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## Benedict XVI, Robert Cardinal Sarah, from the Depths of Our Hearts. Priesthood, Celibacy, and the Crisis of the Catholic Church

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**BENEDICT XVI, ROBERT CARDINAL SARAH,  
FROM THE DEPTHS OF OUR HEARTS.  
PRIESTHOOD, CELIBACY, AND THE CRISIS OF  
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. SAN FRANCISCO:  
IGNATIUS PRESS, 2020.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The book's<sup>1</sup> occasion was the Synod of Bishops for Amazonia (October 2019) and the debates there concerning the discussion of ordaining married men priests.<sup>2</sup> There are two parts to this review: first, presentation of the chapters of the book, then assessment.

The joint introduction (17–21) is titled, “What Do You Fear?” Chapter 1, “The Catholic Priesthood” (23–60) is by Benedict XVI and signed, September 17, 2019. Chapter 2, “Loving to the End: An Ecclesiological and Pastoral Look at Priestly Celibacy” (61–139) is by Cardinal Sarah and signed November 25, 2019. The joint conclusion, “In the Shadow of the Cross” (141–148), is signed December 3, 2019. The book was meant to appear between the Synod itself and the expected publication of the Papal Exhortation.

### **WHAT DO YOU FEAR?**

“While the world was echoing with the din created by a strange media synod that overrode the real synod, we met together. We exchanged our ideas and our anxieties. We prayed and meditated in silence” (19). The authors cannot be silent since “on every side, the waves of relativism are submerging the barque of the Church . . . Jesus is asleep in the barque” (21, 22). They offer their search for truth to the people of God “in a spirit of filial obedience, to Pope Francis” (20) and invite everyone to complete or critique it.

### **THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD (BENEDICT XVI)**

A defective theology of worship leads some to reject the necessity of an authentically cultic priesthood in the New Covenant. The crisis in the priesthood results from this perceived opposition between ministries and cultic priesthood. Although in a conference on the priesthood immediately after the Vatican Council Benedict XVI himself “thought that [he] had to present the priest of the New Testament as the one who meditates on the Word of God, and not as a ‘craftsman of worship,’” (38) he long came to see that such bypasses the cultic foundations of the priesthood that explain celibacy. Newness in Christ transforms institutions

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of the Old Covenant: “From now on, the cultic act proceeds by way of an offering of the totality of one’s life in love” (26). The cleansing of the temple action announced a new form of divine adoration, and thus the new nature of worship and the priesthood—the building of stone was to be replaced by Jesus’ own body as the new Temple.

For ministers, the New Testament employs the terms, *apostolos*, *episkopos* (in gentile settings)/*presbyteros* (in Jewish milieu), and *diakonos*. Already in Clement of Rome, *First Letter to the Corinthians* (96 C.E.), we see *episkopos*, *presbyteros*, and *diakonos* designating, respectively, the high priest, the priest, and the Levite. Such Christological and pneumatological interpretation of the Old Testament “is the expression of a historical transition that corresponds to the internal logic of the text” (35). In the new worship: “the love of Christ, which is always present in the Eucharist, is the new act of adoration. Consequently, the priestly ministries of Israel are ‘annulled’ in the service of love . . .”

“In the common awareness of Israel, priests were strictly obliged to observe sexual abstinence during the times when they led worship and were therefore in contact with the divine mystery . . .” But, “Since the priests of the Old Testament had to dedicate themselves to worship only during set times, marriage and the priesthood were compatible.” With regular and even daily celebration of the Eucharist now essential for the Church, “their [priests] entire life is in contact with the divine mystery. This requires on their part exclusivity with regard to God. Consequently, this excludes other ties that, like marriage, involve one’s whole life. From the daily celebration of the Eucharist, which implies a permanent state of service to God, was born spontaneously the impossibility of a matrimonial bond” (41). Sexual abstinence that was functional transforms into ontological abstinence. Since “the married state involves a man in his totality, and since serving the Lord likewise requires the total gift of a man, it does not seem possible to carry on the two vocations simultaneously” (42). In fact, in the early Church, “married men could not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders unless they had pledged to observe sexual abstinence . . . like the marriage of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary” (42).

