

Formation in Celibacy

How can the preparation of seminarians for celibacy be improved? The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education has just published an educational document geared to providing some guidelines on that question. Celibacy, as a gift from God, cannot be kept unless the candidate is properly prepared for it, the congregation states. The new publication is designed to serve as a guide for educators. It focuses on preparation for emotional maturity and it presents a positive view of celibacy. "A person entering this state of life must not see himself so much taking on a burden as rather receiving a liberating grace," it is stated. Moreover, the congregation points out that in the matter of celibacy "the church is not prompted by reasons of 'ritualistic purity' nor by the concept that only through celibacy is holiness possible." On the following pages, "Origins" will present an excerpt from the 75-page booklet made public this month. This excerpt includes the booklet's forward, and the first two chapters.

FOREWORD

1. Nature and purposes of these guidelines:

This document does not

present "directives" so much as a general orientation about formation for priestly celibacy, perennially valid no matter what the social conditions might be, but which needs an educator's skill to be put into practice. This is a response to the desire expressed in the encyclical letter "On Priestly Celibacy" that appropriate instructions be issued to help those who have the serious responsibility of preparing future priests for a life of sacerdotal celibacy.¹

These guidelines arise from the present-day conditions of the church and have as their purpose the forming of candidates for the priesthood in sacred celibacy, freely accepted as a gift from the Holy Spirit. This, however, is not intended to derogate in any way from the different situation in the life and educational approach of the Eastern rites of the church.

Holy celibacy is a "precious gift" which God freely gives to those whom he calls. Those so called, however, have the duty to foster the most favorable conditions so that this gift might bear its fruit.² It is the educator's task, therefore, to cultivate in his students an appreciation for the

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for the gift of celibacy, a disposition for its acceptance, a recognition of its presence, and its practice.

2. *The specific reason for these guidelines:*

Sex education, whether as a preparation for marriage or for celibacy, is a difficult and delicate matter, especially in the social and cultural climate of today. This is particularly the case regarding complete formation of those who are preparing for a life consecrated to God. As the recent document of the 1971 Synod of Bishops emphasizes, "in today's world celibacy is threatened from all sides by special difficulties, which, nonetheless, priests have experienced in various other times through the centuries." Indeed, "it must be recognized that celibacy, as a gift from God, cannot be kept unless the candidate is properly prepared for it."³

Training men for a consecrated single life is an inescapable duty which falls upon all educators: the community of the family, of the parish, and of the seminary. In large measure, these bear the responsibility to form candidates for the priestly life.

The problem of formation for a celibate life is considered here mainly from the natural aspect in accordance with the principles of education. It must be constantly borne in mind, however, that such a problem cannot be resolved simply on the natural level, even with the best dispositions on the part of the candidates and the greatest care on the part of educators. Grace is a fundamental and necessary element in this formation—as sacred scripture emphatically states. (Ps. 126; Mk. 4, 26-29; 10, 27; Lk. 1, 37; Jn. 15, 5; 1 Cor. 3, 6; Gal. 5, 22-23; Phil. 4, 13). It is, moreover, equally essential to maintain the faithful observance of "the ascetical norms which have been tested by the experience of the church and which are by no means less necessary in today's world."⁴

Young students must be convinced of the necessity of a very special asceticism in their lives, one that is far more demanding than what is required of the ordinary faithful and which is special to those aspiring to the priesthood.⁵

From their seminary days they must learn to recognize above everything the need to cultivate with all their hearts the grace which binds them to Christ, and seek to deepen their understanding of this mystery of sanctification. They must acquire an ever-increasing sense of the mystery of the church and realize that otherwise their state of life will almost certainly begin to appear, even to them, inconsistent and absurd.⁶

3. *Reasons for up-dating:*

The problem under discussion has always existed. But it has acquired a special urgency and a greater importance in our day on account of a number of factors and causes

among which the following deserve special mention:

—in the unfolding of salvation history, priestly celibacy is lived in accordance with new ways of thinking. It must be a witness to salvation offered to men according to their present-day spiritual needs;

—the human sciences—education, psychology and sociology—are in a continual state of development; they are ever searching for new methods, theoretical and practical;⁷

—seminarians themselves manifest a new psychological sensitivity, tending to reject the bonds of convention and wanting to walk in the human order like other men. They extol freedom of choice and open-ended commitment to the ideal of the gospel.

In the face of this, it is the duty of educators to be always up-to-date themselves. They must also read the signs of the times in the secular and Christian world of today.

All human institutions which proclaim lasting values and which are not merely expressions of some relative truth must undergo periodical updating. Priestly values, precisely because they are permanent and imperishable, must be considered in the context of a pilgrim church moving towards the Risen Lord. These values must be expressed in a way that is suited to the present age. Indeed educators must proclaim a love for the eternal meaning of the priesthood, but in a manner adapted to our times.

