INTRODUCTION

On both sides of the Catholic debate on divinely established or Church ordered mandatory celibacy -- pro and con -- the discussion is almost always heated, and arguments are placed with greater regard to emotion than to logic or fact. Phrases like "it has always been this way" are used as often as "things must change," as though they were certainly true, or, in themselves, the authority for retention or change of the Church's current discipline. This paper hopes to present a factual history of clerical celibacy, followed by a critique of some of the common arguments carelessly given by its proponents and opponents. While historical writing is rarely free of the writer's cultural presuppositions, it is hoped that this present paper will annoy those of the modernist "left" who wish to abandon clerical celibacy because they have abandoned any Catholic understanding of the priesthood -- and that it will likewise annoy those of the modernist "right" who think that they can change the truths of history by changing the consensus of feelings about celibacy.

It is clear that celibacy has served well the Church and the clergy and religious who practiced it over the centuries, and that it will continue to do so in times to come. The Church has benefited from the devoted labors of those not encumbered by obligations to a spouse and children. Celibate religious have themselves benefited from the opportunity to focus solely on the things of God, and have provided an outstanding example of self discipline to others. Yet, the Church's discipline has varied over the years, has varied somewhat in our own time, and may very yet in the future. Ideally, disciplines like celibacy are established by the Church to promote the salvation of souls, both the souls of those who are expected to observe the discipline, and by the others who are effected by it. No one has a "right" to Holy Orders or to membership in a religious community. It is for the Church primarily, and for religious communities secondarily, to determine the conditions under which men and women will be admitted to Orders or to Vows. It is the author's hope that this paper will contribute to the peaceful acceptance of whatever the authorities of the Church determine to be appropriate in specific times and places; consonant with the dictates of orthodox moral theology.
THE WORD “APOSTOLIC”

The phrase “Apostolic See” refers, of course, to the Holy See of Rome under the governance of the legitimately chosen successor of Saint Peter at the time under discussion.

In any discussion of celibacy, a goodly number of texts will be referenced which claim to be “Apostolic” either in their titles or by some more specific claim. Apart from the canonical Scriptures such claims are doubtful at best. There are non-scriptural works which may or may not have been written by Apostles, and which may or may not be useful for historical purposes. There are creeds and canons which very dubiously claim apostolic authorship, but which are still useful in their own right. While we will encounter outright forgeries after the patristic era, most of the claims of apostolicity made by third or fourth century writers were sincere enough – the Apostles were alive until just a few generations before, and the writers sincerely believed that genuine apostolic thinking had been passed down to them – at worst they were writing what the Apostles should have written, or what they would have written if they had been consulted on a particular matter. It is this distinction between what should or would have happened, and what did happen, that distinguishes hagiography from history – a distinction of which readers of ancient and medieval texts must always be aware.

SOURCES OF REVELATION

“How do we know this to be true?” is a reasonable question to ask of someone making an assertion, particularly if the ground has not been covered before in the listener’s experience – the question does not convey incredulity, but rather, the desire to know and be able to defend the truth. Catholics are able to make use of the same sources of truth as other men, but have the additional guarantee that what has been revealed by God can only be inerrant truth. Divine revelation is recorded both in the sacred and canonical Scriptures, and in the Traditions (often with an upper case “T”) of the Church. The determination of what makes up authentic Scripture and Tradition is a role assigned by God to the Catholic Church. “Authentic Scripture,” of course, refers to the books of the Bible which the Church has declared “canonical.” Authentic Tradition refers to the truths revealed by God which come down to us (at least in the beginning) through oral testimony. Catholic Tradition is distinguished from merely human knowledge by virtue of having been the universal teaching
of the Apostles and Fathers of the Church about some matter of faith or morals. The bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is probably the best example—it is not written down in the Bible, but which was known to the Apostles, and was clearly taught by the Churches of Christendom from the very beginning and throughout the centuries. Our “traditions” in the more normal sense (lower case “t”) speak to the way in which we are accustomed to do things: fish on Friday, Latin Masses, May crowning, and priestly celibacy are good examples. Such traditions can be identified by the fact that they are customs developed by the Church, either non-existent or varying with time and place since the time of the Apostles or their later introduction. Since (capital “T”) Tradition is a source of God’s revelation, it is beyond the authority of the Church to change, eliminate, or selectively observe it.

**Magisterium and Jurisdiction**

It is not possible to be a Catholic without acknowledging the teaching authority of the Church and Her jurisdiction over the Baptized. It is for the magisterial teaching authority of the Church to determine what constitutes Scripture and Tradition, and how theses sources of revelation are to be interpreted in practical matters. The Church’s own official teaching on Its authority can be found in the documents of the First Vatican Council.\(^1\) It may be useful to recall that the Church’s teaching authority extends to matters of faith and morals, and is exercised through the bishops and/or the Pope. When not exercising their magisterial authority and when not addressing matters of faith or morals, Popes and bishops are generally reliable and weighty teachers of the faith, but are nonetheless capable of error and even outright heresy. Infallibility does not extend to matters of history or science or economics, or anything beyond matters of faith and morals. When collectively exercising their magisterial authority, their pronouncements are universally binding and irreformable. This being the case, it is clear that the Church’s rulings on clerical celibacy, which have varied considerably with time and place, fall under the Church’s disciplinary jurisdiction, are not matters of dogma, and are the subjects of moral theology only insofar as one is required to obey the disciplinary laws of the Church.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Especially Session 4, **18 July 1870**, “First dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ.” [http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6](http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/V1.HTM#6)

Note well that the Church is competent to establish Her own disciplinary laws, apart from, and in addition to, those matters which pertain to faith or morals. The Church is a society, not merely a collection of individuals with the same goal. The power of "binding and loosing" given to Saint Peter and to the disciples refers not only to the rare occasion on which a Pope or Council defines some matter of faith or morals, but extends to the disciplinary needs of the Church as a perfect society.³ Eating pork on abstinence days, by way of example, does not bring about a ritual impurity as it did in the Old Testament, but is sinful because it is a transgression of Church Law – a disruption of God's Society on earth. The Church is likewise competent to make laws and choose its candidates for Holy Orders based on the qualifications it feels necessary for the salvation of souls as well as for the salvation of those seeking ordination. It is extremely important to note that the disciplinary decisions of a particular diocese or local synod do not bind the entire Church. Even Roman synods generally bind only those territorially subject to the Pope as Metropolitan of Rome. And even the universal disciplines instituted by a particular Pope or Council are subject to change as future authorities deem necessary.

Any society that claims to be guided by law must be consistent in its application of that law. Laws must be public, not enacted in secret or otherwise unknowable to those who need to know -- they must be promulgated. When laws go long un-enforced or are enforced only with caprice or discrimination; when laws are imprudent, causing more harm than good; they cease to be laws in the mind of the governed. Immemorial or centenary custom contrary to human law acquires the force of law.⁴ Needless to say, it is the mark of a corrupt society when lawgivers hold themselves above the law, or refuse to enforce it with respect to their friends and benefactors or those who know something potentially embarrassing about them.

THE ELUCIDATION OF DOCTRINE

Early Christianity borrowed almost all of its philosophical tools from the pagan Greeks, with a lesser contribution from the pagan Romans.⁵ As She grew, the Church was more and more frequently called upon to explain Her doctrines in terms that made sense to the

³ Matthew xvi: 19; xviii: 18
⁴ Cf. o.c. 27; n.c. 24 §2.
⁵ Volume I of Father Frederick Copleston, SJ's A History of Philosophy (Gadren City: Image, 1962) may be useful to the reader unacquainted with the early history of philosophy.
educated pagans who had for centuries labored to produce a logically coherent world-view. Together with Judaism, Christianity was unique in worshipping a God who had actually entered human history – a personal God. In Greco-Roman philosophy, “god” was more of an “organizing principle” that made sense out of an otherwise chaotic universe. Even the gods of the common people tended to be mere anthropomorphic representations of this or that aspect of God (fertility, love, war, etc.) rather than actually existent personages. Christianity had doctrines, conveyed by divine revelation, that were completely unknown to the pagan philosophers who had been entirely dependant on the light of natural human reason. Christianity had concepts like the Trinity, the Eucharist, and the Sacraments, which had never been conceived, let alone addressed, by thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Seneca. Thus, Catholic philosophers and theologians were forced to address concepts and to develop terminology appropriate to those concepts that had never been taken on by the sages of the ancient world.

By way of illustration, the educated Christian of the first century knew that there was one God, but somehow there was a Father, a Son, and an Holy Ghost. Somehow, they were one, but seemed to have separate attributes: somehow One could know the Other, love the Other, send the Other, and be spoken about in a list that somehow united three Others with the conjunction “and.” There was somehow a spiritual substance which all three possessed in common, somehow. One of these Others was somehow true God while also being true man; His physical human body was somehow conceived by one of the purely spiritual Others; somehow in the womb of a woman who would never “know man.” Did this second Other somehow have a human soul? Did He somehow have a human will?