Three texts clarify the Christian notion of priesthood. *Ps 16:5-6*: “the Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.” This was used for the tonsure ceremony that marked entrance into the clergy. The Levite was allotted no land, he lived only by God and for God. In the New Covenant, the privation of land is transformed: “priests, because they are radically consecrated to God renounce marriage and family.” The disciples “left

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everything and followed him” (Luke 5:11). “Without such a forsaking on our part there is no priesthood” (46). Only on the foundation of this total being for God can be understood “celibacy, which applies to bishops throughout the Church, in both East and West, and, according to a tradition going back to a time close to that of the apostles, to priests in general in the Latin Church.” The second text is *Deut 10:8; 18:5-8*. The essential cultic role of the Levite is to carry the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and to stand<sup>3</sup> before the Lord to serve him and to bless in his name. The inner nature of the priesthood of the New Covenant is “a life in God’s presence, and with this also a ministry of representing others” (51). Located just after the consecration, this “standing” “points to being before the Lord present, that is, it indicates the Eucharist as the center of priestly life.” The liturgy is the central duty of the priest (54), even if it includes learning to know the Lord in his Word, making it known to all, and drawing near, in obedience. The last text is *John 17:17*: consecrate [sanctify] them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” Jesus asks the Father to include the Twelve in his mission, to ordain them priests (58). In the Old Testament, they washed and purified the priest candidate before he put on the sacred vestments; in the New, the only washing that can really purify man is truth, Jesus himself. So, Jesus is asking the Father to immerse them completely in himself.

### **LOVING TO THE END: AN ECCLESIOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL LOOK AT PRIESTLY CELIBACY (CARD. SARAH)**

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“During the Synod on Amazonia, I took the time to listen to people on the ground and to talk with experienced missionaries. These exchanges reassured me in the thought that the possibility of ordaining married men would be a pastoral catastrophe, lead to ecclesiological confusion, and obscure our understanding of the priesthood” (65–66).

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*A Pastoral Catastrophe*. In revealing in his person the fullness of the priesthood, Jesus shows that “a priest is not only a man who performs a sacrificial function. He is a man who offers himself as a sacrifice through love, following Christ” (66). “Pope Benedict XVI demonstrates that priestly celibacy is not a welcome ‘spiritual supplement’ in the priest’s life. A consistent priestly life ontologically requires celibacy” (67). In this sense, priestly celibacy is necessary for a correct understanding of the priesthood. I fear that the plan to ordain married men as priests might generate a pastoral catastrophe—“how would a Christian community understand the priest if it is not obvious that he is ‘removed

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from the common sphere' and 'delivered over to God?'" Is the intention to prevent these poorly evangelized populations from discovering the fullness of the Christian priesthood? The Christians of Guinea continued teaching the catechism and reciting daily prayers and the Rosary the ten years (1967–76) missionaries were expelled. "I think that if they had ordained married men in each village, the Eucharistic hunger of the faithful would have been extinguished. The people would have been cut off from that joy of receiving another Christ in the priest" (70). "The ordination of married men would deprive the young Churches that are being evangelized of this experience of the presence and of the visit of Christ, delivered and given in the person of the celibate priest" (71). For some bishops from the West or even from South America, celibacy has become a heavy load. Yet, "as a son of Africa, I cannot in conscience support the idea that people who are being evangelized should be deprived of this encounter with a priesthood that is fully lived out. The peoples of Amazonia have the right to a full experience of Christ the Bridegroom. We cannot offer them 'second-class' priests" (72). "A few theologians, or rather sorcerer's apprentices" wish to use the poor as an experimental laboratory, and deprive them of the fullness of the priesthood. "A community that was formed according to the idea of a 'right to the Eucharist' would no longer be a disciple of Christ" (75). True, "many married men were ordained priest during the first millennium, but from the day of their ordination on, they were obliged to abstain from sexual relations with their wives." It is intellectual dishonesty to assert there were married priests, but not to add that they were obliged to complete continence. That is why there was no opposition when the Council of Elvira (300 CE) excluded from the clerical state bishops, priests, and deacons suspected of engaging in sexual relations with their wives. Is there a vocation to be the wife of a priest? What about the children who would have the right to all resources necessary for their flourishing? Will married priests have to be paid accordingly as a consequence? (79) "To ordain a married man a priest would amount to diminishing the dignity of marriage and reducing the priesthood to a job [*fonction*]" (79). At a late date, in the Council in Trullo (691), the East allowed sexual relations to married men who had become priests, but this novelty was result of an error in transcribing the canons of the Council of Carthage (390 CE). Even now, the Eastern married clergy is in crisis, and divorce by priests has become a cause of ecumenical tension.<sup>4</sup> "Many Orthodox Christians would never go to confession to a married priest. The *sensus fidei* causes the faithful to discern a form of incompleteness in the clergy who do not live out consecrated celibacy" (81). Yes, the Catholic Church