4. *Adaptation to the situation of the local Churches:*

Formation in celibacy must be adapted not only to differing civilizations and historical periods, but also to the conditions of the local churches. Since these can differ considerably from one to another, their members' psychological and sociological outlooks will differ accordingly and they will bear witness to the gospel in different ways. Seminary training must, therefore, reflect the kind of education which is suited to local church life, always, of course, in accordance with the norms established by the bishops' conferences. Priestly celibacy, like the priesthood itself, is a consecration to God on behalf of the people whom priests are sent to serve.⁸

These guidelines, which apply to today, are not intended to usurp the responsibility of the local church to educate its priests. On the contrary, local churches have a duty to re-examine their spiritual needs, their ecclesiastical life-style and the efficiency of the local seminaries to provide a solid education and a witness in the world of today. Indeed, each single presbyterate ought to discover God's plan by studying present day problems in the light of God's word.⁹

5. *Adaptation to the individual:*

This document presents a number of suggestions for training to a life of celibacy. Although it is divided into sections, it would be a mistake to suppose that they can be taken

QUOTE FROM A PAST TEXT OF CURRENT INTEREST:

"To preclude misunderstanding, let me state my position at the outset. I am personally deeply convinced of the value of celibacy for my own priestly life. But in my nearly ten years of counseling with priests and seminarians, I have come to see the sharp pain and the heavy burden that celibacy often entails for good men in the priesthood. If I were a bishop and had to cast a vote, I would most probably do so in favor of optional celibacy. But I would be under no illusions that this would solve the vocation crisis or any other crisis in the priesthood today, and least of all that marriage would guarantee that priests are going to be warm, loving men without sexual hang-ups."

(From, "Celibacy and Personal Growth," by Martin Pable, OFM Cap, in "Origins," Vol. 3, p. 713.)

separately without reference to the development of the single theme of the whole work. It is also important to remember that despite great biopsychological and socio-cultural differences among individual seminarians, the fact remains that problems about sex are substantially identical for all human beings, regardless of their state of life.

The universal character of this matter indicates that there can be some general guidelines for it. It is necessary, of course, that these guidelines be put into practice and when doing so that effort be made to find the best way to apply them to the needs of the individuals being trained. It is the individual who is to be directed towards and selected for the priesthood, and a constant search needs to be made for the best means of doing so even when one is dealing with a variety of persons with characteristics in the normal range of human behavior, but particularly when one also has the duty to recognize those who are truly atypical or possess deviant personalities.

These guidelines are written with the training of normal men in mind, since candidates for the priesthood ought to be normal. In cases of more or less abnormal persons, a more specialized kind of work has to be undertaken, but of course, that kind of student must be clearly told that the priestly life is not for him.

PART I

THE MEANING OF CELIBACY IN CONTEMPORARY PRIESTLY LIFE

6. *States of authentic Christian life:*

Matrimony and celibacy are two states of life which are authentically Christian. Both are ways of following the Christian vocation, a vocation that is expressed in its fullness in the totality of the church.¹⁰

Celibacy for the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19, 12) is a gift that Jesus Christ gave to his church. It is not a charism that belongs essentially or exclusively to the priesthood. It is not the unique vocation of a priest. It can be seen in the church lived in a variety of ways by groups of persons called to the practice of the evangelical counsels.

Celibacy constitutes a sign which completes the total picture of the other evangelical counsels. Insofar as it is chosen for the kingdom of heaven, it implies fundamentally the gospel virtues of poverty and obedience. In fact, these are intimately connected with one another, and complementary to each other, and they signify a life which is perfectly evangelical in nature.

I. CELIBACY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

7. *Meaning of the sacrament of Holy Orders:*

The sacraments of baptism and holy orders enable Christians to share, through the paschal mystery of our Lord, in the priesthood of Christ. Holy orders is a participation in the "capital" function of Christ the priest. It

confers the ministerial priesthood which is different, not only in degree, but *in essence* from the common priesthood bestowed by baptism.¹¹ It makes priests to be "ministers" that is, representatives of Christ as head of the church and partakers of the authority by which Christ himself causes his body to grow and sanctifies and governs it.¹²

Presbyters "by virtue of the unction of the Holy Spirit, are marked with a special character by which they resemble Christ the priest."¹³ As other Christs and with the love of Christ, they are sent to save the People of God; they are called to direct men, through the ecclesial community founded on God's word and the eucharist, to an ever deeper and larger life in the Spirit of Christ, which brings them progressively closer to living like those who have risen in the Lord, always witnessing to his

"The choice of priestly celibacy does not interfere with the normal development of a person's emotional life, but, on the contrary, it presupposes it. A celibate is called to express his ability to love in a special way."

resurrection.

8. *The priesthood and the evangelical virtues:*

The evangelical virtues are at the same time both imperatives and graces of priestly consecration. A candidate for the priesthood, by his consecration to Christ the priest, assumes also the gospel's commitment connected with it, prolonging the very mission of Christ and bearing witness to him by an evangelical life.

The ministerial priesthood demands a special kind of love, which is called pastoral charity by which a priest endeavors to give his entire life for the salvation of others. The ministerial priesthood requires this so that love can be offered to others. The evangelical counsels are precisely to be of service in this pastoral charity.

If it is true that every Christian is consecrated to God in Christ and to the service of his brothers, it is no less true that consecration to God in the priesthood demands an even more generous and complete dedication. It is precisely in the practice of the evangelical virtues that one finds an adequate response to the ideal of priestly perfection.

9. *Specific nature of celibacy:*

Celibacy has a clearly positive value in that it makes one totally available for the exercise of the priestly ministry. It means consecration to God with an undivided heart. It is a sign which testifies to an almost paradoxical love for the kingdom of heaven.