Catholic theology was thus faced with the monumental task of creating the intellectual apparatus capable of taking all of the somehow’s out of the paragraph above and replacing them with terminology that consistently and coherently, without exception, made sense of all these propositions garnered from divine revelation. Before the Incarnation there had been very little need for men to distinguish concepts like “the person,” “the soul,” “the individual,” “the nature,” “the will” – Christianity made such distinctions imperative. Christianity, indeed, required that clear cut, hair splitting, permanent meanings be associated with the terminology of the Incarnation. And, if that were not enough, agreement had to be reached that this particular term or phrase in Greek carried precisely the same meaning in Latin, or visa versa.
Until the twelfth century, Western scholars worked without the benefit of most of Aristotle’s teachings – particularly that on logic. Only with the Crusades were the missing works of Aristotle, preserved by the Moslems, translated from Arabic into Latin and become available to the Scholastics. This is not to say that the ancient Latin West was illogical per se, but it did labor without the tools of careful logical non-contradiction. Logical scrutiny became almost a sport with the schoolmen, who relished in dissecting the works of their opponents and pointing out their contradictions. Without this sort of analysis the contradictions implied in a “sinful Sacrament” or a “Christian ritual impurity” eluded some of the best minds. (That Presidents, Popes, and Prime Ministers can get away with the contrarian behavior which they do is a testimony to the fact that in spite of technological development the latter part of the twentieth century was the beginning of a new “dark age” in which many of our people were not taught the grammar of their own language, and have never received instruction in logic apart from a course in mathematics or computer programming – and have no clue at all that these things can be taken from the abstract and applied to the real world in which we must live and work out our salvation!)

It is no one’s fault, but the Church needed centuries to sort out Her philosophical concepts concerning marriage. Marriage, with the procreation of children, was the primordial command of God, and even the pagan could see that it was good – but – and this is important – that it was a good easily capable of misuse. The Old Testament seemed to suggest that even the legitimate use of marriage brought about some sort of defilement or enmity with God. But so did a number of other things (the touching of a corpse, for example, or a leper) that no longer had any force under the New Law. Thus, Catholic theology had at least two major questions to answer for itself about marriage: In spite of the Council of Jerusalem, did the ritual prescriptions of the Old Law somehow still apply to marriage under the New Law (and, if so, in what ways); and, were there ways in which even legitimate marriage might be misused and descend to the sinful level of fornication?

Some of this “elucidation of doctrine” was not complete for over a thousand years (it may never be absolutely complete). A, perhaps more obvious, example than the morality of marriage is our understanding of the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament –

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somewhat vague until the thirteenth century Saint Thomas Aquinas proposed a sound explanation of transubstantiation based on the Aristotelian concepts of separate but united substance and accidents. Inevitably, the process of elucidation took occasional wrong turns. Fallible human minds, including some of the greatest minds in Christendom, would advance their theories – sometimes to be accepted, but more often to be further refined by their co-workers. We, therefore, will find works bearing the names of great Catholic authors propounding opinions that do not quite measure up to what the Church ultimately came to include in her approved theology.

CITATIONS

In following the scientific method, physical scientists – chemists and physicists for example – are expected to supply the details of the experiments which they have conducted during the process of testing the particular theory at hand. These details allow other researchers to duplicate the experiments and to determine for themselves whether or not the original scientist’s theories are verified in fact. Enough detail must be supplied that the secondary researchers can duplicate all the relevant parameters of the original experiment. For the historian, directions for experimental verification are replaced by information adequate to allow the reader to consult the sources quoted by the author, so that the former may determine that quotations are accurate and may examine them in context in order to see if the author’s interpretations are reasonable. The availability of footnotes proves nothing unless the reader is willing to at least “spot check” them for accuracy and interpretation in context. Particularly when an assertion sounds “a bit off” the reader ought to make a point of evaluating the quality of the source and the author’s use of it.

In this writing the notes will be used only as citations, so the reader need not jump back and forth between the text and the notes to see if they provide additional explanatory matter – they will not. Where Internet URLs are available they will be provided to facilitate source checking. If the number of citations seem to favor optional celibacy this is not by design. Particularly for the patristic era decrees favoring mandatory celibacy seem not to have made it into the public arena with the same frequency as those allowing some option. Writings ordering mandatory celibacy tend to be quoted as “snippets” with no context, or can

be found in context only in expensive, multi-volume patristic series or on pass worded internet sites not available to the general reader. It is for the reader to decide whether this comparative lack of publication is deliberate or not.

ABBREVIATIONS


HE: Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History.

HE (Soc): Socrates’ Ecclesiastical History.


Latin: http://www.intratext.com/X/LAT0011.HTM
DEMOGRAPHICS OF CELIBACY

Modern people are often surprised when they hear for the first time that, in the not to far distant past, most marriages were arranged by the bridal couples’ families. Modern attitudes hold marriage to be an expression of romantic love (at best), or as nothing more than a vehicle for self gratification. That the primary end of marriage might be the procreation and education of children, or that the family might be the fundamental unit for dividing labor in order to stay alive, are notions foreign to many in the twenty-first century. But both of these ideas were taken more or less for granted during most of the time the Catholic Church has been one earth, and for centuries before.

For most of our recorded history people have viewed their grasp on the planet, and particularly on their part of the planet, as somewhat tenuous. Famine, war, disease, and natural disaster were always viewed as potentials for annihilation. The single most important way for society to survive any of these calamities was to keep population levels high and growing. Man has the responsibility to reproduce himself; particularly if he holds the sacred Faith revealed by Jesus Christ, and those who would replace him do not.

Intimately coupled with the imperative of reproduction is the need to survive on a day by day, year in and year out basis. For most of our history this survival has amounted to a direct confrontation with nature to provide the necessities of life. The confrontation was more or less serious depending on the local climate. In the rural world – which is not where history is written, and not where the great decisions of Church and Empire are made, but where most people lived before modern times – the confrontation required man to derive everything he required out of his natural surroundings. There was no Sears-Roebuck catalog, and no shopping mall beside the highway. Rural life is labor intensive today, and was all the more so in the early days of the Church. The fields must be cultivated, the animals must be tended, the eggs gathered, the milk obtained and made into butter and cheese. Buildings and tools must be fabricated and kept in repair, cloth spun and woven, animals skinned and hides tanned, shoes and belts, and pants and shirts made and repaired. Nothing comes canned or frozen in paper or plastic. Little can be put off until tomorrow without loss. Time must be spent in bartering what one has for what one needs; money generally being scarce or nonexistent.
No one can do all of these things by himself, so, traditionally people lived in extended families and depended upon the labor of husband, wife, children, and neighbors.

Conditions varied somewhat over the centuries and with geographical location, but in general we can say that in areas under Roman influence the agricultural effort was well organized on the large estates known as latifundia; the barbarian invasions disrupted large scale agriculture in favor of much smaller hamlets of perhaps a half dozen households; only with the rise of feudalism toward the end of the first millennium was there a resurgence of large manorial estates. The smaller the village, the less it is likely that anyone can survive as a “specialist” – a blacksmith, a carpenter, a cook, or a priest – only in large villages can the agricultural workers afford to support the one who does specialized work and free him from the tasks of rural life.

But, Christianity started out as an urban religion. Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria … a glance at the Acts of the Apostles will yield the name of one urban center after another where Paul stopped to preach in the city’s synagogue. In the cities celibacy is considerably more practical than in the countryside. For a city of any size to function, arrangements must be made for the inhabitants to satisfy their material needs without keeping and slaughtering livestock, growing grain, tanning hides, and so forth. Barter has to give way to a money economy, so that a man can exchange his services for a convenient medium of exchange, and then pay for the things he needs. There will have to be lodgings were he can rent a room, markets and restaurants were he can get his meals, tailors to make and mend his clothing, barbers to cut his hair and shave his beard, perhaps a physician…. If the city is to function, market forces or government will see to it that all of the necessities of life can be obtained in the local economy.\(^1\) And, in doing so, they will have insured that it will be possible for a man to live in the city as a celibate priest – provided, of course, that there are enough people who want the services of a priest and are willing to pay for them, or that he is able to work at some job required by the urban economy. (Saint Paul, for example, made tents to support himself.\(^2\) He also had the benefit of the Mediterranean climate, and of moving in Jewish circles, with their strong tradition of hospitality.) But shortly after celibacy

\(^{1}\) *The Time Travelers Guide to the Roman Empire*, www.channel4.com/history/microsites/H/history/guide03/part02.html will provide an idea of the complexity of urban life in ancient Rome.