allowed married clergy in some Eastern Churches in union with Rome, but the purpose is to foster a gradual development toward the practice of celibacy, not by law, but for spiritual and pastoral reasons.

*Ecclesiological Confusion.* In *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992), John Paul II presents Christ as the Head of the Body that is the Church-Bride: this Bride “desires to be loved by the priest in the total, exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ the Head and Bridegroom loved her” (no. 29). Point is, “without the presence of the celibate priest, the Church can no longer become aware that she is the Bride of Christ” (83). So priestly celibacy is necessary to the identity of the Church.

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*There is a true analogy between the sacrament of Matrimony and the sacrament of Holy Orders, both of which culminate in a total gift of self. This is why the two sacraments are mutually exclusive . . . The priest's capacity for spousal love is entirely given to and reserved for the Church. The logic of the priesthood excludes any 'other spouse' than the Church<sup>5</sup> (84–85).*

Priests point out to spouses the meaning of the total gift. Spouses, by their conjugal life, point out to priests the meaning of their celibacy. Hence, “interfering with priestly celibacy is tantamount to injuring the Christian meaning of marriage” (86). Debates about celibacy have given rise to questions about the possibility of women being ordained priests or deacons. As representing Christ the Bridegroom, the priest is male. “Promoting the ordination of women amounts to denying their identity and the place of each sex” (88). “The government of the Church is a loving service of the bridegroom for the bride. Therefore it can be carried out only by men who are identified with Christ, the Bridegroom and Servant, through the sacramental character of priesthood” (90). As to women deacons, “we know, for example, that the women who were called ‘deaconesses’ were not recipients of the sacrament of Holy Orders. Ancient sources are unanimous in forbidding deaconesses to have any ministry at the altar during the liturgy.” In Syria, their role was the pre-baptismal anointing of the entire body of women. Besides, “the deaconesses were not ordained, but only blessed, as the Chaldean Pontifical specifies explicitly” (94). We must give women their entire place as women and not just grant them a little bit of the men’s place! Speaker after speaker in the Amazonia Synod called for transition from pastoral care by visitation to pastoral care of presence, ordination of married permanent deacons to the priesthood. Why reserve to clergy alone the task of proclaiming

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Jesus and witnessing to him? The laity, by dint of Baptism and Confirmation, are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself (AA, no. 3). "The ordination of married men would give an unfortunate signal that the laity is being clericalized" (98). After Francis Xavier evangelized Japan in 1549, persecution meant that Christians lived for two centuries without a priestly presence, yet they handed on the faith. They gave three signs by which each generation would recognize the return of priests: "they will be celibate, they will have a statue of Mary, they will obey the Pope of Rome" (97). Serious harm would be done to the universal church if it was left to each episcopal conference to opt for married priests in its territory.

