

COLUMNISTS

Priests in 1000 had little training, education

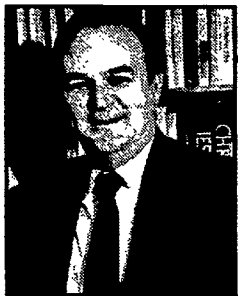
Father Kevin Madigan, professor of church history at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, notes in an article in the December issue of *Chicago Studies* that the most common form of the parish in Europe in the year 1000 was the so-called proprietary church, built and governed by the local lay lord, primarily for his own family and laborers. It was he, not the bishop, who appointed and removed the pastor, usually a freed serf who continued to till the parish land after ordination.

While there were laws on the books regarding clerical celibacy at the time, many priests in these rural parishes lived with women, either as wives or "hearthmates," as Father Madigan refers to them.

"Simply put," he tells us, "virtually no rural parishioner or priest in the year 1000 regarded clerical concubinage or marriage as practically or canonically objectionable."

There were various reasons for this situation. "Given the difficulty of rural life, the economic motivations of having a wife and the peasant origins of the clergy," Father Madigan observes, "it was doubtless the case that many thought of celibacy as too lofty an ideal; some were probably even unaware that clerical concubinage or marriage was uncanonical."

Moreover, the bishops were casual



BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

essays in theology

about their supervisory responsibilities over priests, and some bishops themselves were hardly models for emulation. Complicating all this was a shoddy-to-nonexistent system for clerical education. (Seminaries would not be established until more than five centuries later.)

The author points out that this may have been "the single greatest organizational defect of the early medieval church," namely, "the lack of an adequate system of clerical education and formation."

In the year 1000 most candidates for priesthood were trained for ministry by their local priest. However, because clerical celibacy was neither widely enforced nor practiced, that local priest was, in many cases, the trainee's own father. "Thus," writes Father Madigan, "a typical

ordinand probably learned the cure of souls the same way other boys in the village learned their skills, namely, as apprentices to their fathers."

Among the obvious weaknesses of this system was that moral and educational defects were passed on from one generation to the next. A major educational defect was an inadequate knowledge of Latin, at a time when almost everything a priest needed to know and do was in Latin.

The key person in the process, however, remained the feudal lay lord. It was he who appointed and removed the parish priest. Unfortunately, the lords often chose priests for reasons other than their pastoral aptitude. Some were willing to take low pay. Others were willing to pay up front for the appointment.

Almost all of the village priest's job was centered on the sacraments and other devotional activities, such as the blessing of crops, cattle and dwellings. "The notion that a parish priest should be trained and able as a counselor, a teacher, a preacher, a pastor of souls," Father Madigan writes, "is ... a later medieval development."

What was the Mass like at this time? "The general picture," the author suggests, was "not terribly inspiring." In contrast to the Slavic regions where the vernacular was used, the service was in Latin,

which almost no one understood. The altar was now situated against the back wall of the sanctuary, while the faithful stood or milled about in the nave (there were no pews). The celebrant had his back to the congregation and prayed in a low tone.

The Mass was "altogether the priest's business," while the laity looked on, "uninvolved and almost surely bored." The priest was seen as one who offered prayers on behalf of the people rather than as the leader of the people in their prayer.

Most Masses took less than 30 minutes and were celebrated "without much reverence or dignity." Sermons were exceedingly rare. Most priests would have been incapable of preparing a homily and none of the parishioners would have expected them to do so, in any case.

As far as the people were concerned, mere attendance at Mass and proximity to the altar was sufficient to win God's blessings. Reception of Holy Communion was generally limited to once a year, at Easter.

The Mass back in the year 1000 was in many ways very much like it was in the 1940s and 1950s, before the liturgical movement and the Second Vatican Council changed it all for the better.

...
Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

God sees beneath the surface to what lies in our hearts

Fourth Sunday of Lent (R3) John 9:1-41. (R1) 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13. (R2) Ephesians 5:8-14.

