

An aerial night photograph of the Vatican Museums dome and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The dome is illuminated from below, and the surrounding city lights are visible. A large orange semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing white text.

# Catholic Apologetics Priesthood & True Church





# Celibacy & the Priesthood

It is **NOT** Doctrine or Dogma

Eastern Rite Catholics – Married Priest are the Norm

- Unmarried Priest May Not Marry
- Married Priest, if Widowed, May Not Remarry
- All Bishops are Unmarried

Western or Latin-rite Church – All take Vow of Celibacy

- Rule has been in place since early Middle Ages
- Some are married who are converts from Lutheran and Episcopal

It **IS** a Disciplinary Rule





# Celibacy & the Priesthood

*Is Marriage Mandatory?  
Is Celibacy Unbiblical or Unnatural?*

## **But the bible says...**

Genesis 1:28 – “Be fruitful and multiply”

1 Corinthians 7:2 – “but because of cases of immorality every man should have his own wife, and every woman her own husband.” *(this is really to thwart the temptation to immorality)*

**Look further in Chapter 7 (8-9) – Paul actually endorses celibacy** – “Now to the unmarried and to widows, I say: it is a good thing for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control they should marry, for it is better to marry than to be on fire.”

**Even further in Chapter 7 (27-34) – Paul makes a case for preferring celibacy** – “Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek a separation. Are you free of a wife? **Then do not look for a wife ...** An unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided.”

**Keep Going in Chapter 7 (38) – Paul’s Conclusion** – “So then, the one who marries his virgin does well; **the one who does not marry her will do better.**”



# Celibacy & the Priesthood

*Is Marriage Mandatory?  
Is Celibacy Unbiblical or Unnatural?*

**Jesus weighs in on the subject by teaching the value of celibacy “for the sake of the kingdom (Matthew 19:11-12) -** He answered, “Not all can accept [this] word, but only those to whom that is granted. Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it.”

- The call to celibacy is a gift only granted to some...
- Others are called to marriage...
- It is possible to fall short of our own true calling – this does not mean we were not called!
- “Be fruitful and multiply” is not binding upon every individual – it is a general precept.

# Celibacy & the Priesthood

*Old Testament*

The Prophet Jeremiah – forbidden to take a wife because of his prophetic mission (Jeremiah 16:1-2) – “This word came to me from the Lord: Do not take a wife and do not have sons and daughters in this place”

*This is different from Catholic priestly celibacy, which is not divinely ordained, yet the divine precedent still supports the legitimacy of the human institution.*

## The Dignity of Celibacy & Marriage

The holiness of marriage is what makes celibacy precious  
Only what is good and holy in itself can be given up for God as a sacrifice

Fasting → goodness of food  
Celibacy → goodness of marriage

Celibacy is life-affirming

Childless were often despised in the OT

By renouncing marriage, the celibate affirms the intrinsic value of each human life

Celibacy is an eschatological sign to the Church, a living out in the present of the universal celibacy of heaven: “At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven.” (Matthew 22:30)



**“Call no one on earth your father;  
you have but one Father in heaven.”  
(Matthew 23:9)**

**God have us the commandment – “Honor  
your father and mother**

**Priests are “spiritual  
fathers”**

**There are numerous references to  
“father” in both the OT and NT**

**In Matthew 23:9,  
Jesus is showing  
the scribes and  
Pharisees how  
sinful and proud  
they were for not  
looking humbly to  
God as the Source  
of authority – not  
themselves!**

**Protestants use the term “Pastor” which means  
shepherd – Jesus said in John 10:16, “So there  
shall be one flock, one shepherd.”**

**A father must nourish, instruct, challenge,  
correct, forgive, listen to, and sustain – is this not  
what we want for our priest to do in our spiritual  
lives?**

**God have us the commandment – “Honor  
your father and mother**



# Aren't Priest Unworthy Because They Are Sinners?

**Donatism  
Heresy from  
4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>  
Century  
states  
effectiveness  
of  
sacraments  
depends on  
moral  
character of  
the minister.**

**St. Augustine  
notes no  
person is  
morally pure.  
God is the one  
who works  
and He is not  
restricted by  
the moral  
state of the  
adminisrtrant**

**The Church is  
holy but her  
members are  
not. The  
church is not  
made holy  
because of the  
people but by  
her sacraments  
and her  
message**

**Just like the sacrament of Baptism, Holy  
Orders cannot be undone. Once a Priest,  
always a Priest**

**Priests are not holy on their own account,  
but in the sacraments, they act on behalf of  
Christ who is holy.**

**CCC 1128** This is the meaning of the Church's affirmation that the sacraments act *ex opere operato* (literally: "by the very fact of the action's being performed"), i.e., by virtue of the saving work of Christ, accomplished once for all. It follows that "the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God." From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister. Nevertheless, the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them.



# The Inquisition

The primary task of the inquisition was to keep the Catholic Church free of heresy

**Detect heretics....To clear those falsely accused**

Paul warns against the threat of heresy in Acts 20:30 – “And from your own group, men will come forward perverting the truth to draw the disciples away after them.”

A necessary tool to protect Jesus' Church from errors and false truths

**Target of Inquisitors - Christians only – exclusively Catholics until 16<sup>th</sup> century**

**What General Methods were used?**

Initially, civil courts

Difficult to discern if accused person was a heretic

More of an Ecclesiastical Court used

Codes & manuals developed to Courts

Period of grace and confession of dissenting practices was offered

Trial only for those who refused to confess

Bottom line ... inquisition saved uncounted thousands of innocent people

**Was torture or execution ever used?**

Torture use on a limited basis

Execution never used in Church Court, only civil court

Many Protestant Reformers punished heretics with death

Bottom Line...Catholic Church did not kill thousands...the inquisition was not one monolithic event controlled by the Pope...it did not target non-Catholics and Jews...only Catholics or make-believe Catholics...it did not execute...used a church court system following strict rules...had extremely partisan enemies in the Protestants that used printing press to their advantage!





# Scandals in the Church

- OT had baby sacrifice and temple prostitution involving leaders
- Twelve Apostles
  - One betrayed Christ
  - One denied Christ
  - One refused to believe His Resurrection
  - All abandoned Him at the Garden of Gethsemani
- Church is both human and divine
  - Going to have scandal – human
  - Will last forever – divine

What Saint Paul said about the Jews in Romans 3:3-4 applies to us as well: **What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means!**

Christ remains faithful to the Church even if some members are not faithful as shown in 2 Timothy 2:13: **If we are faithless, he remains faithful – for He cannot deny himself.**




# Scandals in the Church

Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 13:24-30 that good and evil will exist side by side until the end of time:

He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. **When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well.** The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.”’”

**Again in Matthew 13:47-48:** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, **which collects fish of every kind.** When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away





How does/has the Catholic Church made the world better...you fill in the blanks...