*Confusion in Understanding the Priesthood.* It is no argument to say there already are exceptions by which married men ordained priests continued the use of marriage. By definition, an exception is transitory, "a rupture, a wound in the consistency of the priesthood" (108). The lack of priests does not justify such a rupture; the ordination of married men in young communities would prevent them from giving rise to the priestly vocation of celibate priests (109). To achieve their aim, some theologians reduce the priesthood to the administration of the sacraments alone (a functionalist concept of priesthood) or call for a married clergy side by side with a celibate clergy, which runs the risk of inculcating in the minds of the faithful the idea of a high and a low clergy. As Paul VI wrote: "the consecrated celibacy of the sacred ministers actually manifests the virginal love of Christ for the Church, and the virginal and supernatural fecundity of this marriage."<sup>6</sup> Every time a priest repeats "this is my Body," he offers his body, as a man, in continuity with the sacrifice on the Cross (112). At mass the priest "does not become only an *alter Christus*, another Christ. He is truly *ipse Christus*; he is Christ himself . . . clothed with the person of Christ" (113). As to inculturation or the idea that the peoples of Amazonia do not understand celibacy or that it will always be foreign to their culture, I find "this sort of argument a contemptuous, neo-colonialist, and infantilizing mentality that shocks me" (117). Celibacy will always be a scandal to the world because it makes present the scandal of the Cross. Some people are projecting their doubts onto the Amazonian peoples. The Salesian, Father Lasarte,<sup>7</sup> had this to say: "the proposal of the *virii probati* as a solution to evangelization is an illusory, almost magical proposal that goes nowhere near to addressing the real underlying problem." Under the pretext of inculturation, people are defending the rights of the indigenous peoples, working to promote their economic development. We have become specialists in the fields of social, political, or economic

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activity. But this is not the heart of the mandate that Jesus gave us. The faithful expect us to be specialists in promoting the encounter between man and God.<sup>8</sup> Some argue that celibacy is the distinguishing feature of religious life and should be reserved to it. I am convinced that the future of priesthood lies in Gospel radicalism: “the full concept of priesthood includes a *life led according to the evangelical counsels* (124)—even though it does not require *the profession by vows of the evangelical counsels* (see LG, no. 44)—italics mine. “Celibacy is the sign and instrument of our entrance into the priestly being of Jesus” (137). St. Paul VI thus declared, “I would rather give my life than change the law on celibacy.” And Pope Francis too: “personally, I think that celibacy is a gift for the Church. Second, I don’t agree with allowing optional celibacy, no.”<sup>9</sup> Hence, “to diminish [the ontological-sacramental connection between priesthood and celibacy] would be to call into question the Magisterium of the Council and of Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. I humbly beg Pope Francis to protect us from such a possibility by vetoing any attempt to weaken the law of priestly celibacy, even limited to one particular region” (138).<sup>10</sup>

### **IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS (THE TWO AUTHORS)**

They write that their decision to take up the pen was prompted solely by love for the Church (145). For, wrote they: “it is urgent and necessary for everyone—bishops, priests, and lay people—to take a fresh look with the eyes of faith at the Church and at priestly celibacy, which protects her mystery” (146), for “no one is prevented from proclaiming the truth of the faith in a spirit of peace, unity, and charity.”

### **A FEW QUESTIONS**

Here begins assessment of the book.

*The Pull of Celibacy.* The celibacy of ministers has been a phenomenon in many religions. Celibacy can also be practiced on philosophical grounds (Stoics) or mistaken theological grounds (Gnostics who consider the body evil). Already 1 Tim 4:3 spoke of those who “forbid marriage and require abstinence from food that God created to be received with thanks . . .” The magnet of the celibacy of Christ himself draws the church (“some have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven,” Matt 19:12). The Blessed Virgin Mary became *theotokos*, God-bearer, and without ever knowing man, she shared fully in her Son’s work of redemption. Paul was celibate: “I wish everyone to be as I am, but each has a particular gift from God” (1 Cor 7:7). He even counseled widows and the



unmarried to remain as they were, unless they could not exercise self-control (1 Cor 7:8, 9). In fact, some Christians in Corinth believed that “it is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor 7:7—euphemism for sexual intercourse). Fired with the possession of the Spirit, expecting imminent resurrection, they may have considered that “even those believers who are married should not have sexual relations with their spouses.”<sup>11</sup> Tatian and the Enkratites (*enkrateia* = self-control) forbade marriage and imposed abstinence from meat and wine. It appears that celibacy was a requirement for Baptism in the early Syrian Church!<sup>12</sup> No wonder if priests called to live the ideal of discipleship would be attracted to celibacy.

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*But does Priesthood ontologically require Celibacy?* The magisterium of the church has consistently seen celibacy as not demanded by the very nature of the priesthood.

