

WHAT MANY OF US LEARNED IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND OTHER FACTS - UPDATED

1. Once a Roman Catholic priest, always a priest. (*Canon Law #290*)

2. Married Roman Catholic priests have been ordained for life with the obligation to say Mass and administer the sacraments if and when they are asked by their communities or by anyone in need. (*Canon Law #843*)

3. Married priests are still priests, but not clerics. The status of Cleric is a political position of authority in the institutional church. Married priests have been dismissed from the clerical state of being able to perform within the Church structure. They are often incorrectly referred to as "ex-priests" when they are really "ex-clerics." Ordination to the priesthood is permanent and is about spirituality and treating people as Jesus did in the Gospels. Married priests continue to do so legitimately under *Canon Law #290*. The sacraments they provide are valid sacraments.

4. At present there are 5,300* Roman Catholic parishes, which have no resident priest (cleric) to lead them. Many of those parishes have married priests in the congregation who are ready to celebrate Mass and administer the sacraments. If they are asked by the people to serve as priests, they must respond to the community with ministry according to *Canon Law #843* (**CARA, 2001*).

5. More than 25,000 Roman Catholic priests have married in the United States (approximately 400 per state) since the 1970s and more than 110,000 worldwide.

6. History fully supports a married priesthood. For the first 1200 years of the Church's existence, priests, bishops and 39 popes were married. (*39 Popes Were Married – see website*)

7. The shortage of celibate priests and seminary candidates is caused in large part by the man-made rule of mandatory celibacy, which was passed in 1139 at the Second Lateran Council. Before then, a married priesthood founded and served the Church with great heroism and distinction. (IN 30 YEARS, SEMINARY ENROLLMENT HAS DROPPED FROM 45,000 TO 3,500.)

8. In the July 18, 1993 issue of the *New York Times*, Pope John Paul II was quoted as saying that "celibacy is not essential to the priesthood."

9. Twenty-one church laws entitle Roman Catholics to utilize married priests when they so desire. In marriage, by virtue of *Canon 290*, their education, their ordination and 12 centuries of Roman Catholic tradition, priests retain their priesthood and the role of serving people as Jesus did.

10. The Eastern rites of the Catholic Church have kept the tradition of a married priesthood over the centuries (Byzantine Catholic Church, the Chaldean rite, the Coptic rite and others), and they are in communion with Rome.

11. Organizations of married priests who remain faithful to our Roman Catholic tradition and still perform the sacraments can be found in approximately 29 foreign countries and can be reached through www.rentapriest.com.

12. At present, there are over 100 married Protestant Ministers who have converted to Roman Catholicism and they are now serving as married priests in the Church. They are allowed to keep their families, administer all the sacraments, and do not take the vow of celibacy. Many of these priests are replacing the priests who have been removed from the same parishes because they married. This program called "*Pastoral Provisions*" is under the direction of Bernard Cardinal Law.

13. Over 70% of US Roman Catholics want a married priesthood right now. (*GALLUP, 1993*)

14. At present, Married Roman Catholic priests dismissed by the Church are refused retirement pensions after years of service. At the same time, pedophile and sex-abuser priests are financially supported by the Vatican and continue to receive their pensions and other benefits. (*Boston Phoenix, July 18, 2002*)

15. If your local priest is unavailable or not willing to accommodate your needs, you have specific rights according to Canon Law that allow you to call a married priest for help.

16. If you would like to form a Roman Catholic small faith community with your local married priest(s), please contact us at info@rentapriest.com or 1-800-PRIEST 9.

Canon Law #27: "Custom is the best interpreter of laws." Practice becomes custom and custom becomes law in the Catholic Church.

Sources:

Center of the Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) 1996, 2000.
Coriden, James A.; Thomas J. Green; Donald E. Heintschel. The Code of Canon Law. Paulist Press. 1985.
Ranke-Heinemann. Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven. Doubleday, NY.
Schoenherr, Richard and Lawrence Young. Full Pews and Empty Altars. 1993.
Sipe, A.W.Richard. A Secret World. 1990.
Smolinski, Delmar. Canonical Reflections on Pastoral Emergency and the Use of Married Priests in the Catholic Church. Catholic Resource Center, Brunswick, ME. 1995

See other side for Canon laws that empower the public to "summon" married/resigned priests to ministry.

CITI Ministries, Inc.

(Celibacy Is the Issue)

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To work toward the full utilization of married Roman Catholic Priests in filling the spiritual needs of the people of God.

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Canon Laws

Canon 213: “The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors out of the spiritual goods of the church, especially the word of God and the sacraments.”

Canon 290: “After it has been validly received, sacred ordination never becomes invalid.”

Canon 843: “Sacred ministers may not deny the Sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them, are properly disposed and are not prohibited from receiving them.”

Canon 844: “Whenever necessity requires or genuine spiritual advantage suggests, and provided that the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, it is lawful for the faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, to receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose churches these sacraments are valid.” (If we can lawfully receive sacraments from non-Catholic ministers, priests who married can provide the same, since utilization of Canon 844 is based on the premise of valid ordination.

Canon 1752: “...the salvation of souls..., is always the supreme law of the Church.”

A state of emergency occurs in the church when there is threat against the continuation of essential activities of the church. A shortage or unavailability of celibate priests has caused emergency situations regarding the Christian faithful's baptismal right to be assisted by their Pastors from the spiritual riches of the church, especially by the word of God and the sacraments, as noted above in Canon 213. Other examples of emergency sacramental administration that are permitted by the Code of Canon Law are “danger of death” (Canon 976), “reasonable cause” (Canon 1003:2), “grave inconvenience” (Canon 1323:4) and “just cause” (Canon 1335).

The remaining applicable canons include 226, 840, 845:1, 883:3, 897, 898,899: 1,2,3, 900:1, 911:2, 999:2, 1116, 1169:2.

The above Canons are in **The Code of Canon Law**, (Paulist Press), available in many libraries. *CITI Ministries. Research conducted by Delmar Smolinski, JCL, SWL.*

**WHAT
CATHOLICS
SHOULD
KNOW**

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