Speaking of celibacy, the synod cited above states: "priestly celibacy harmonizes fully

with the calling to follow Christ and also with the unconditioned response of the called, who assumes the duty of pastoral service." The same document underlines the fact that "if celibacy is lived in the spirit of the gospel, in prayer, vigilance, poverty, joy, the shunning of honors and in fraternal love, it becomes a sign which cannot long remain hidden; on the contrary, it will effectively proclaim Christ to the human race, even in our time."¹⁴

Celibacy transcends the natural order. It involves a total personal commitment. It cannot be maintained except with God's grace. More than a mere law of the church, celibacy must be understood as a "qualification" which receives added value because it is publicly offered in the presence of the whole church. Celibacy is an offering, an oblation, a real and true sacrifice publicly given, not merely the giving up of the sacrament of marriage, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. "The seminarian must understand this form of life not as something imposed from without, but rather as an expression of his own free giving, which, in turn, is accepted and ratified by the church in the person of the bishop."¹⁵

10. Celibacy and the apostolate:

It is a fact that Jesus Christ placed before all his disciples very strict requirements in order that they might be his followers. But he demanded even more from those whom he called to follow him as his apostles. Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything to follow Christ (Mk. 1, 16-20). Jesus himself praised celibacy embraced for the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 19, 12). The apostle Paul, who personally lived this evangelical radicalism, considered celibacy a divine gift through which, with an undivided heart, one could better dedicate oneself to the Lord.

Through celibacy, the availability of the ministers of the church is reinforced, their power to bear witness is increased, and they preserve the freedom to oppose every oppression. The celibate shares wondrously in the "kenosis," which was the chosen way of Christ in his paschal mystery.

Implanted in priestly life, even though not absolutely necessary either for the priesthood or the exercise of the priesthood, celibacy is most fitting because it sheds lustre on the nature of the priesthood and it enhances the work of the priesthood itself. It eminently actualizes that consecration to God, conformity to Christ, and dedication to the church which are the characteristics proper to the priesthood. It expresses the ideal which the priestly character is supposed to convey.

11. Celibacy viewed eschatologically:

Celibacy brings into focus and gives impetus to priestly love. It enables a priest to perfect this love and, in a very real way, to anticipate the future life of love with the Risen Christ to which the eyes of a priest must be turned.¹⁶

By celibacy, embraced and lived for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, a priest answers the call to imitate Christ. He anticipates the world to come, already present through faith and charity. Consecrated celibacy constitutes a sign of eschatological hope, a prophetic sign of the future reality when all men, united in Jesus by his Spirit, will live only to glorify the Father.

Every Christian has a duty to be united with the love of Christ and to bear witness to this love. Thus, every Christian life is permeated with an eschatological character, from martyrdom to the religious life, from the priesthood to the married state. Strictly speaking, celibacy does not, therefore, confer an eschatological character on the priesthood. The priest already has this himself, just as Christians in all other states and vocations possess it in themselves, in their own special way.¹⁷ But, priestly celibacy harmonizes with the eschatological aspect of the priesthood, and in certain ways, reinforces this aspect and enables the priest to be very fully immersed in the perfect love of the Risen Christ.¹⁸

II. PRIESTLY CELIBACY IN MODERN LIFE

12. Problems of priestly celibacy:

Today the question is asked whether a priest could not remain a good priest without remaining celibate. However one looks at it—whether from the natural or the Christian point of view—the choice of priestly celibacy seems to imply the sacrifice of something good. For instance, it is possible to suppose that marriage, in certain places, might facilitate an interest in priestly vocations and even, for some priests, might mean a better balanced emotional life. However, such reasoning would not be able to take away the fact that celibacy, in itself, is more appropriate to the mission of the priest and that this sacrifice can be transformed into redemptive love.

There is no state of life or vocation that does not imply the sacrifice of something good. This is not only because vocations are lived by created human beings, but also because they come from an outpouring of the grace of the Easter mystery of our Lord.

Whether it is appropriate to link celibacy with the priestly office or to allow the two to be separated in some limited way is not simply a matter of disciplinary choice. It is a pastoral decision of the church's government based not solely on reasons of faith, nor on the results of sociological research, but on a mixture of both.¹⁹ In any analysis of the values of the priesthood, these two elements are codetermining factors, that is, a living faith and a studied reflection on the experience of priests.

13. Reasons for celibacy:

The church has deep reasons for

The role of inter-personal relationships in the life of a priest is discussed in "Personal Relationships and Spirituality," a text from the Priestly Life and Ministry Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Relationships with authority figures, peers, laity and aspects of celibacy are all discussed. An excerpt from the text appeared in "Origins," Vol. 2, pp. 381ff.

demanding celibacy of her priests. They are founded on the priest's imitation of Christ, on his role as representative of Christ, head and leader of the community, on his availability for service which is indispensable for the constant building up of the church.²⁰ The church is not prompted by reasons of "ritualistic purity" nor by the concept that only through celibacy is holiness possible.

Among the historical reasons adduced to justify a priest's celibacy there may be some which are no longer valid with the passing of time, but this should not cause the rejection of the connection between celibacy and the priesthood. This connection is a living reality in the church. It is experience that is linked not so much to this or that argument as to the fundamental fact and reality of Christianity itself, which is the person of Jesus Christ, at the same time virgin and priest.²¹

The church has never set out celibacy as simply an external, impersonal element, but as an integral part of a priest's life and ministry. It always originates as a gift given from above, a gift which pervades a priestly vocation, becoming an essential and qualifying component of it.