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*Perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, commended by Christ the Lord . . . is held by the Church to be of great value in a special manner for the priestly life . . . Indeed, it is not demanded by the very nature of the priesthood, as is apparent from the practice of the early Church and from the traditions of the Eastern Churches . . . [where] there are also married priests of highest merit. This holy synod, while it commends ecclesiastical celibacy, in no way intends to alter that different discipline which legitimately flourishes in the Eastern Churches. It permanently exhorts all those who have received the priesthood and marriage to persevere in their holy vocation . . . Indeed, celibacy has a many-faceted suitability for the priesthood.<sup>13</sup>*

Suitability is not necessity. In saying, “it is not demanded by the very nature of the priesthood,” the very text cites ancient authorities.<sup>14</sup> “This holy synod . . . in no way intends to alter that different discipline which legitimately flourishes in the Eastern Churches.” Cardinal Sarah considers it an aberration resulting from error in transcribing the canons of the Council of Carthage of 390 CE; if tolerated for Eastern Rites in union with Rome, it is only so they may evolve to celibacy. *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 29 mentions the priest’s spousal relationship to the church, yet calls celibacy a law. It does not affirm celibacy as ontologically necessary to the priesthood—that would invalidate any married priesthood, both in West and East. PDV, no. 29 says:

*In this light one can more easily understand and appreciate the reasons behind the centuries-old choice which the Western Church has made and maintained . . . of conferring*

*This synod strongly reaffirms that the priesthood be conferred only on those men who have received from God the gift of the vocation to celibate chastity*

*the order of presbyter only on men who have given proof that they have been called by God to the gift of chastity in absolute and perpetual celibacy.*

*“While in no way interfering with the discipline of the Oriental churches, . . . This synod strongly reaffirms what the Latin Church and some Oriental rites require that is, that the priesthood be conferred only on those men who have received from God the gift of the vocation to celibate chastity (without prejudice to the tradition of some Oriental churches and particular cases of married clergy who convert to Catholicism, which are admitted as exceptions in Pope Paul VI’s encyclical on priestly celibacy, no. 42).*

*Inasmuch as it is a law, it expresses the Church’s will, even before the will of the subject expressed by his readiness. But the will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the link between celibacy and sacred ordination, which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the head and spouse of the Church. The Church, as the spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her head and spouse loved her . . .*

*The Question of the Sensus Fidei.* The Synod of Bishops is an exercise of discernment by the whole church on behalf of a particular church. The *sensus fidei* of some 200 bishops, clergy, religious, and laity from all parts of the church declares in nos. 110, 111 of the Synod document, which garnered 128 votes (more than the required two-thirds), with 41 against.

*The community has a right to the celebration of the Eucharist, which derives from its essence and its place in the economy of salvation . . . flourishing communities truly cry out for the celebration of the Eucharist . . .*

*. . . Sometimes it takes not just months but even several years before a priest can return to a community to celebrate the Eucharist, offer the sacrament of reconciliation or anoint the sick in the community. We appreciate celibacy as a gift of God (SC 1967 1) to the extent that this gift enables the missionary disciple, ordained to the priesthood, to dedicate himself fully to the service of the Holy People of God . . . We know that this discipline “is not demanded by the very nature of the priesthood” (PO 16) although there are many practical reasons for it . . . Considering that legitimate diversity does not harm the*

*we propose that criteria and dispositions be established to ordain as priests suitable and respected men of the community*

*communion and unity of the Church, but rather expresses and serves it (cf. LG 13; OE 6), witness the plurality of existing rites and disciplines, we propose that criteria and dispositions be established by the competent authority, within the framework of Lumen gentium 26, to ordain as priests suitable and respected men of the community with a legitimately constituted and stable family, who have had a fruitful permanent diaconate and receive an adequate formation for the priesthood . . .*

Pope Francis did not even mention celibacy; he bypassed the sharp polarities, while praising the final Report, recognizing it as the discernment of the local church, and urging everyone to read it. Ivereigh wrote:

*In a context of false polarisation the greatest mistake a leader makes is to resolve it by allowing one side to defeat the other. Rather, the task of the leader is patiently and lovingly to hold together the polarity—positions that pull in a different direction, but are not per se in contradiction, as in the case of a celibate and a married priesthood—and thus open the space for a “third way” that the Holy Spirit will in time reveal.<sup>15</sup>*