\(^{2}\) Acts xviii: 3; 2 Thessalonians iii: 8.
began to be legislated by the local synods of the West in the fourth century, invasion and epidemics began to hit the cities especially hard, and drove people into the rural areas where a celibate existence would be more difficult. Simultaneously, the decrease in village size made exclusive specialization difficult, and the extended family more necessary.

The monasteries facilitated the celibate life by being a combination of extended family and small city. What would be done by husband, wife, and children for each other was done by the monks for each other. And as the size of a monastic foundation grew, it might have a few men that specialized as blacksmiths, carpenters, cobblers, and such. “Ora et labora – pray and work” is the motto associated with Saint Benedict’s monks. “Idleness is the enemy of the soul; and therefore the brethren ought to be employed in manual labor at certain times, at others, in devout reading.”3 The monastery would give shelter to travelers, and sold its goods at market (at lower than market price). Benedict even envisioned the education of children, if not their procreation, in this extended family – both the noble and the poor could offer their sons to God’s service in Benedict’s monasteries – the Rule made provision for treating them in a manner appropriate to their age.4

Saint Benedict’s Rule clearly implied a celibate life for his monks. All of their time, sunrise to sunrise, every day of the year, is spoken for; they sleep in their habits, in a common dormitory. Much more than celibacy, the Rule required a general renouncement of self, much like the one described by our Lord in Matthew xix. The monk was relatively isolated from home, family, friends, and at least the control of property. But here again, the Barbarian invasions hit the monasteries hard. And then, after the commotion of the invasions settled down a bit, Europe’s feudal reorganization brought some changes that seriously reordered the life of the monks, sometimes threatening the celibate life even among monastics.

After the invasions, many populations found themselves without secular leadership and looked to the authority of bishops and abbots for guidance in reorganizing society. As a result, these ecclesiastics became the lords of large landed properties, and were recognized by

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3 RSB, chapter 48
secular governments as having civil authority and responsibilities. The Abbot served not only at the pleasure of the Church, but also at the pleasure of the king. Since his responsibilities were to both Church and state, he had to be someone acceptable to both. Thus begun the problem of “lay investiture,” about which we will hear for many centuries of Church history. Investiture by the civil authority conferred a great deal of wealth, in return for which the recipient – clerical or lay – was expected to make various payments. In modern terms, we might say that the king granted a “franchise” and provided the “capital plant” to the recipient, for which the recipient was expected to make a “down payment” and other payments under specified times and conditions. This could easily appear to be “simony,” the buying or selling of a holy thing – in our case the abbacy of a monastery. But, more importantly for the consideration of celibacy, it meant that abbots and bishops might be men who acquired appointment by little more than court influence and making the right payment – worse, they might be, or live like, laymen who considered the benefice as nothing more than an investment. “Commendatory” abbots and bishops were men who held the title to a particular benefice, but who hired a substitute to perform their duties while collecting the revenues from that benefice, be it a diocese or an abbey.\(^5\) It was not unheard of for a man to hold more than one benefice “in commendam,” without personally attending to any of them. (Although, in earlier centuries, secular lords made such appointments to benefices, technically the term “commendatory” is used for those absentee abbots appointed with the approval of the fourteenth century Avignon Popes and their successors, in spite of the abolition of such things by the “Gregorian reform” of the eleventh century. The seventeenth century opponent of the commendatory system, Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, was himself appointed as commendatory Abbot of La Grand Trappe at the age of ten!)\(^6\)

While it is tempting to fault the absentee lay abbots, things could only have been worse if they had moved into their monasteries – as they sometimes did. Imagine the disruption caused to monastic life by the introduction of the abbot’s wife and daughters, boisterous sons, dogs, horses, cattle, pigs, and numerous dandy callers and guests. Laxity can be infectious, and there are occasional reports of married abbots allowing the same privilege

\(^5\) Women could also hold such benefices, but had to delegate their duties to a substitute. See Phillip Hughes, *A History of the Church* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1979), vol 2, p. 199-201.

to their monks. The eleventh century Abbot Erluin, sent to reform the monastery at Lobbes, is said to have been blinded and his tongue cut out by the monks who preferred living with the wives and families permitted by the previous commendatory administration. Lobbes was not unique.  

The idea of dioceses, abbeys, and other benefices as property raised a second problem in the middle ages, as property laws tended to deal only with the rights of individuals to inherit and minimized the possibility of a perpetual corporation holding title without interruption. A man, a woman, or even a child might hold a benefice, but for a long stretch of European history the holder was a human person and not a corporation. The transfer of property ownership might be by the direct appointment of the king, but more likely it was to the owner’s heirs after confirmation by the crown (following the payment of the customary fee). Where a bishop or an abbot had sons, he would certainly attempt to have them succeed him in office.

There were also “proprietary” monasteries, established by secular rulers who retained the right to appoint the abbot or abbess and to install their landless sons and unmarriageable daughters as monks and nuns living in aristocratic style. The abbots of such proprietary institutions were often relatives of the ruler, or men whom the ruler needed to reward for feudal service (possibly married laymen, holding the benefice in commendam). All of this was contrary to the Rule of Saint Benedict, which prescribed the democratic election of new abbots by “the entire community, in fear of God.” As one might imagine, monasteries populated by the nobility had a much higher standard of living than that envisioned by Saint Benedict, with monks or nuns being waited upon by servants. In some houses only the upper classes were accepted among the professed.

In the rural areas many parish churches were proprietary. As the population began to expand following the invasions, new manors were developed on previously uninhabited lands. In order for the lord of the manor and his people to attend Mass conveniently, the lord might set aside a few acres for a church and the maintenance of a priest. The priest was just slightly

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7 Phillip Hughes, *ibid.*
10 RSB, Ch. 64.
above the level of a serf, worked his own land, and required the services of an extended family to stay alive. He had little formal education, and it made good sense for him to train his sons for the priesthood in the same way the other specialist workers of the village trained theirs, by apprenticeship. At this level, refusing the right of a priest to keep his wife and children was a strong inducement to concubinage.\textsuperscript{11}

While the laws of celibacy may have some basis in Christian theory, they were not always practical in all times and places.

THE JEWISH CULTURE OF JESUS AND THE APOSTLES

Our Lord and His Apostles were born into Jewish culture -- a culture formed in large measure by the divine revelation of God's Law to Moses. Jewish culture prized chastity, but not always in exactly the same way as Christianity does. A man might have two wives, and sometimes more.\(^1\) He might put away his wife if she displeased him by some form of "indecency" -- yet, a woman having relations with a second husband became defiled with respect to the first if he were still alive.\(^2\) When asked whether there was any cause for which a man might put away his wife, our Lord answered that a man and wife are "no longer two, but one flesh," and that such a thing was allowed only by Moses who, "because of the hardness of your heart, permitted you to put away your wives, but it was not so from the beginning."\(^3\) To those who replied that it was "not expedient" to enter such permanent marriages, He countered that "some men must make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven" -- a bit of hyperbole, like that of "cutting off the hand or foot" that causes one to sin -- the concept of being a eunuch was so detestable under the Mosaic Law (eunuchs were excluded from Jewish society) that this clearly indicated how important God considered marital fidelity.\(^4\) Nonetheless, even while declaring the inviolability of the marriage bond, our Lord advocated a more merciful attitude toward sinners than the Mosaic Law, including those caught in adultery. The Mosaic law prescribed death by stoning for both the man and the woman, but we heard our Lord say: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her."\(^5\) The death penalty, while still lawful, is no longer mandatory under Divine Law.

Moses demanded virginity among unmarried women, and death to the woman who feigned virginity in order to marry, for "she had played the whore in her father’s house."\(^6\) Abstinence was honored among widows -- the Old Testament widow Judith, for example, was honored for her fidelity to her deceased husband, as well as for her prowess against the Assyrians -- likewise the New Testament Anna, the prophetess daughter of Phanuel, who

\(^1\) Deuteronomy xxi: 15.
\(^2\) Deuteronomy xxiv: 1-4
\(^3\) Matthew xix: 3-12.
\(^4\) Ibid.; Matthew xviii: 7-9; Deuteronomy xxiii: 2.
\(^5\) Deuteronomy xxii: 22; John viii: 1-11
"lived as a widow to eighty-four years." But a woman who lost her husband might expect to wed his brother in order to raise up children to the first brother's name. Men and women were expected to marry, and among the married, fecundity was a blessing and an obligation, while sterility was a curse. For the Jews, as for any people, children were the only true insurance against famine, invasion, and natural demise – “Behold, sons are a gift from the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward … they shall not be put to shame when they contend with enemies at the gate.” The Psalmist, in describing how God punished His people for their infidelities, includes the statement that “their maidens were not betrothed.” A few ascetic organizations practiced celibacy -- the Essenes, for example -- but they were far from the mainstream of Jewish life and held beliefs foreign to orthodox Judaism, some identifiably gnostic.