The world's greatest detective, Sherlock Holmes, and his faithful companion, Dr. Watson, were on a camping trip.

They were in their sleeping bags looking up at the sky when Holmes spoke.

"Watson, look up. What do you see?"

"I see thousands of stars," Watson said.

"And what does that mean to you?" Holmes inquired.

"Well," said Watson, "It means a nice day tomorrow."

Watson then asked, "What does it mean to you, Holmes?"

"To me," said Holmes somberly, "It means someone has stolen our tent."

There are some things in life that ought to be obvious. In fact, they are obvious — but sometimes we forget. One of the things we forget is what's really important in life.

For instance, what's really important in life is not how we look. Oh, some people think it is. We'd be rich if we could get our hands on just a tiny fraction of the money people spend trying to look good.

There was an amusing magazine article telling of a few of the tricks makeup artists use for the Miss America Pageant to keep America's beauties beautiful. First, dirty



BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

a word for sunday

hair. A hairstylist admitted, "I can make a style fuller and stay better with dirty hair." Another trick was face putty, which makeup artists use to cover up lines, scars, and pockmarks, and to create "porcelain" complexions." Teeth are smeared with Vaseline so that contestants can smile easily, even if their mouths dry up from nervousness. And sometimes hemorrhoid ointment is smeared on eyelids and under the eyes to remove puffiness. These are some of the tricks used by Miss America contestants to make them look good.

It's also not how smart we are or what we know that really matters. Certainly a good mind, like a nice appearance can be helpful. Knowledge plays a bigger role in our lives than ever before. More new information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the previous 5,000. Still

IQ offers little to explain the different destinies of people.

When 95 Harvard students from the classes of the 1940s were followed into middle age, the men with the highest test scores in college were not particularly successful compared to their lower-scoring peers in terms of salary, productivity or status in their field. Nor did they have the greatest life satisfaction, nor the most happiness with friendships, family and romantic relationships.

Again, let's not be naive. It's more advantageous to be attractive than homely. And it's better to be smart than stupid. But there are more important things.

When Samuel was sent by God to pick a king in place of Saul his eyes fell on Eliab, young, tall, handsome. But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look at appearances, the Lord looks at the heart."

For example, in choosing a spouse, personal appearance may have played an important role. So may have intelligence. But what is it one appreciates most in his or her spouse today? Is it not their hearts? A loving and devoted heart, in the long run of life, is far more important to happiness than a pretty face and a superior brain.

Many wives would trade a handsome husband for one that is faithful; a smart one for one that is sober, a good father to the children, one who goes to church with the family and treats her with respect. God looks beyond appearances to the heart. So what really matters is not how we look or how smart we are, but how we live and love — matters of the heart.

...
Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, March 15

Isaiah 65:17-21; John 4:43-54

Tuesday, March 16

Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12; John 5:1-16

Wednesday, March 17

Isaiah 49:8-15; John 5:17-30

Thursday, March 18

Exodus 32:7-14; John 5:31-47

Friday, March 19

2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16;

Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22

Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24 or

Luke 2:41-51

Saturday, March 20

Jeremiah 11:18-20; John 7:40-53

I your Mother, am coming to visit you as THE MOTHER AND LADY OF ALL NATIONS



Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, send NOW Your Spirit over the earth. Let the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of ALL nations, that they may be preserved from degeneration, disaster, and war. May The Lady Of All Nations, who once was Mary, be our advocate. Amen

For an appointment to see her please call Dorothy Bartosch - Host Guardian 716-242-9329

Looking for Quality Printing?

Call us for...
Continuous Forms

Through a special arrangement between Wayuga Press and the Catholic Courier Graphic's Department, you can now get quality, affordable typesetting and printing.

.....
Give us a call for your next job!
COURIER GRAPHICS • 716-328-4340
WAYUGA PRESS • 315-754-6229

HART MONUMENT COMPANY

Since 1856

Monuments, Markers and Cemetery Lettering

2301 Dewey Avenue
(OPPOSITE HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY)

(716) 865-6746