*A married clergy was the normal feature in the early church*

*Sexual Continence and Ministry at the Altar.* Peter was married (Mark 1:29-31). With the rest of the apostles, he took along “a Christian wife” (NABRE, 1 Cor 9:5) on his apostolic journeys.<sup>16</sup> Bishops, presbyters, and deacons of the early church were mostly married, with children (1 Tim 3:2). A married clergy was the normal feature in the early church. Pope Hormisdas (514–23) was father to Pope Silverius, his successor.<sup>17</sup> For the early times, we speak of clerical continence (non-use of marriage), not yet celibacy as such. We have no historical record of when and how clerical continence began.<sup>18</sup> We only know that from the fourth century councils (local and ecumenical) began to prescribe continence in marriage for clerics, for example, the Spanish Council of Elvira<sup>19</sup> (300 CE), some indicating such tradition as apostolic.<sup>20</sup> The First Council of Aries (314) attempted a motive: “we exhort our brothers (in the episcopate) to make sure that priests and deacons have no (sexual) relations with their wives, *since they are serving the ministry every day* [emphasis mine]. Whoever will act against this decision, will be deposed from the honor of the clergy.”<sup>21</sup> The Council of Nicaea (325) debated making this compulsory for all clergy, also the Council of Carthage (390). Sozomen<sup>22</sup> reports that it deferred to the view of Paphnutius, a confessor, that marriage being honorable and chaste, cohabitation with their wives was chastity. Such a law would be difficult to bear

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and might provoke incontinence; according to the ancient tradition of the church, those who were unmarried before sacred orders were required to remain so, and those who were married were not to put away their wives. Some modern historians assert that historically Sozomen was mistaken about the decrees of the Council of Carthage. But, truth is not measured by the historical accuracy of supporting documents. The Eastern Church hardly relied just on Paphnutius. The theology of marriage, as sacred and chaste, is faultless. Concrete experience raised human and moral difficulties. If the wife refused to live like a sister? Or they agreed at first but then claimed marital rights? Council after council returned to the minutiae of policing such practice. The decretal, *Ad Gallos episcopos* of Pope Innocent I (401–17) or perhaps Pope Damasus, has it that “. . . if intercourse is defiling (*pollutio*), it is obvious that the priest must be ready to carry out his celestial functions so that he himself not be found impure.”<sup>23</sup> The Old Testament is clear on pollution.

*if intercourse is defiling (pollutio), it is obvious that the priest must be ready to carry out his celestial functions so that he himself not be found impure*

*If a man has sexual relations with a woman, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening (Lev 15:18). If any one of you . . . dares while he is in a state of uncleanness, to draw near the sacred offerings which the Israelites consecrate to the Lord, such a one shall be cut off from my presence. I am the Lord (Lev 21:3).<sup>24</sup>*

Eph 5:25-27 could hardly regard marital union as pollution yet present it as sacrament of the love of Christ for his Bride, the Church! If daily celebration of the Eucharist imposes permanent clerical sexual continence in marriage, what about daily communion of Christian couples? Some Councils sought the biblical foundation and the apostolic origins in 1 Tim 3:2: “a bishop<sup>25</sup> must be irreproachable, married only once . . . He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity.”<sup>26</sup> Other translations of *mias gunaikos andra* are: “faithful to his wife”<sup>27</sup> (NIV), “husband of one wife” (KJ). We work with this last, as it corresponds to the Vulgate’s *unius uxoris virum*, as cited in the later councils. This stipulation occurs for all three groups of ministers—the *episkopos*, the presbyter, and the *diakonos*—and never for other Christians.<sup>28</sup> Tradition came to see this as prohibiting the ordination of remarried laymen.<sup>29</sup> Continence in marriage would be an impediment to subsequent marriage, for there could be no real marriage unless it was potentially open to sexual consummation.<sup>30</sup> Pope Siricius interpreted “husband of one wife” in terms of clerical continence, alluding to the purity required of those approaching the altar—this, of course, has no connection with the text of 1 Tim 3:2. Some fathers related the *unius uxoris vir* of 1 Tim 3:2 to *uni viro* of