14. Relationship between celibacy and the priesthood:

The relationship between celibacy and the priesthood appears all the more clear as one considers the christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological aspects of celibacy. This is why the Second Vatican Council speaks of a manifold fitness (*multimodam convenientiam*) when referring to the consecration and mission of the priest within the framework of the mystery of Christ and the church.²² The 1971 Synod of Bishops re-affirmed the existing law of celibacy "by reason of the intimate and manifold fitness between the office of pastor and the celibate life."²³

A priest is a representative of the person of Christ. By his ordination he is deputed to build up the People of God through his ministry of word and eucharist and to show forth brotherly love in a unique and sacramental manner. Equally in both these ways he contributes to the cause of the building of the kingdom.

The invitation of Jesus to the apostles to leave everything enabled them to be more available for the coming of the kingdom. But it did more. It also offered them the opportunity of entering the apostolic communion where they could experience deep and enriching interpersonal relationships.

Priestly celibacy is a communion in the celibacy of Christ. The newness of the Catholic priesthood is an intimate sharing in the very newness of Christ.²⁴ It is a vision of faith that has consequently governed the development of arguments in favor of sacred celibacy in its christological, ecclesiological and eschatological meaning.²⁵

A priest, who really shares in the one and only priesthood of our Redeemer, finds in him "an immediate model and a supreme ideal." Such a high ideal is obviously capable of inspiring heroism and even the most difficult undertakings.²⁶ Hence, there arises a desire in those exercising the priesthood to reproduce the same conditions and outlook of life as Christ experienced, in order to effect the closest possible imitation of him.²⁷

15. Modern difficulties with clerical celibacy:

Priestly celibacy does not enjoy the esteem of modern society.²⁸ Ideas today are in a process of radical revision. Society does not stress the stability of vocation, but rather the opposite. This situation is especially responsible for producing a celibacy crisis. According to one opinion, celibacy interferes to some degree with the priest's mission to the poor and downtrodden. The priest should want to be part of the human struggle, without privileges, exemptions, or limitations. He should want to share in the basic human experiences (work, insecurity, housing, love, culture, recreation, etc.). Most of all he should feel strongly drawn to human love.

Apart from the fact that today it is not easily understood, priestly celibacy is especially difficult for those who feel their

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autonomy is restricted or their rights are being ignored. In these situations, a person instinctively seeks, as a form of compensation, a supplemental dose of affection, even though it is forbidden.

Indeed, a search for compensatory affection may be made easy by the simple fact that women, with whom a priest establishes a relationship by reason of his ministry, are inclined to confide in him precisely because his celibate state encourages trust. At times women might seek in him masculine support. Furthermore, in today's widely promiscuous environment, the problem is made more acute because of provocative fashions and the widespread use of the means of social communication (press, cinema, radio, television),²⁹ dangers to which the chastity of candidates for the priesthood is also exposed.

16. Presuppositions for training for celibacy:

Looked at from today's point of view,

the celibate must obviously be a person who is allowed to develop to human emotional maturity while preserving a life of continence as an expression of apostolic love.³⁰ Continence, when it is not inspired interiorly by apostolic love, is not the continence of the gospel. For the consecrated person who has chosen celibacy in order to live and communicate ecclesial charity in the most heartfelt and unique way possible, continence without apostolic love is a contradiction.

A celibate person who is emotionally and spiritually mature does not feel himself hemmed in by canonical legislation extrinsic to his life. Nor does such a celibate see the necessary precautions, which he must always take, as something imposed on him from outside.

Celibate chastity is not some kind of taxation that has to be paid to the Lord, but rather a gift that one receives from his mercy. A person entering this state of life must not see himself so much taking on a burden as rather receiving a liberating grace.

The purpose of seminary formation is to form a responsible and mature man into a faithful and perfect priest. Modern conditions in the world, socially negative as they are, do not make becoming mature and responsible an easy task. This places an increasing personal burden on the candidates for the priesthood themselves, since the duty of fully bringing their vocations to realization rests basically on them.

PART II GOALS OF SEMINARY TRAINING

17. *Threefold structure of seminary training:*

An enlightened training for priestly celibacy will take into account all the aims of seminary formation. Woven into this general pattern of formation will be the specific elements necessary for a training in priestly celibacy. It is precisely these elements which are the object of these guidelines.

Seminary training must have as its aim the forming of men into shepherds of souls, after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest, and pastor.³¹ Such an educational purpose presupposes and implies that the students will be at the same time formed as men, as Christians, and as priests.³² Therefore, plans for priestly formation should have three aims, answering the need to form personalities which are integrally human, Christian, and priestly.

Educational planning must always show a full and balanced regard for the relationships among these three levels of formation, never giving more attention to one than to another, neither separating

Christian formation from the human, nor priestly formation from Christian.

Essential distinctions, to be harmonized in unity, must be kept clear in this threefold structure of training—human, Christian, priestly. So too their complementarity and interaction: indeed, if training for manhood is a pre-condition for living a Christian life, grace is the dynamic force for the realization of a full humanity.

I. FORMATION IN HUMAN MATURITY

18. *Concept of human maturity:*

The specific matter of priestly celibacy is associated with the basic problem of the emotional maturity of the candidate. It is part of the wider and essential problem of psychological and moral maturity. Human maturity, as shown by a mature personality, is a harmony of elements and an integration of tendencies and values.

As modern psychologists correctly observe, maturity is not one single quality; it has many facets, each of which can be developed in various ways, and must be carefully considered when determining the criteria by which maturity is judged. Maturity, then, is a global condition qualified by a typical mode of being, and by a style which, while it escapes objective measurement, manifests itself in its own special way.