The Law held life sacred. It required the death penalty for murder. Paradoxically, at least for the Western mind, it visited a number of ritual impurities on those who came into contact with the means of making or taking life and with the dead, yet, on occasion the very blood of life was used in holy ritual. Blood, the ultimate symbol of life, was never to be consumed; but blood was to be sprinkled upon the altar regularly, priests were to be anointed with blood, and the people were sprinkled with it in purification. There was a ritual impurity incurred in childbirth, in menstruation, and in the emission of seed. Not surprisingly, uncleanness was incurred in connection with the improper treatment of life. Impurities were incurred for eating unclean animals, animals that were killed improperly, or died in the wild. Defiled were those who had relations with a menstruating wife, a neighbors wife, a man, or an animal. God personally struck Onan dead for withdrawing from his deceased brother's wife. No matter how innocently such impurities were incurred, the priests were forbidden

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8 Deuteronomy xxv: 5-10.
9 Genesis xvi; Deuteronomy vii: 14; 1 Kings i; Psalm cxxvii; Matthew i: 36, 58; etc.
10 Psalm cxxvi.
11 Psalm lxxvii: 63.
12 Leviticus vi: 26-27; xvii; i: 1, 5, 11, 15; 8: 23-24; Exodus xxiv: 3-8.
13 Leviticus xii; xv.
14 Leviticus xi; xxi.
15 Leviticus xviii: 19-30.
16 Genesis xxxviii: 9
even to "draw near the sacred offerings which the Israelites consecrate to the Lord." Many of
the ritual impurities required ritual purification; baths, or at least the passage of time.\textsuperscript{17}

To the degree that it was possible, Jewish society existed in extended families. James and John continued the fishing business of Zebedee, together with the families of Simon and Andrew. Mary put all else aside to help Elizabeth in her pregnancy, and in turn was supported by Mary of Cleophas, a blood relative who was the mother of James the Apostle, a cousin of our Lord.\textsuperscript{18} In a real sense, all of Israel was intended to be a sort of super-extended family. The Mosaic Law was filled with admonitions that God's people must look out for one another: there were regulations about keeping Jewish servants, protecting each other's livestock, prohibiting usury, punishing disruptive crimes, and mandating hospitality for the traveler and the hungry.\textsuperscript{19} When we hear about the disciples picking grain on the Sabbath, there is no question but that they are entitled to feed themselves from what is growing on the land of Israel.\textsuperscript{20}

The organization of Jewish society made it possible for our Lord and His disciples to preach the Gospel in Israel. Without this notion of a family-like hospitality it would have been humanly impossible for thirteen men and their occasional entourages to go about the land with little financial backing. The seventy-two disciples, sent two by two, without wallet or purse, into every town and place where our Lord was about to come had a right to hospitality as well as to a reward for their labor.\textsuperscript{21} Nonetheless, the men and the women who accompanied our Lord and His Apostles made real sacrifices. The "land of milk and honey" had not been truly the extended family of the Mosaic Law for centuries -- foreign conquest and internal dissention had disrupted that for a very long time. Indeed, as head of the Apostles, Peter asked what sort of recompense they might receive for leaving "houses, or brothers, or sisters, or fathers, or mothers, or wives, or children, or lands" -- even in Israel they were making a great effort -- but the reward, of course was to be "a hundredfold" plus "life everlasting."\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{17} Leviticus xxii: 1-9.
\textsuperscript{18} Mark xvi: 1.
\textsuperscript{19} Deuteronomy xxi - xxiii.
\textsuperscript{20} Matthew xii; Mark ii; Luke vi; Deuteronomy xxiii: 25-26.
\textsuperscript{21} Luke x: 1-12.
Yet it must be recognized that detachment from the comforts and conveniences of life was not simply a consequence of the mission -- this detachment was more than just the practical realities of life on the move that might have to be faced by a soldier stationed overseas or even by a traveling salesman -- it was not simply the result of seeing to the needs of the poor and preaching to the ignorant. The detachment our Lord called for was a means to the end of focusing one's life on eternity by divorcing one's self from the enjoyment of temporal things. "Those who wear fine clothes and live in luxury are in the houses of kings.... If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me."\(^{23}\) Some time later our Lord's admonitions would be summed up in the vows taken by many in the religious life: "poverty, chastity, and obedience." Yet, the various works of detachment, the "evangelical counsels," are called "supererogatory works" -- they are advised for those seeking a high degree of union with God, but are not strictly necessary for salvation. Sometimes they are taken as temporary or permanent vows; sometimes they are pursued for a time, or at times -- the Apostles went back to Galilee for a time and Peter to his fishing, and Paul suggested that the married might occasionally abstain from relations for a time insufficient to cause temptation.\(^{24}\) The "counsels" are often practiced with varying degrees of emphasis on each of the three. And, though the priesthood or religious life might take a person permanently away from his origins, there has never been much of a movement by religious (let alone seculars) to vow the avoidance of the parents, brothers, sisters, family homes, and hierarchical position also mentioned by our Lord.

In the religious life, in which men or women live in community, chastity and obedience must be absolute -- the centuries have proved it virtually impossible for religious communities to be made up of families rather than individuals, and it is likewise impossible to imagine a house of, say, fifty or sixty monks or nuns in which each is free to follow his own will. The house or the order, though, may have its own standards for poverty. Even though, in theory, the vowed religious owns nothing, the order owns property which it makes available to the members for use. There are considerable differences in the use of property between one order and another, and, to a lesser degree, between houses of the same order, and

\(^{24}\) John xxi: 1-14; 1 Corinthians vii: 5.
between the ranks of individuals within a house. (We will also take note of an exception to
the rule of celibacy among professed religious when we come to the military orders.)

It is significant to recall that the eremitic or monastic life of the early Church was
lived largely by lay people, not by those in Holy Orders. The ordained clergy were generally
city dwellers. Christianity spread from population center to population center; first to those
cities having a synagogue, and later to those that did not. Monasticism, be it in the forest, on
the mountain, or in the desert was not an attempt to spread the Faith, but rather a concentrated
effort to practice the Faith by individuals or small groups. Where there were ordained priests
among the monks, their numbers were only adequate to serve the sacramental needs of the
community. There are exceptions, of course, such as those living under the Rule of Saint
Augustine, modeled more or less on a Platonic philosophical brotherhood, or those living in
similar scholarly conditions under the Rule of Saint Basil -- educated priests generally serving
urban centers, more like the later canons regular than monks. 25

The Rule of Saint Benedict is more typical, as well as being more widespread in the
West. It allows for the occasional admission of priests to the monastic community at the
abbot's discretion, and for the abbot to choose a few of his monks for ordination, provided in
both cases that sacramental dignity of the individual not be allowed to interfere with the
discipline of the monastery. 26 Saint Benedict's rule is thought to be based on the earlier,
amonymous, Regula Magistri -- Rule of the Master, which envisioned Eucharistic reservation
for daily Communion in the monastery church where Mass was offered only rarely, and then
by priests from outside the monastery, as the abbot and monks were not in Holy Orders. 27 The
Historia Monachorum in Ægypto speaks of priests among the desert dwellers, perhaps more
often than other sources, but as in Benedictinism they are few relative to those not in Orders. 28
Certainly, many monks of the desert were without the daily ministrations of the ordained
clergy.

02084a.htm; s.v. "Rule of Saint Basil" http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02322a.htm; s.v. "Saint Basil the
Great" http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02330b.htm
31-34. That the monks received Communion daily is clear from chapters XXI and XXII of the Rule.
28 The Lives of the Desert Fathers, a translation of the Historia Monachorum in Ægypto by Norman
index s.v. "Clergy."
In any event, the majority of those in Holy Orders during patristic times were not under the supererogatory vows of religion. And even in the middle ages when celibacy had become widespread for the Western clergy, the suggestion that seculars ought to be under the supererogatory vow of poverty was treated as heresy.\textsuperscript{29} This in spite of the fact that "selling what you have, and giving it to the poor" is emphasized far more often in the Gospels, than the abandonment of wife and family.