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2 Cor 11:2: “for I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God since I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” “Marital love between Christ the bridegroom and his bride the Church is ever a *virginal* love.”<sup>31</sup> Ironical that Eph 5:22-23 portrayed this marital union of Christ to the Church in the real union of a Christian man with his wife! The exclusive love of the Christian couple models the minister’s exclusive love for the bride, the Church. East and West quickly upheld sexual continence for bishops. Council after Council re-imposed this law for lower clergy—difficulties were normal for married couples living in a “brother-sister” relationship (see above). They went into details of sleeping arrangements to avoid scandal. Some recommended or sometimes required (Lyons, 583 CE) physical separation.<sup>32</sup> In the fifth century, the Persian Church, which became Nestorian, legislated *against* clerical continence and authorized those already in orders to contract marriage.<sup>33</sup> The Synod in Trullo (691) set the current practice of the Eastern Church. Bishops are to separate from their wives, by agreement, before consecration (canon 12). Married priests and deacons may have marital relations, except in periods they serve at the altar (canon 13).<sup>34</sup> As to the West, the Lateran Council of 1123 finally mandated clerical celibacy: “We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, or sub-deacons to live with concubines and wives, and to cohabit with other women, except those whom the council of Nicaea permitted to dwell with them solely on account of necessity, namely a mother, sister, paternal or maternal aunt, or other such persons, about whom no suspicion could justly arise.” Priesthood is now separated from marriage, “that which in the past was *continence* for married ministers, in our day becomes the *celibacy* of those who are not.”<sup>35</sup>

*What pulls Priestly Life and Ministry Together?* Benedict XVI affirms that “The liturgy is the central duty of the priest” (54). He noted that rejection of the necessity of an authentically cultic priesthood induced a crisis that pitted ministries against the cultic priesthood, some seeing the priesthood as a function not a state of life. To be noted, however, is that in New Testament times the Eucharist was not as yet thought of as sacrifice. In fact, Christians continued worshiping in the temple. Christian cultic priesthood could emerge only when Christians constituted a new religion. The rite Jesus established at the Last Supper would (in early second century) be seen as sacrifice and consequently its celebrants as priests.<sup>36</sup> Hebrews speaks of the high priesthood of Christ without associating this with the Eucharist or the Last Supper.<sup>37</sup> Worthy of note also is that Vatican II changed the paradigm of priesthood from focus on cult to *pastoral love* as the root of all priestly life

and ministry—teaching, sanctifying, and ruling as aspects of shepherding the flock.<sup>38</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

1. Original French edition: *Des Profondeurs de nos coeurs*. Paris: Librerie Arthème Fayard, 2020.
2. In an open letter of January 14, 2020, Cardinal Sarah sought to tamp down the firestorm that erupted when the joint publication appeared. He outlined the consultations he had with Benedict XVI over the matter, particularly Benedict XVI's approval on November 25, 2019: "For my part, I agree that the text should be published in the form you have proposed." The two men are close friends.
3. The 2011 English version of Eucharistic Prayer II simplified the image of "standing" for "be in your presence."
4. Note 8, page 80: some years ago, the president of an Orthodox association of priests observed that fewer and fewer emancipated women agree to lead the demanding life of a cleric's wife.
5. Note 14: In fact, a student of the Ratzinger circle of former students, Marianne Schlosser, at a symposium in Rome on September 28, 2019, cited an 8th-century Syrian author: "the priest is the father of all the faithful. And so if . . . he marries, he can be compared to a man who marries his own daughter."
6. Encyclical *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*. June 24, 1967, no. 26.
7. He organizes the 47 Salesian mission communities, within 62 different ethnic groups, in all 612,000 Christians.
8. See Benedict XVI to Polish Clergy, May 25, 2006.
9. Press Conference on return flight from World Youth Day in Panama, January 27, 2019.
10. This chapter cites Benedict XVI, sometimes extensively, 26 times; Pope Francis is referred to 4 times.
11. Collins, Adela Yarbro, "Ancient Christians on Marriage and Celibacy: Readings of 1 Corinthians 7 in the Early Church," *Biblical Research* 64 (2019) 6–24, at 9.
12. See Vööbus, Arthur, *Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church*. Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 1951.
13. Vatican II, *The Ministry and Life of Priests*, no. 16.
14. *Constitutions of the Apostles*, VIII, 16, 4 (ed. F.X. Funk, 1, p 522, 13); cf. *Epitome of the Constitutions of the Apostles*, VI (ibid., II, p 80, 3–4); *Testamentum Domini*, (transl. I. E. Rahmani, Moguntiae 1899, p 69). Also in *Trad. Apost.* (ed. B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique*, Munster, i. W. 1963, p 20). One may also consult the Code of Canon Law, no. 277.1 and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1579, 1580.
15. See further in Ivereigh, Dr. Austen, "Let Us not clip the Wings of the Holy Spirit" *The Tablet*, 20 February, 2020—reproduced here in *Spiritian Horizons* 16 (2020).
16. The Greek is "a sister, a woman." Some argue that the reference must be to a virgin who lives with an apostle, not as wife, but as a housekeeper.