Maturity is a complex reality which cannot be easily or fully defined. In general, however, one can judge as mature a man who has brought to reality his vocation as a man; in other words, a person who has acquired a ready and habitual capacity to act freely; a man who has integrated his developed human potential with habits of virtue; a man who has acquired an easy and habitual emotional self-control by integrating his emotional drives and placing them at the service of his reason; a man who enjoys community living because of his willingness to give himself to serve others; one who devotes himself to his profession steadily and calmly; one whose conduct obviously follows his conscience; a man who uses freedom to explore, investigate, and develop; who can mold events and bring them to future fruition; finally, a man who has succeeded in bringing all his specifically human possibilities and potentialities to their due development.

19. *Human maturity in education:*

Educating a man means promoting his "growth" in various primary areas (physical, intellectual, moral, social, religious) and in certain secondary areas (artistic training, vocational training—in the sense of professional education, training for a certain role in human society), but in such a way that the whole complex work of education be so coordinated as to result in

The topic of celibacy was frequently raised during the international Synod of Bishops in Rome held during the fall of 1971. Among synod texts which appeared in Vol. I of "Origins" see;

*What About Married Priests? by Bishop Alexander Carter, p. 291;

*Canada's Bishops View the Priesthood, p. 294;

*What the U.S. Studies Show, p. 297;

*Married Clergy Alternatives, by Cardinal John Carberry, p. 311;

*New Forms of Priestly Service, by Cardinal Bernard Alfrink, p. 312;

*The Synod's Text on the Priesthood, p. 365.

a unified whole of the biopsychosocial personality of each person in his own proper and particular individuality.

What makes a man educated is his ability freely, consciously, and responsibly to will "the good" with the fullness of his psychological and spiritual personality. This is the kind of human maturity which the Council presented as the purpose of education. To be educated to this degree is the inalienable right of every man.³³ This is all the more applicable when one is dealing with the formation of students in a seminary. This is because God calls real men and if there are no men, there can be no call.³⁴

Seminary formation must allow the candidates to develop as men in such a way that their religious training will not replace their human formation, but rather will gradually penetrate and purify it.

20. *Human emotional maturity:*

Maturity must be acquired in all its aspects, including, naturally and above all, emotional maturity. Indeed the role of the emotions must be considered a fundamental element in the building of the personality. For this element is one of the major contributory processes in personality-integration, in the unfolding of emotional and sexual relationships, finding responsible fulfillment in work or a profession, and in cultivating friendly social contacts. Precisely because the emotions are looked at as basic to a person, emotional maturity can be held to be an indispensable requirement for the best functioning of a personality.

Considered as a part of psychic life, the emotions are variously understood: either as the complex of internal and external reactions to satisfaction, or as the ability to show feelings, or as the ability to love, or as the potential for a man to form attachments.

A well integrated person knows how to make his reason rule his emotional nature, while the less adjusted a person is, the more his emotions will dominate his rational nature. Therefore, an educational program that aims to form a well-developed personality must above all help the students to acquire the ability to balance their emotions.

Deeply connected with the emotional factor is the problem of adaptation, which consists in facing one's problems calmly, accepting responsibility for them, and working out solutions for the difficulties encountered. Inability to adapt, on the other hand, carries with it a domination by negative emotions, hostility factors, a feeling of dependence, social inadequacy, and, at the same time, the pressure of unresolved problems.

21. *Man's sexual maturity:*

When referring to emotions, the "sexual dimension" is especially important. The existence of a close link between emotions and sexuality and their interdependence in the wholeness of a personality cannot be denied, even though these two things are diversely understood. In order to talk about a person as mature, his sexual instinct must have overcome two immature tendencies, narcissism and homosexuality, and must have arrived at heterosexuality. This is the first step in sexual development, but a second step is also necessary, namely "love" must be seen as gift and not a form of selfishness.

The consequence of this development is sexual conduct on a level that can be properly called "human," whereby a person gains self-knowledge with self-esteem, and acquires a new concept of himself.

Sexuality must be considered as a determining factor in the maturing of the

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personality. Sexual maturity represents a vital step in the attainment of psychological adulthood. Hence, it is necessary to give a proper place to sex in the total picture of a personality in the process of formation.

A mature sexuality, with the characteristics here underlined, cannot be attained without conflict or without sacrifice and difficulty. A maturing person must always struggle because at every moment he has to make a choice: what need, that is, should he satisfy along one or other line of his potentialities.

22. *Integrated sexuality:*

To adequately judge what is "well-adjusted sexuality" remains a most difficult problem. Sex should be looked on as one of the human values, not as something negative or frustrating for an individual's development. The intrinsic worth of sex must be seen and accepted as having a proper place in the scale of values, a place that is important as an "element of expression" and as "an integrating factor."

Sexual maturity entails not only accepting sex as part of the totality of human values, but also seeing it as giving a

possibility for "offering," that is, a capacity for giving pure love, altruistic love. When such a capacity is sufficiently acquired, an individual becomes capable of spontaneous contacts, emotional self-control and commitment of his free will. This giving-aspect of sex involves a feeling of being "one for another." Therefore, self-giving is not entirely separate from receiving. Sex introduces into life an aspect of relationship and, therefore, the capability of both giving and receiving, a disposition to accept love that is offered in order to let oneself be fully possessed.

23. *Human self-control:*

In order to make full use of his potential, an individual must gain self-control. What he must control are the continuing changes that go on within him, as they go on in everyone, that is, his desires, impulses, thoughts and habits. Self-control really means self-discipline: imposing order on mental activity and external behavior in such a way as to produce joy, happiness, and well-being.

