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CATHOLIC LAWS FOR THE PEOPLE

Most Catholics believe that Church laws are only the Church's laws and that all must abide by them. However, that is not always the case. Little is known about "Book II" of The Code of Canon Law (1983, Coriden, Green and Heintschel), the book known as "The People of God," further explained as "The Obligations and Rights of all Christian Faithful."

Among these canons is #213 which reads, "The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors of the spiritual goods of the church, especially the word of God and the sacraments." This means that all Catholics have the right to a full Mass (even inside their own church building).

Also in Book II is Canon 290 which reads, "After it has been validly received, sacred ordination never becomes invalid." In other words, priests are priests forever—sacred pastors—even if they are married.

Elsewhere in The Code of Canon Law is Canon 843 which reads, "Sacred ministers [pastors] may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them." (See Canon 290 above.)

Bottom line: If a priest is missing from a church community, be it a regular or a vigiling parish that has closed, the congregation has the right—indeed the obligation—according to The Code of Canon Law to invite a married priest to celebrate Mass for the community. Permission comes from Canon Law. No other permission is needed.

Eighteen other Canons pertain to the legal/legitimate use of married priests by the Christian Faithful without permission from anyone. Information is available on the married priest website, www.rentapriest.com. Married priests are Priests Without Borders and therefore available for all sacramental ministry inside or outside church buildings. They are especially available to former/alienated/marginalized Catholics as well as non-Catholics.

Another Canon from the same Canon Law Directory, Canon 27, says that “Practice becomes custom in the church.” Like the use of female servers which finally were approved by the Vatican in the late 1980s, so can the use of married priests.

The more educated Catholics become about the laws that govern them, the more empowerment they will have.

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