\textsuperscript{29} Council of Constance (1414-1418) condemned errors of John Wycliffe, \textit{Denzinger} 590, 616, 684,
MATTHEW 19, MARK 10, AND LUKE 16-18

There are two passages, each recorded in all three of the synoptic Gospels, which are referred to by those who claim that the celibacy of the clergy was mandated by our Lord. The events are related at opposite ends of the chapters mentioned above – the chapters are fairly long, so only the relevant passages are given here, but, as always, the reader is urged to examine them in their proper context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Luke</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19:3. And there came to him the Pharisees tempting him, saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 19:4. Who answering, said to them: Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And he said: 19:5. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. 19:6. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. 19:7. They say to him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? 19:8. He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 19:9. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery. 19:10. His disciples</td>
<td>10:2. And the Pharisees coming to him asked him, tempting him: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? 10:3. But he answering, saith to them: What did Moses command you? 10:4. Who said: Moses permitted to write a bill of divorce and to put her away. 10:5. To whom Jesus answering, said: Because of the hardness of your heart, he wrote you that precept. 10:6. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. 10:7. For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife. 10:8. And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. 10:9. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. 10:10. And in the house again his disciples asked him concerning the same thing. 10:11. And he saith to them: Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery against her. 10:12. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she</td>
<td>16:17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fall. 16:18. Every one that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.</td>
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| 22   | say unto him: If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry.  
19:11. Who said to them: All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given.  
19:12. For there are eunuchs, who were born so from their mothers womb: and there are eunuchs, who were made so by men: and there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it. |
| 22   | committeth adultery. |
| 22   | The Rich Man and Lazarus  
Avoiding Scandal  
Forgiveness of Injuries  
The Unprofitable Servant  
Ten Lepers  
Coming of the Kingdom of God |
| 22   | Jesus Blesses the Children  
The Danger of Riches |
| 22   | 19:27. Then Peter answering, said to him: Behold we have left all things, and have followed thee: what therefore shall we have?  
19:28. And Jesus said to them: Amen I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel.  
19:29. And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting.  
19:30. And many that |
| 22   | 10:28. And Peter began to say unto him: Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee.  
10:29. Jesus answering said: Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,  
10:30. Who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time: houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting.  
10:31. But many that are first shall be last: and the last, first. |
| 22   | 18:28. Then Peter said: Behold, we have left all things and have followed thee.  
18:29. Who said to them: Amen, I say to you, there is no man that hath left home or parents or brethren or wife or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake,  
18:30. Who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. |
It is hard to see that our Lord was dealing with anything other than the permanence of marriage in the first set of citations above. The Mosaic Law allowed a man to issue a bill of divorce to his wife if he was “displeased with her because he finds in her something indecent.” The traditional rabbinical interpretation of this was that adultery was grounds for divorce. But by the time of Christ, the rabbis of the Hillel School were interpreting “indecency” in far more liberal grounds – practically speaking, to use Matthew’s phrase, “for every cause,” or any cause. The Pharisees asked Jesus His opinion, and must have been taken very much aback when told that even the strict interpretation of the Mosaic Law was not in accord with God’s actual will. The wording is a bit tricky, and there is some debate among Christians as to just what exactly Jesus meant to allow (divorce for adultery, divorce if the relationship was found to be incestuous, separation of bed and board for adultery, or for adultery and other causes). Some of the debate hangs on the use of the word “porneia -- πορνεία” for “adultery,” or some other form of immorality, but it is clear from the context that our Lord was being more restrictive than Moses. The Catholic position, of course, is that there is no such thing as divorce, and that any “putting away” is no more than the formality of civil law necessary to protect one’s rights in the event of a foreseen long term or permanent separation. “The Lord commands that a wife is not to depart from her husband, and if she departs, she is to remain unmarried or to be reconciled to her husband.”

On hearing what our Lord said to the Pharisees, the disciples made the observation that if marriage is to be so completely binding, it might not be “expedient to marry,” and thereby incur this lifetime liability. Our Lord indicates that there is some degree of choice in the matter: “All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given…. there are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it.” Taken in context, He seems to have been saying that while the Mosaic Law was yet in

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2 1 Corinthians vii: 10.
force, Jews might make use of its traditional prescription, but would do better not to remarry if they found themselves with an unfaithful wife. It is highly unlikely, that at the same time as He raised marriage to a level more exalted than even that which it enjoyed under the Mosaic Law, He was exhorting people in general not to marry. “Go forth and multiply” is God’s primordial Commandment, eons old when Moses came down from Mount Sinai.

In that the Mosaic Law is no longer in force, our Lord’s words remain an admonition that some people are unsuited for marriage, even though they are good Catholics – before entering marriage, they ought to weigh the spiritual cost of a possibly unsuccessful marriage, and ought to avoid it if they foresee the disaster of divorce. This is the most obvious interpretation of our Lord’s words, that “marriage is not for everyone” and that prudent people will consider their own situations and personalities, and those of prospective spouses, and may abstain from marriage to avoid being placed in a later occasion of sin – but, of course, not all will do so. For many people, finding marriage inexpedient is not necessarily a permanent thing. Marriage may not be expedient with this particular person at this particular time. Another, more suitable, person may come along in a year or two – or ten. The passage of time itself may make a difference – presumably a person matures emotionally with age – able to assume the responsibilities of marriage at thirty, even though such was unthinkable at twenty. Or maybe a few years in the military are needed to develop the self reliance, responsibility, and reliability needed – or maybe just a few years in industry, learning to deal with people under real world conditions.

Those who quote Matthew xix to find scriptural justification for mandatory celibacy may well be doing the priesthood and religious life an injustice. Having a religious vocation is not the same thing as finding marriage inexpedient! The decision not to marry does not automatically inspire one to a life in the Church – the essential attractions to God and to prayer and to the salvation of souls are not necessarily infused into all celibate people – even relatively holy ones who will persevere in the state of grace as single people. And the reasons why one finds marriage inexpedient can, in many cases, make a religious vocation equally inexpedient – short temper, self will, irresponsibility, infidelity, addiction, or homosexuality will not work any better in the religious life than they will in married life. When Saint Paul described the qualities needed in bishops and deacons to Timothy and Titus, he described men who had all the qualities of good family men – men who were, or at least could have been,
successful husbands and fathers. To the degree that people are made to believe that the choice between Matrimony and Holy Orders is an “either/or” decision based on expediency, the Church is made to be a dumping ground for unmarriageable misfits.

The Church can and does make use of one phrase (Matthew xix: 12) taken out of context – accommodating the text to another meaning in much the same way the sapiential writings are applied to the Blessed Virgin. By such accommodation, one might make the case that our Lord might also have been saying that one could and/or should devote one’s life to spiritual things and avoid the entanglement of marriage through voluntary celibacy. But even that interpretation does not prescribe mandatory celibacy for one who is free to marry. It is, perhaps, a good idea, a suggestion, or a recommendation – but not a command. Even in the accommodated sense it is for “he that can take it”—if, in fact, that is what our Lord had in mind. (For more on the “accommodation” of biblical texts, see below, “Hagiography or History.”)

It seems very unlikely that, if our Lord intended to impose mandatory celibacy on His followers or on His clergy, He would have phrased His command as little more than a “throw away line” in a discourse on a different subject. And it seems further unlikely that this highly important command would fail to appear in the other two synoptic accounts of the same event. Mark and Luke may not have been eyewitnesses as Matthew was, but the concept of celibacy would have been so unique to Jewish men (to most men, really) that they could not have failed to learn about it from those who were there when Jesus made this amazing announcement, and they would not have failed to include it in their accounts. For those who insist that Jesus mandated celibacy in Matthew’s account, the omission by Mark and Luke is on par with omitting “thou shalt not murder” from a list of the Ten Commandments.

At the end of the chapters in question, the synoptic Gospels each record Peter’s question about the reward the Apostles would gain for having left all things and following Him, and each quotes a slightly different answer by our Lord. Those who would like to “prove” that out Lord mandated celibacy for the Apostles and their successors generally quote Saint Luke’s answer, which places less emphasis on property ownership and hierarchical rank within society than the others. Saint Mark’s answer doesn’t even mention leaving a wife, and suggests (with Matthew and Luke) that the things of the world will be returned to those
generous enough to give them up, but that all worldly things are apt to cause difficulty in some way.

Our Lord was speaking in general terms, saying that those who were generous with the things that were dear to them on God’s behalf would be rewarded, here, and particularly, in the kingdom of heaven. Rather than giving the Apostles a list of prohibited things, He was calling to their minds a general list of things that could and might have to be given up in their mission. As mentioned before, some of these things might be given up permanently, or for a time or times. And again, if these accounts were supposed to record a command of mandatory celibacy, they fail utterly in making that clear – something very unlikely if our Lord had actually given such a command to a following of male disciples. Were it not utterly out of character, taken out of the greater context of the Gospels, one could even make the case from these passages that the Apostles were to be faced with the tribulation of being rewarded with a hundred wives here on earth!