17. Cholij, Roman, "Priestly Celibacy in Patristics and in the History of the Church," 1. At [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_cclergy\\_doc\\_01011993\\_chisto\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_01011993_chisto_en.html) accessed May 12, 2020.
18. Some fathers of the church extrapolated that the apostles renounced the use of their marriage. See Galot, Jean, *Theology of the Priesthood*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984, 238.
19. "Bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and all other clerics having a position in the ministry, are ordered to abstain completely from their wives and not have children. Whoever, in fact, does this shall be expelled from the dignity of the clerical state" (canon 33).
20. For example, the Council of Carthage, 390 CE.
21. See Cholij, "Priestly Celibacy," 3.
22. Sozomen (375–477), *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 2, chapter 3.
23. *Ibid.*, note 55.
24. Many moderns hardly understand this notion of pollution or impurity. Such impurity was not ethical, rather cultic—prevents concourse with others and presence in holy places. Loss of body fluids was considered as small dyings (they did not yet know that the semen replenished itself by millions every night of youth). Death, as opposed to Life (God), was the ultimate uncleanness.
25. *Episkopos* is literally "overseer." Pauline communities were under presbyters/elders who in their capacity of pastoring the community were called overseers/bishops.
26. For what follows, I am indebted to Potterie, Ignace de la, "The Biblical Foundation of Priestly Celibacy," [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_cclergy\\_doc\\_01011993\\_bfoun\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_cclergy_doc_01011993_bfoun_en.html) accessed May 15, 2020 for the Latin tradition. For the Eastern tradition, I have recourse to Cholij, "Priestly Celibacy."
27. Corresponds to the interpretation of the Antiochene fathers, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrhus, who saw it in terms of marital fidelity and not prohibition of ordaining the remarried. See Cholij, "Clerical Celibacy," 1.
28. Potterie, "Biblical Foundation," 2. The complementary "wife of one man" is used in 1 Tim 5:9 for widows at least sixty years old.
29. Second marriages were always thought of in the early Church as a concession to incontinence, see Cholij, "Priestly Celibacy," 13, note 7.
30. *Ibid.*, 2.
31. Potterie, "Biblical Foundation," 7.
32. Cholij, "Priestly Celibacy," 5 and notes 35 and 36.
33. *Ibid.*, 5. Cholij mentions the Council of Beth Lafath (484) that, though recognizing the antiquity of this tradition, to eradicate or regularize clerical incontinence, abrogated the tradition, rather than the West that continued to reinforce it.
34. See Cholij, "Clerical Celibacy," 8. The East regards this Synod as part of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681–2), thus having supreme legislative authority. It presented "temporary" continence as what the Synod of Carthage (390) as "what the apostles taught and what antiquity itself has observed," when that Synod had declared perpetual continence (*continentes esse in omnibus*) so.
35. *Ibid.*, 9.
36. See Brown, Raymond, *Priest and Bishop: Biblical Reflections*. New York: Paulist, 1970, 16–17, 20.
37. *Ibid.*, 13.
38. "Thus, by assuming the role of the Good Shepherd, they will find in the very exercise of pastoral love the bond of priestly perfection which will unify their lives and activities. This pastoral love flows mainly from the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is therefore the center and root of the whole priestly life" (PO, 14).