The dynamic structuring of a person is marked by conflicts and tensions. He only reaches his full maturity by a gradual and progressive combination of contrasting forces. There is tension between a person's ideals and his drives, and it is exactly in this area that self-control is required if one wants to attain stability, adaptation, and success.

Self-control does not mean a static quality or a colorless stability in one's social and personal behavior. One can note rather in the human psyche an impulse toward self-improvement. It is a tendency which, through conscious action and personal effort, goes beyond merely spontaneous development or simple biological growth. Men do not only grow and develop but, since they think and are free, they also make progress. This interior drive that generates progress is nothing other than the actualization of man's ever-fresh potentialities. The process of making a personality whole is done by repeatedly satisfying some drives and not satisfying others. In other words, it is brought about by channeling both the drives and activated potentialities of an individual. In man's very dynamism there is implicit a practice of asceticism—but one of an eminently positive kind.

II. FORMATION IN CHRISTIAN MATURITY

24. *The Christian dimension in education:*

Christian education—to which a Christian as a child of God through baptism

has a right—ought to help a person become mature not only in a human way, but principally in a Christian sense. Christian maturity comes about by a gradual growth in the faith, by the adoration of God as Father—especially through participation in the liturgy—by growing more perfect in Christ, and by contributing to the building up of his mystical body.

A Christian, even though he is already living in Christ, can never feel adequately transformed in his Spirit. He has continually to complete the work of creation-redemption within himself as well as in other men and in all earthly things. Nevertheless, one can affirm that there does exist something called Christian maturity.

Seminary training, then, must bring maturity to the Christian personality of the students.³⁵ The education given in seminaries must primarily envisage unity, that is, what is common, and only after that, differentiation.³⁶ Following this line, the training in seminaries should not be completely different from the normal education of the Christian. In fact there are not two types of education, but one basic type. This is the education of a Christian man, which at a later stage is differentiated between the distinct vocation of the lay person and that of the priest.

25. *Maturity as a requirement of the Christian life:*

Even prior to its requirement for the priestly state, human maturity is an elementary requirement for a Christian life. The history of priests who have defected is often that of men somehow lacking: of personalities without unity or integration where one would look in vain for maturity and balance.

Christianity certainly should be seen in its transcendental dimension, but it can also be viewed in its capacity for human advancement. This is especially true today when there is a particular sensitivity about everything that concerns the development of mankind.

Psychological and emotional maturity is the goal of the many social and personal efforts being made for the complete development of man. It can be viewed as the premise of a rich supernatural development. This is the kind of maturity that Saint Paul exhorted the Ephesians to acquire so that they might arrive at the dimension of "the perfect man, fully mature with the fulness of Christ himself" (Eph. 4, 13).

The invitation to develop a fully human personality, although always present in the documents of the Magisterium, has recently taken on a particular urgency because of the progress of human science.³⁷

In a letter accompanying the text on formation for celibacy, Cardinal Gabriel Garrone, prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and Archbishop Joseph Schroffer, the congregation's secretary, wrote: "Education for celibacy is motivated and regulated, before everything else, by the love of Christ which is at the bottom of this commitment. Without a deep love of Christ, sacerdotal celibacy loses all meaning.

"Still, the meaning and exercise of celibacy are conditioned by human elements which must absolutely be looked at. Indeed, it would be a serious mistake, today more than ever, not to take them into account."

See also in "Origins" the text by James Gill, S.J., entitled: "Tensions in Accountability." The text, an address given at the 1973 convention of the National Federation of Priests Councils discussed aspects of personal growth and emotional maturity related to the evaluation and accountability of priests. It appeared in Vol. II, pp. 645ff.

26. *Emotional maturity of the Christian:*

Emotional maturity receives enormous help from a Christian education. Indeed, insofar as the conditioning of the emotions is concerned, attention should not only be paid to natural factors, but also to the emotional repercussions resulting from sharing through baptism in the very life of Jesus Christ, being under the influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and hearing the word of the Lord.

A Christian lives in the Catholic Church, which is essentially a "brotherhood and a union of love," a communion of life, charity, and truth.³⁸ So sharing in the extensive social life of the church, he finds ways wide open to love in his encounter with God and with his brothers.

Living in union with God and his neighbor, a Christian will find the kind of peace and security that endures, despite possible disturbances that come from struggling with his lower nature. The fact is that a Christian life does not eliminate the spontaneous reactions of nature, nor does it destroy neurotic inclinations acquired in childhood or deriving from a mistaken or an incomplete type of religious upbringing.

In this connection, it is good to mention that Christian training can help a great deal towards a man's positive acceptance of himself for what he really is, with his complex make-up, capacities, weaknesses, and lack of talent. Accepting oneself is an essential prerequisite for the personal maturing process at all levels. When, instead of such positive self-acceptance, there is the phenomenon called regression, one frequently sees abnormal behavior with compensatory overtones.

27. *The sexual maturity of a Christian:*

Christian pedagogy, in accordance with God's revelation, has its own proper perspective and evaluation of sex. Christianity sees sex as part of God's creation, a reality which does not have the body alone as its object, but involves the entire human being, a reality which has a determining role in the way a man matures, both physically and morally and, therefore, in the way a man develops in his resemblance to God. It sees sex as a reality which is actualized in personal encounter. Precisely because of this mutual person to person encounter, human sexual relationships are fundamentally different from animal mating.