**Lex Orandi**

It has often been said that the way the faithful person prays is the best indicator of what he believes and considers significant among the things he believes or tacitly accepts – “Lex orandi, lex credendi.” One who prays the Rosary every day probably does “believe in God the Father Almighty,” and in the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension, and Assumption. The Church’s official prayers likewise disclose what It believes in its practical (as opposed to its more theoretical) mind. The Mass and Office are normally without the exaggerated rigorism and hyperbolic speech found in more transient pronouncements and popular piety. Compare, for example, the horrific stories of what Purgatory will be like, with what is found in the Canon of the Mass – souls “gone before us with the sign of faith, resting in the sleep of peace,” with the hope of “comfort, light, and peace.” It is interesting to see how the Church has incorporated Saint Matthew’s nineteenth chapter in Its official prayers, the Mass and the Office – to see just what weight the framers of the Western Church’s liturgy assigned to the idea that Matthew xix prescribed or advocated celibacy. What follows was gathered from the Roman Missal and Roman Breviary of 1960, but a cursory examination suggests that earlier editions were much the same. To be thorough, a few other elements from the Nuptial Mass
and from the Common of Virgins, and some observations about the use of the Common are included.

To avoid confusion, it should be noted that Mary, the most blessed ever-virgin Mother of God, is always considered apart from the other Virgins and Holy Women of the Missal and Breviary. She has a goodly number of votive Masses, proper texts, and her own common. Her feasts may be of the first, second, or third class, while the feasts of the other virgins are always third class. Without prejudice to Mary’s perpetual virginity, when we speak of “Virgins” liturgically we are speaking not of Mary, but of the other virgins who have been raised to the honors of the altar. Also, for purposes of this writing, the calendar under consideration is that of the Universal Church, and not of a nation or diocese which might have a virgin saint for its patron and honor her with a feast of first or second class.³

There are two significant sections in Matthew xix, the section that speaks to the indissolubility of marriage (3-12), and the section concerned with leaving “house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands” (27-29). The intervening section (13-21) is used liturgically, incontestably dealing with the perfection of obedience through poverty, alms giving, and the following of Christ.⁴

Verses 27-29 are assigned to the Common of Apostles and the Common of Abbots, and often constitute the Gospel for saints falling into those two classes. The same text is used for a number of other Confessors.⁵ Depending upon the rank of the feast, there may a homily on the Gospel of the feast in the third nocturn of Matins. It is reasonable to hold that the Church has chosen these commentaries because they provide an authentic interpretation of the Gospel’s meaning. We find the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apostles outside of Paschaltide</td>
<td>Saint Bede the Venerable</td>
<td>By giving up their possessions, giving alms to the poor, and following Christ, the Apostles will have great glory in heaven, judging even the angels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbots</td>
<td>Saint Jerome</td>
<td>We must give up family connections, and we must also follow Christ, but there will be earthly compensation. Jerome disputes those claiming an earthly millennium, pointing to inappropriateness of being rewarded with 100 wives among the hundredfold earthly reward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbots</td>
<td>Saint Bede the</td>
<td>Discusses judgment day in connection with Matthew xxv. Earthly rewards will flow from the affections of others for those who have followed Christ.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

³ Cf. Missale vel Brevarium Romanum (1960), General rubrics Nos. 35-46.
⁴ Cf. 20 July, feast of Saint Jerome Aemeliani.
⁵ E.g. 12 February, the Seven Servite Founders; 20 May, Bernardine of Sienna; 17 July, Saint Alexis.
In short, nothing in the Missal or Breviary interprets Matthew xix: 27-29 as requiring celibacy, or the perpetual abandonment of temporal things. Even Saint Jerome does nothing more than point to the obvious absurdity of having a hundred wives; he says nothing about the possibility of returning to one’s proper wife after some missionary work (as appears to be the case with the Apostle and/or the Deacon Philip).

The first part of Matthew xix (3-12) is a little harder to pin down. If the intent of the passage were clearly to mandate or even advocate celibacy, one would expect to read it in the Mass and Office of men known for their celibacy; Saint Aloysius Gonzaga (June 21), for example, or Saint Gabriel Adolorata (27 February), but it is not. Given the Mosaic Law’s allowance for men to put away their wives, and the term “eunuch” employed by our Lord, it is more clearly directed to men, and only metaphorically to women, but in fact it is read for no male saint. The Missal is rich with votive Masses that quite appropriately might include a call to celibacy: Masses for the blessing of abbots, and of abbesses; for the blessing and consecration of virgins; for the religious profession of men, and of women; for asking for, and for the strengthening of ecclesiastical vocations; for asking for and the strengthening of religious vocations; not to mention the Masses for the various grades of ordination from Porter through Pope. None of these include the reading of Matthew xix: 3-12 for the Gospel.

Not surprisingly, our Lord’s words on indissolubility are read at marriages. Only verses 3-6 are read, understandably, for by the time the Gospel is read at the nuptial Mass, it is a bit late to be reminding the bride and groom that marriage is not for everyone, or that they should consider making themselves “eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven.”

But surely the entirety of Matthew xix: 3-12 must be read somewhere in the Roman Missal – and it is, on the feast of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr, 6 February. There is no corresponding homily on the Gospel in the Office, for the rank of her feast does not require three nocturns. The details of Saint Agatha’s life and death are highly elusive, so we cannot even conjecture why this Gospel was chosen; but for whatever reason, the Church has assigned this reading as proper to her feast . . . and to no other. (We may conjecture about the reason when we treat of Pope Saint Damasus.) The reading does also appear following the

6 CE s.v. “Saint Agatha” http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01203c.htm
second common for Virgin-Martyrs, *Me exspectavérunt*, as a possible alternative to the usual Gospel reading of Matthew xiii: 44-52, “the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field.” There is even a homily on the Gospel for this alternative reading in the Breviary, written by Saint John Chrysostom.\(^7\) Saint John takes the position that our Lord (whose speech never has an unintended consequence) did intend to demonstrate the possibility and even the desirability of virginity in this passage, but, taken as a whole His sermon, like the words of our Lord, is directed at the indissolubility of marriage. It is quite possible, however for this alternative Gospel and the corresponding homily *never* to be read. It is given as an alternative, and printed in a place where the priest might not discover it until he has already read the Gospel from Matthew xiii – and 1960 was still a time when most priests substituted *nothing* in the Mass unless is was specifically required by a rubric in the *Missal* or an entry in the diocesan *ordo*. With regard to the hand missals of the laity, the *Maryknoll Missals* of the 1960s don’t even give a reference as to where it may be found. Within the altar *Missal* as used for the Universal Church there is no rubric calling for Matthew xix in the Mass of any Virgin-Martyr other than Saint Agnes. In the Office, the homily would only be read in the uncommon event that the day is celebrated as a first or second class feast.\(^8\)

Other readings (equally unlikely to be read) include:

**First Nocturn:** 1 Corinthians vii: 25-40:

Now, concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. I think therefore that this is good for the present necessity: that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But if thou take a wife, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned: nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. But I spare you. This therefore I say, brethren: The time is short. It remaineth, that they also who have wives be as if they had none: And they that *weep*, as though they *wept* not: and they that *rejoice*, as if they *rejoiced* not: and they that *buy* as if they *possessed* not: And they that *use* this world, as if they *used* it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away.

But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord: how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world: how he may please his wife. And he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world: how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your profit, not to cast a snare upon you, but for that which is decent and which may give you power to attend upon the Lord, without impediment.

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\(^7\) Saint John Chrysostom is cited as “Homily 63 on Matthew, about half way through.” It appears that the correct citation is Homily 62.

\(^8\) Cf. *Brevarium Romanum* (1960), General rubrics of the Roman Breviary Nos. 167-170
But if any man think that he seemeth dishonoured with regard to his virgin, for that she is above the age, and it must so be: let him do what he will. He sinneth not if she marry. For he that hath determined, being steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but having power of his own will: and hath judged this in his heart, to keep his virgin, doth well. Therefore both he that giveth his virgin in marriage doth well: and he that giveth her not doth better. A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband die, she is at liberty. Let her marry to whom she will: only in the Lord. But more blessed shall she be, if she so remain, according to my counsel. And I think that I also have the spirit of God.

Note that Paul begins by stating that he has no divine instruction about virgins, and goes on to state his reasonable opinions about the greater spirituality of the unmarried state, while still recognizing the indissolubility of marriage. “It is good for man to remain as he is.”

Second Nocturn: The text in the Breviary is adapted from Book 1, chapters II and III of Saint Ambrose’s much longer letter to his sister Marcellina on virgins.9

This is a virgin’s feastday, and our love of chastity prompts us to say something on the subject of virginity; lest, by ignoring it, we give the impression of obscuring what is, after all her principal virtue. For virginity is praiseworthy not merely because it is found in Martyrs, but because it makes Martyrs. What human character could be expected to embrace a virtue which nature itself does not include it among its laws? And who can express in natural speech what is beyond the nature’s experience? It is a virtue summoned from heaven, to be imitated upon earth. It was in heaven that this Virgin found her Spouse; and from heaven, therefore, not unnaturally, she took her rule of life.

