my neighbor. Now the cheap dramatics in the sanctuary: scant skirted girls, slovenly teen agers, smirking and creating a gaudy show is revolting both to religion and civility. Shades of Billy Rose! Such cheap stuff doesn't help me find Christ either in the Mass or in my neighbor. And I don't think the teeners are finding Him by this route either. In fact they are bailed by the promise of a teenage pizza party after the celebration."

I replied: "Cheer up, I'm sure your ulcer is acting up again. I'm sending you the final format of the Mass. Find a parish which follows it, and your old devotion and comfort will return. Better still, God will be glorified, and the glory of God is still numero uno in the spiritual life."

If a reader wants the General Instructions, send a dollar to the Sacred Heart Fathers. It's a good investment—even if it isn't free!

## COMMENTARY

Courier-Journal—Friday, February 13, 1970 13

### ALL IN THE FAMILY

#### Hooray for the Saturday Mass

By Sarah Child

The prospect of going to Sunday Mass on Saturday afternoon or night is exciting. Exciting, did I say? It's absolutely breathtaking. But not half as breathtaking as it would have been a few years ago when my husband was still working a newspaper shift of haphazard hours and random days off.

At our house we are inclined to smile indulgently when my seventy-ish grandma sighs plaintively at every new change and asks somewhat petulantly: "What on earth is the church coming to?"

For we, the younger if not the youngest generation, find it difficult to find fault with any innovation that makes it easier for us to fulfill our spiritual obligations.

Celebrating Mass on Saturday night does not mean to us, as some skeptics might claim, that Sunday will become meaningless, but rather that the Sunday starts a little earlier. The added convenience will surely cut down on the excuses for missing Mass.

The Saturday night Mass, insti-

tuted as I understand it to keep pace with the shortage of priests and the ever-increasing population, could bring about a lot of changes in Catholic households that perhaps have not even crossed the mind of the clergy responsible for the move.

If chaos reigns at our house Sunday, mornings with only two preschoolers to feed, dress, get past the cartoons and out the door by a prescribed hour imagine the confusion for families with an assortment of four or more children.

Yet, as convenient as an extra Saturday afternoon or night Mass might be for families such as these, it cannot even come close to the convenience it could mean for shift-workers or those whose schedules do not conform to the conventional world.

I know, for we have been there. Outstanding was the time we were going to my husband's former home to see his mother and a visiting brother whom he had not seen for a couple of years.

Since my husband worked a 5 p.m.

to 1 a.m. shift and began his week-ends on Sunday mornings rather than the usual Friday night, we decided to get a good start on the four-hour trip by attending Mass along the way.

That didn't work either—as a timesaver. By the time we had found a church with Mass being celebrated within an hour of our itinerary, we were into the afternoon and quite late for the family reunion.

Picayune complaining. Possibly. But how wonderful to have a Mass schedule where there is time for other pursuits—particularly in this age where families do not live in the same town or city, much less in the same neighborhood.

As I write this, no word has been heard as to whether our own parish will celebrate a Saturday night Mass but we can hope that all churches where the most popular Masses (10 and 11) have Standing Room Only will see fit to add this new convenient Mass.



## THE ROCKEFELLER REPORT

### A Hotbed of Ambiguity

By Father Patrick McDermott

NC News Service

Washington — The riots and protests that met last summer's presidential mission to Latin America, headed by Gov. Rockefeller of New York, received more public attention among Americans than the vital finding of its report.

This paradox gives support to Marshall McLuhan's extensive writings on the hypothesis that, in this age of instant communication, the means or medium of communicating often supplants the content of the communication itself. The medium becomes, in a real sense, the message.

The Rockefeller Report was meant to be a message delivered to the President of the United States concerning the state of affairs in Latin America as an aid to policy formation in the Western Hemisphere. The fact-finding trips and the publication of the data were the means by which the message was constructed and communicated.

I think it would be interesting, however, to examine the Rockefeller mission, the chaotic events surrounding the four trips to Latin America, the delays and secrecy surrounding the publication of the report as a real message in itself, of equal or even greater importance than the data-gathering, the evaluations or the judgements contained in the 137 pages of the final draft.

The report itself is ambiguous as to its approach, combining an optimistic view of development possibilities in Latin America with a pessimistic view of Latin America as a hotbed for future subversion.

The report will, no doubt, be read by a number of experts and government officials, but that number of readers will be small in comparison to the millions who viewed the riots and disruptions which met the Rockefeller investigators on each leg of the journey. These millions received another message which was just as emphatic or informative as any written report.

The extent and intensity of the violence accompanying the Rockefeller trip should be a sign to North

Americans that Latin Americans were far from unanimity in their estimation and approval of the Rockefeller mission. In fact, the opposition was widespread and highly emotional. Should this surprise us? What would Americans think if the president of Brazil or Chile loaded up several airplanes with experts in the fields of education, government, religion, industry, art and the military, and sent them on a whirlwind tour of the United States to "evaluate" our institutions so that they might provide us with a better understanding of our problems and point out ways of improving these institutions.

I would venture to say that the average American would respond "Those so-and-so's! Who do they think they are?" The Latins reacted in somewhat the same manner.

At best, the Rockefeller mission was a sincere attempt of the President and U.S. policymakers to ascertain the extent of the needs in Latin America so that proper response could be made. At worst, the mission was a probe into investment potentials and marketing possibilities in Latin America with a heavy emphasis on the security aspects of the military establishments in Latin America and an assessment of their potential and their capacity to protect investments.

The final draft of the report was influenced heavily by the representatives of business and the military. What was its message to the Latins, who are particularly sensitive to the possibility of economic exploitation and domination by the United States?

It is precisely this ambiguity in the final report which will detract from the value of this otherwise noteworthy study. The ambiguity concerns two approaches which run side by side in the report, but are in essence contradictory. The final drafter shuffled the two reports together into one deck, or at least tried to.

One approach centered on the economic requirements of the Hemisphere. It sought to define areas of cooperation between the Americas with an emphasis on growth and development stimulated by an intelligent and prudent use of resources. This echoes the style of the "Good Neighbor" policy which the United

States has tried to push forward through various forms of inter-American assistance programs. It looks forward to 1970s with hope for a period of peace and prosperity.

The other approach is the complete antithesis. It looks upon Latin America as ripe for subversion and infiltration by the darkest elements of Castroism and communism. The report states:

"All of the American nations are a tempting target for Communist subversion. In fact, it is plainly evident that such subversion is a reality today with alarming potential. . . governments are forced to use increasingly repressive measures to deal with it."

The report warns: "Clearly, the opinion in the United States that communism is no longer a serious factor in the Western Hemisphere is thoroughly wrong." It is no surprise that the Rockefeller report recommends increased outlays for counter-insurgency training and the beefing up of riot control forces.

This alarmist side of the report reflects some Cold War rhetoric which is becoming less meaningful in Latin America. Actually, Castro-style subversion has been on the decrease in recent years, especially with the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia. The cause of Castro's relative decline in Latin America is Moscow itself, as the Kremlin's thawing tactics now call for improved relations with the West. Why, then, crank up old fears when the present realities may call for a different response?

Returning to our original theme, if the medium is the message, then the presence or coexistence of these diverging views in one report is a message in itself. There must have been a good deal of dissent and divergent opinion within the Rockefeller team. It would probably have been more informative, and possibly more credible, if the various opinions had shown up in separate reports; for example, a military or security report separate from a report on economic development.

In this way, the real complexities and diversities of the southern half of the hemisphere could have been spelled out in greater detail to the President and to the nation.

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