In Christian education, love means the ability to open one's self to the needs of one's neighbor. It means conquering every form of selfishness. It means self-giving to others for the sake of others. Finally, it means active participation in the life of the community. Christian education holds that this kind of authentic love, which is the

vocation of all men, can be lived both in matrimony and in celibacy.

Sexual fulfillment achieved in marriage is not necessary for the emotional formation of the human personality; nor will marriage in itself bring about harmonious development of the emotions. On the other hand, man is capable of sublimating his sexuality and finding fulfillment in non-sexual emotional relationships.

The virtue that governs the use of sex is chastity. This is a natural virtue; but in a Christian it acquires a supernatural dimension. Christian chastity leads to sanctity inasmuch as it is part of the supernatural order. The workings of the theological virtues give a new and higher significance to chastity and even change its very nature.³⁹ It becomes a gift from God with a power that enables the will not so much to suppress sexual desires as to integrate the sex drive into the entirety of the Christian personality.

28. *Christian self-control:*

Dominating control over sensual passion is demanded for a real spiritual life in Christ (1 Cor. 1, 23). To suffer together with Jesus means to mortify one's passions for the purpose of being mystically united to Christ crucified. It is impossible to yield to concupiscence and at the same time lead the life of the Spirit (Rom. 8, 13; 1 Cor. 6, 9; Eph. 5, 5).

The Easter mystery, which, through baptism, is at the root of Christian life, expresses in the truest and most vital way the basic dynamism of Christian existence. This mystery effectively brings together the basic requirements of a person both as human and as Christian, namely a self-affirmation in the very act of giving oneself to God and to neighbor.

In the present plan of salvation, the paschal mystery offers a theological and psychological basis for the kind of asceticism which alone seems capable of re-establishing the original harmony in man. The way of life revealed to us by the Easter mystery inseparably unites "renunciation" of some kinds of conduct with genuine "offering" of self, just as the death and resurrection of Jesus are theologically inseparable.

Urged on by love, which grows stronger not weaker with effort, a Christian practices asceticism without even adverting to its existence, and renounces things often without realizing it, because he feels the powerful attraction of a higher ideal.

III. FORMATION IN PRIESTLY MATURITY

29. *Formation from a pastoral viewpoint:*

The fundamental feature of a priestly

personality, according to the Second Vatican Council, is that of a shepherd of souls, on the model of Jesus Christ, teacher, priest, and pastor.⁴⁰ As a pastor, the priest must possess the charism of supporting and guiding the Christian community; he must build up the Catholic Church.

The principal purpose of seminary formation is to train true pastors of souls.⁴¹ Pastoral formation is not to be only a separate aspect or part of formation; it should characterize priestly formation as such; should inspire and penetrate everything that has to do with the personal formation of candidates for the priesthood.

Everything in seminary formation ought to converge with complete harmony towards the goal of forming priest-pastors.⁴² This means that all the elements that make up the structure and function of a seminary have to be thought out and effectively geared toward the attainment of this goal. Educators have to keep before their eyes, besides their specialized activity and its aim, the pastoral formation of the seminarians.

30. *Human and Christian maturity in priests:*

A priestly vocation demands human and Christian maturity so that the answer to this divine call may be an answer based on faith, and so that the seminarian may be able to understand the sense of a vocation from God, and realize what it demands.

The specific maturity of the priest must be sought in what differentiates him from the ordinary Christian, that is to say in his unique relationship with the body of Christ present in the holy eucharist as the principle and source of the ecclesial community of salvation and its saving mission. The priest is a "man of God taken from among men." His spirituality oscillates between these two poles, God and mankind. The relation between these two terms of reference is not one of alternatives, either God or men, but rather one of unity, both God and men. To be closely united to mankind a priest has to be deeply united with God first.

During his time of formation, a seminarian must pass from pre-adolescent immaturity to adult maturity, from an ordinary Christian life to a mature Christian life. In other words, he must learn to live, in a profoundly intense way, a life of faith, hope, and charity in Christ. Finally, he must advance to the level of priestly maturity, a more intimate sharing in the teaching, sanctifying and ruling mission of Christ the priest. Sacerdotal maturity includes and strengthens human and Christian maturity, but at the same time, it goes beyond these, permeating all the human and Christian elements in him, including, therefore, his emotional, sexual and active life.

31. *Emotional maturity in the priest:*

The choice of priestly celibacy does

not interfere with the normal development of a person's emotional life, but, on the contrary, it presupposes it. A celibate is called to express his ability to love in a special way. Having grown up in human and divine love, a priest can responsibly decide the manner in which he will, for his whole life, form his emotional relationships.

Celibacy chosen "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" is the celibacy proper to the priest. It is falling in love. It is possible only for someone who has integrated it into his spiritual life. It is a matter of choosing exclusively, perpetually, and completely the unique and supreme love of Christ for the purpose of more deeply sharing his lot by the resplendent and heroic logic of a singular and unlimited love for Christ the Lord and for his church.⁴³

By virtue of his celibacy, a priest becomes more totally a man of God. He lets himself be more completely taken over by Christ, and lives only for him. Virginal love invites him to possess God in a fuller way, to reflect him and give him to others in his fullness.

The love that a priest has for others must be essentially pastoral in aim. Externally it should be shown by a warm-heartedness which is indispensable in disposing people to accept the spiritual support a priest offers them.