Beyond the clouds she went, beyond the air, the Angels, and the stars, and in the very bosom of the Father she found God’s Word, and took Him to herself with all her heart. Who would find so great a good and let it go? For “Your name spoken is a spreading perfume – that is why the maidens have loved You, and have drawn You.” “Those who neither marry or are given in marriage will be as Angels of God in heaven” – and these words are not mine. "[Postrémo, non meum est illud quóniam, Quæ non nubunt neque nubentur, erunt sicut Angeli Dei in cælo.] United to the Lord of angels, is there any wonder that they should be compared to Angels.

Who then, would deny that heaven is the wellspring of this way of life, which is hard for us to find on earth, except after God’s coming in human flesh? It was then that a Virgin conceived in her womb, and the Word was made flesh, that flesh might become God. The observation might be made that Elias too remained uninvolved in the delights of bodily union. True enough; and that is why he was caught up in the chariot to heaven; that is why he appeared in glory with the Lord and will come again as a herald of the Lord’s final coming.10

The lessons start out well enough. Virginity “makes martyrs”; certainly true in times of persecution. It is not unreasonable to accommodate the love poetry of Canticles to the love of virgins for God. But following that Saint Ambrose presents a classic example of one-line-out-of-context-accommodation run amok. Tactfully inviting the reader to think that he is quoting our Lord – “and these words are not mine” – he badly accommodates a line from

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9 http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-10/Npnf2-10-37.htm#P6979_1781576
Matthew xxii: 30, “Those who neither marry or are given in marriage, will be as angels of God in heaven.” The quote is inaccurate, and these are not words concerning a virgin, but rather a widow who has known seven husbands! Our Lord spoke them explaining how, in heaven, the number of marriages one contracted on earth would no longer matter – not exactly a selling point for earthly celibacy.


My dear brothers, often enough I have warned you to shun evil-doing and to avoid the contamination of the world, but today’s Gospel reading forces me to say more. You must observe great caution, even in the process of doing good deeds. In doing good, you must not seek to win men’s grace and favor; nor must you allow any desire for praise to creep in, robbing of its inward reward what has been done merely for outward effect. For consider these ten virgins our Redeemer speaks of. All of them are virgins, He says, yet they are not all admitted through heaven’s gateway. Some of them, while ostensibly anxious for the glorious reward of their virginity, are unwilling to keep a supply of oil in their vessels.

But first we must ask what is meant by the kingdom of heaven, and why it is compared to ten virgins, of whom five are called wise and five foolish. Everyone knows that the reprobate are not allowed into the kingdom of heaven. Why then is it said to be like foolish virgins? We must realize that often in sacred Scripture the kingdom of heaven stands for the Church as it exists at present. Thus in another passage the Lord says, “The Son of Man will send forth His Angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all scandals.” But there cannot be any scandals needing to be gathered out of the kingdom of happiness where peace reigns supreme.

Everyone has five bodily senses. Now twice five is ten. Since, therefore, both sexes are represented in the multitude of the faithful, the holy Church is said to be like ten virgins. But in the Church the bad are mixed up with the good, the reprobate with the elect. It is therefore rightly said to resemble wise and foolish virgins. For there are many who in self-denial refrain from desiring outward things, and are attracted to interior things by the virtue of hope. They discipline the body and long for heaven, their homeland, with all their heart. They look to receive rewards that are eternal, and scorn human praise for all the work they do. They certainly do not parade their glory before men’s eyes; they keep it undercover in their own consciences. But there are also many who, while practicing self-denial, do so merely to win human regard.  

Keeping to the context of the Gospel, Saint Gregory suggests that the Gospel refers to the entire Church, commending prudence over foolishness in the things necessary to salvation. He reminds us that even good actions may be made void when they are done in order to gain the admiration of others.


I will give glory to thee, O Lord, O King, and I will praise thee, O God my Saviour. I will give glory to thy name: for thou hast been a helper and protector to me. And hast preserved

11 Ibid., pp. 888-891.
A simply beautiful acknowledgement of God’s protection of those who trust in Him. “Thou didst save me from evil and preserve me in time of trouble…. Therefore I will give thanks, and praise thee, and bless the name of the Lord.”

**Alternative Second Nocturn:** Saint Cyprian of Carthage on the discipline and dress of virgins.

Cyprian’s praise of virgins is a bit hyperbolic, but not unreasonable for a saint’s feast day. At odds with Saint Paul, Cyprian suggests that virginity is the “keeping of the Lord’s life-giving commands,” but then goes on to recognize that in Matthew xix, our Lord did not urge the prudent avoidance of marriage on everyone. Saint Cypian’s tendency toward judaizing is mentioned elsewhere in this paper – in this nocturn he quotes the passage in Apocalypse xiv which the Church normally accommodates to the Holy Innocents (who died during the tenure of the Mosaic Law), suggesting that men are defiled by women, and women by men.

**Alternative Third Nocturn:** Saint John Chrysostom, homily 62 or 63 mentioned above. It is interesting that the homily on Matthew xix: 3-12 was left to a Patriarch of Constantinople, where clerical celibacy has never been required, except (after the Council in Trullo, which Rome did not accept) for bishops.

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\(^{12}\) *Ibid.*, pp. 897-899, but we have given the more stately Douai translation.
Perhaps it is the demon of liturgical “reneawal,” or perhaps it is the work of the Holy Ghost. Some other writer will have to discuss the question of why these lessons are printed in the Breviary, and why they may, possibly, never be read liturgically.

Those who celebrate (or attend) daily Mass know, all too well, that there is a paucity of texts for the Masses of Virgins. Unless some aspect other than virginity is important in the saint’s life (e.g. Saint Therese of Lisieux, 3 October; or Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, October 17) the Gospel is almost always Matthew xxv: 1-13, the parable about the five wise and the five foolish virgins. The other possibility is the parable about the “treasure hidden in a field” (Matthew xiii: 44-52). The first of these contrasts wisdom with foolishness, and the “virgins” could just as well been “caterers,” or some other group of people – the second metaphorically extolls someone’s virtue for an unspecified reason. Without a whole lot of imaginative metaphorical thinking, neither of these two Gospels has anything directly to do with the virtue of virginity! Why are Gospels that extoll the virtue of virginity not used? Simply because there are none that exist.

Though the Common of Virgins is a somewhat “mixed bag” of the Church’s teaching, the rites of Matrimony are unequivocal statements of the holiness of Christian marriage. No where do they refer to “ritual impurity” or “defilement” or “shameful lust”:

The Exhortation Before Marriage, prefixed to the rite given in the Roman Ritual, “a custom of very long standing in the U. S.” tells us:

Beloved of Christ. You are about to enter upon a union which is most sacred and most serious. It is most sacred, because established by God Himself. By it, He gave to man a share in the greatest work of creation, the work of the continuation of the human race. And in this way He sanctified human love and enabled man and woman to help each other live as children of God, by sharing a common life under His fatherly care.

Because God Himself is thus its author, marriage is of its very nature a holy institution, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. But Christ our Lord added to the holiness of marriage an even deeper meaning and a higher beauty. He referred to the love of marriage to describe His own love for His Church, that is, for the people of God whom He redeemed by His own blood. And so He gave to Christians a new vision of what married life ought to be, a life of self-sacrificing love like His own. It is for this reason that His apostle, St. Paul, clearly states that marriage is now and for all time to be considered a great mystery, intimately bound up with the supernatural union of Christ and the Church, which union is also to be its pattern….

The epistle of the nuptial Mass, Ephesians v: 22-33 continues this theme of Saint Paul:

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Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. He is the saviour of his body. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ: so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. As the church is subject to Christ... The church then, according to St. Paul, is ever obedient to Christ, and can never fall from him, but remain faithful to him, unspotted and unchanged to the end of the world. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and delivered himself up for it: That he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: That he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the church: Because we are members of him, body, of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother: and shall cleave to his wife. And they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament: but I speak in Christ and in the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular love for his wife as himself: And let the wife fear her husband.

By now, we have memorized it, but anyway the Gospel for the Mass is from Matthew xix: 3-6:

At that time, there came to Jesus some Pharisees tempting him, saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who answering, said to them: Have ye not read, that he who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And he said: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

The nuptial blessing is given after the Lord’s Prayer, and contains the words

O God, your mighty power created all things out of nothing. You, having laid the foundations of the world and made man in your likeness, gave this man an inseparable helpmate, fashioning woman's body out of his very flesh, and thereby teaching us that it is never lawful to put asunder that which it pleased you to form out of a single substance.

God, you sanctified the bodily union of husband and wife [excellénti mystério coniugálem cópulam consecrásti] by a great sacrament, thus foreshadowing, in the marriage bond, Christ's union with the Church. God, you joined woman to man, and endowed this primal union of theirs with the one and only blessing that was not forfeited either in punishment of the first sin or under sentence of the flood....