A priest can form true and profound friendships. These are particularly useful to his emotional development when they are fostered within the priestly fraternity.⁴⁴

32. *Sexual maturity in the priest:*

Celibacy, as a personal option made for a higher good, even one completely on the natural level, can result in a fully mature and integrated personality. This can be even more true when celibacy is chosen for the kingdom of heaven, as can be seen in the lives of many saints and faithful, who dedicate themselves in a celibate life to the service of God and man, promoting human and Christian progress.⁴⁵

The exclusive nature of a candidate's choice of priestly celibacy, when he becomes a special possession of God, determines also his duties and particular dedication to the love of God in Christ. One who chooses virginity in virtue of his determination to give himself exclusively to sharing in the priesthood of Christ is obliged to grow in love of God and his neighbor. If he does not progress in this love, he is not following his vocation.

There is something sublime in the qualities roused in a man's heart by natural fatherhood: an altruistic spirit, the assumption of heavy responsibilities, a capacity for love and a dedication enough to make any sacrifice, daily bearing of life's burdens and difficulties, prudent care for the future, etc. However, all this is equally true of spiritual paternity. Moreover, spiritual fatherhood, not being confined to the natural order, is even more responsible and heroic.

A PAST TEXT OF CURRENT INTEREST:

In a recent text printed in "Origins," four questions considered to bear on current discussions of celibacy were singled out. The four questions: How is sexuality related to the development of full humanness? How can I overcome loneliness? What is masculinity? How can I achieve self-fulfillment?

The text discussing those questions was by Martin Pable, OFM Cap, a priest psychologist. His text was prepared for the convention of the National Catholic Educational Association this spring. It appeared in "Origins," Vol. 3, on pp. 713ff.

For this reason, celibacy is not for everyone. Celibacy requires a special vocation from the Lord. Throughout the whole of life, it is never without risk and danger, since something can always occur to take the heart out of a man's universal and pastoral fatherhood and his exclusive dedication to Christ.

33. *Self-control of the priest:*

Continuous self-control implies constant effort. This is necessary not only to acquire emotional maturity, but also for persevering in it. Ongoing self-control impedes regression from emotional adulthood once this is attained. It is an irreplaceable factor in the practice of human, Christian, and priestly chastity, which should always be able to check any new or unforeseen resurgence of emotional stimulation.⁴⁶

In the Christian view of continuous and progressive self-control, priestly celibacy appears as a lifelong offering to our Lord. To be consecrated in holy celibacy is not simply a single action made once at ordination. It is rather something that has to be renewed again and again, in the constant vigilance a priest must exercise when faced with human attraction and the emotions and passion of affection and love.

Just as with natural human love, the fullness of love which is involved in celibacy requires the daily practice of glad self-renunciation. This is the only way to conquer the difficulties that, with the passage of time, can come from boredom or from the weakness of the flesh.

A priest should always find an incentive for self-control in the thought that the personal sacrifice demanded by his celibacy is serving the whole church. His sacrifice underlines the spiritual dimension that must mark all love worthy of the name and it merits grace for Christian families.⁴⁷

Footnotes

1. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 24 June 1967: *AAS* 59 (1967), p. 682, n. 61.

2. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12; Paul VI, Apost. Exhort. *Evangelica testificatio*, 29 June 1971: *AAS* 63 (1971), p. 505, n. 15; Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, part a., I, n. 4, d.: *AAS*, 63 (1971), p. 917.

3. Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 917.

4. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

5. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, p. 684 ff., n. 70.

6. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, p. 687, n. 75.

7. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Past. Const. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1; Vat. Coun. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 681, n. 61.

8. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 1.

9. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

10. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 665, n. 20.

11. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 10.

12. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 2.

13. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 2.

Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 28; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 664, n. 19 ff.

14. Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 915.

15. Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 916.

16. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

17. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 663, n. 17.

18. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 670 ff., nn. 33-34.

19. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 29; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 674, n. 42.

20. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 915.

21. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, nn. 43, 46.

22. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16.

23. Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 916.

24. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 664, n. 19.

25. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 663-670, nn. 17-34.

26. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 664, n. 19, p. 666, n. 31.

27. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 665, n. 21.

28. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 657, n. 1.

29. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 10.

30. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 10-11.

31. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 4; Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 28.

32. Paul VI, in the Enc. Letter *Summi Dei Verbum*, 4 Nov. 1963: *AAS* 55 (1963), pp. 984 ff. calls attention to "the necessity of the simultaneous formation of the man, the Christian and the priest" and affirms that "the formation of the man must go hand in hand with that of the Christian and the future priest."

33. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, n. 1.

34. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 11.

35. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 3, 8, 11; S.C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, Rome 1970, nn. 48-58.

36. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, Chapt. II, III, IV.

37. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decl. *Gravissimum educationis*, nn. 1-2; Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 10-11; Decr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n. 29; Decr. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 12; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Populorum progressio*, 26 March 1967: *AAS* 59 (1967), p. 265, n. 16; S.C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., 51.

38. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 9.

39. Cf. *Summa theologica*, I-II, q. 63 a. 4.

40. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 28; Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 4-9.

41. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, n. 4.

42. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Optatam totius*, nn. 8-20; S.C. for Cath. Ed., *Ratio fundamentalis*, loc. cit., nn. 44-49.

43. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 666 ff., nn. 24 ff.

44. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, nn. 8, 14; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 688-689, nn. 79-81.

45. Cf. Synod Doc., 30 Nov. 1971, *De sacerdotio ministeriali*, loc. cit., p. 915.

46. Cf. Vat. Coun. II, Decr. *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 16; Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., pp. 686-688, nn. 73, 77.

47. Cf. Paul VI, Enc. Letter, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, loc. cit., p. 679, n. 57.