HAGIOGRAPHY OR HISTORY

In that the Gospels at most hint about the desirability of mandatory clerical celibacy or consecrated virginity, it is easy to lose patience with those who claim to see clear requirements for these things where, at most, they are vaguely implied. Particularly when the same proponents choose to ignore the much more explicit writings of Saint Paul. It is difficult not to feel that dishonesty or extreme ideological bias is at work. Yet, that is not necessarily so.
Modern readers are used to evaluating evidence on a straightforward basis: We gather what seems to support a position, compare it with whatever seems to go against the position, and draw a conclusion one way or the other based on the comparative “weight” of the evidence – or, perhaps, admit that the evidence is too equal or too scant to form a conclusion either way. If we come across someone who ignores the available evidence and demands an unwarranted conclusion, we begin to suspect his motives or his intellect or both. This judgment of motives may not always be appropriate in evaluating the motives of patristic and medieval writers, who often introduce a more subjective (and therefore debatable in itself) element of “fitness” into their analysis of the facts. They write of what they feel should have been, or what they feel should have happened, rather than what was or did. We find this with great regularity in reading “hagiographies,” the edifying biographies of the saints.

For example, historians, both those living in the patristic era and those living today, are well agreed that the Emperor Constantine, although favorable to Catholicism and often referred to as a Christian, was not baptized until he was on his death bed in 337, and then by the Arian Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia. But to have the first Christian Emperor baptized by an heretical bishop would not be fitting – so the hagiographers generally have Constantine baptized by Pope Silvester in the Lateran palace in Rome, often with mention of a miraculous healing from leprosy (sometimes spiritual, sometimes physical). The hagiographer isn’t lying, He is not falsifying history, for he never set out to write history. The hagiographer writes to edify the Christian faithful, to show them the greatness of God’s providence, and His ability to effect His plans through the use of holy men and women – and to impress his readers that they too should become holy men and women. Of course, any one can baptize, even an Arian – but it is more fitting for Constantine to be baptized by the miracle working Pope – and a much greater demonstration of God’s power that it should be so.

We also have a liturgical tradition of accommodating biblical writings to subjects other than those of the original texts. There is no deception involved, but most of us were a

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14 Ibid.
15 See, for example Eusebius, Life of Constantine, Bk. 4, Ch. LXI-LXIII http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/25024.htm or www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-01/Npnf2-01-30.htm#P8068_3311663 for a patristic historian, and Philip Hughes, A History of the Church, Vol 1, pp. 198-199 for a modern one.
bit startled when we first realized that those “epistles” in the Masses of the Blessed Virgin were taken from the Old Testament. No one seriously thinks that our Lady was physically there when God “established the heavens … marked out the vault over the face of the deep … and fixed fast the foundations of the earth” – but those words certainly do call to mind how fitting it was for God to conceive the Immaculate Mother of His Son in His mind from all eternity. It is likewise fitting to acknowledge Mary as “the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge and of holy hope,” a description likewise from the Old Testament. We like the fitting imagery of Mary crushing the enemies of God’s people, as she does in the person of the Old Testament Judith on the feast of the Assumption – but no one really thinks of her as exactly as Judith. With great moderation, even the love poetry of the Canticle of Canticles is occasionally (and well) accommodated to our Blessed Lady. Even though there may be no real connection between the scriptural passage and its accommodated subject, it is fitting that the former be called to mind to emphasize some attribute of the latter. Why then would we be surprised when the patristic mind quotes a passage about the permanence of marriage to argue for clerical celibacy when the words are fitting?

There is, too, a less fortunate aspect of this problem. Mandatory clerical celibacy has been impressed on the minds of many Catholics for many centuries, to the degree that they consider it inseparable from the Catholic Faith – as though it were a defined dogma or a revealed part of divine positive law – it is something, they have come to believe, that Catholics may not doubt without ceasing to be Catholics. They react – in varying degree, of course – as advised by Saint Ignatius Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises:

Thirteenth Rule. To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white which I see, is black, if the Hierarchical Church so decides it, believing that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, there is the same Spirit which governs and directs us for the salvation of our souls. Because by the same Spirit and our Lord Who gave the ten Commandments, our holy Mother the Church is directed and governed.

It matters not that the Hierarchical Church has defined no such thing, for even great theologians fail to make such distinctions when something that is so inextricably tied up with

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17 Epistle for December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Proverbs viii: 22-35).
18 Epistle for July 16, Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Ecclesiasticus xxiv: 23-31).
19 First nocturn of September 8, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (Canticles i: 1-16).
the life long experiences of their religion is questioned. Since heretics and schismatics have challenged it before, any such challenge is now thought to be a heresy or a schism. It is not fitting to think otherwise, even if, perchance, the otherwise might be true. The mind can accommodate itself: the white must be black.

Galileo got himself in trouble for challenging authority (just after the Reformation, when Authority already had more than enough challenges to deal with). He had the impudence to suggest that the physical sciences were best learned through empirical experiment, rather than by consulting the learned (pagan!) authorities of antiquity. Aristotle and Ptolemy were intelligent men, to be sure, but their pronouncements just didn’t square-up properly with what observers actually saw and measured in the universe around them. To Its everlasting credit, the Church was already prepared – with the help of men like Saint Augustine – and eventually adjusted to the questioning of scientific authorities.

Centuries later Leo XIII would quote Augustine in an encyclical on Biblical interpretation in the light of Scientific criticism (Saint Robert Bellarmine had expressed the same ideas at the time of the Galileo affair):

"as St. Augustine warns us, "not to make rash assertions, or to assert what is not known as known."(51) If dissension should arise between them [science and theology], here is the rule also laid down by St. Augustine, for the theologian: "Whatever they can really demonstrate to be true of physical nature, we must show to be capable of reconciliation with our Scriptures; and whatever they assert in their treatises which is contrary to these Scriptures of ours, that is to Catholic faith, we must either prove it as well as we can to be entirely false, or at all events we must, without the smallest hesitation, believe it to be so."

(51) In Gen. op. imperf. ix., 30.
(52) De Gen. ad lft. i. 21, 41.

Ironically, Saint Augustine is one of those who sometimes relied on what was “fitting,” without adequately weighing other evidence, yet who in his own sphere is accepted much like Aristotle, without question, even though the Church may teach otherwise.

"How do we know ______ to be true?" "Because Saint Augustine said so."
"How did Saint Augustine know ______ to be true?" "Because he was Saint Augustine."
"But how did he know?" "Because he was a Doctor of the Church."
"And how do Doctors know ______ to be true?" "Because they are infallible."
"They're not, but even if they were, how would they know." "They just know."
"You mean, because Augustine said so?" "Yeah! There you go!"

21 Pope Leo XIII: Providentissimus Deus (On the Study of Holy Scripture) November 18, 1893
http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/l13provi.htm
There is nothing wrong with filling in the lacunæ of salvation history with speculation as to what would have been “fitting” – nothing wrong with recognizing the great wisdom of men like Augustine, and habitually consulting their opinions. There is a problem, though, when modern people, not familiar with the patristic genre, mistake hagiography for history, and, on the basis of “authority,” take what is “fitting” for what is fact.

**OPTIONAL EXERCISE:**
We know that our Lady was perpetually a virgin. Had she not remained so, she would have run afoul of the precept of the Mosaic Law given in Deuteronomy xxiv, defiling herself with respect to her Spouse, the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures portray her as observant of the Mosaic Law in all things – and sinless in every way. Her bodily Assumption is ample proof of enduring sinlessness. It will be left as a simple exercise for the reader, without appealing to the authority of Saint Augustine, to determine “How do we know the statement that as a child Mary took a *vow of virginity* to be true?” (A passing grade will require a list of all evidence considered, pro and con, and a brief statement as to how the evidence was evaluated.)
THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

Our Lord is well known to have said, "I have come not to destroy the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill.... Whoever does away with one of these least commandments, and so teaches men, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven...."

It is necessary to see a distinction between the Natural Moral Law that was incorporated into God's revelation on Mount Sinai, and the merely ritual prescriptions which embellished the Mosaic Law. The Natural Moral Law cannot be abolished, having been set in the mind of God before all creation. To the best of his abilities man must worship the one true God in the way He desires to be worshipped; man must honor his family; he must not kill, cheat, steal, lie, or lust after his neighbor's wife and property -- these things can never change. Following our Lord's lead, mankind may deal with infractions of the law with greater mercy than that shown by the mandatory penalties of the Mosaic law -- human society may elect on earth not to put to death murderers or those who lie with someone else's wife, an animal. or another man, but these things remain seriously sinful under heaven. Not even the Church can give permission to violate the prescriptions of the Natural Moral Law.

What has been abolished, however, are the ritual prescriptions of the Mosaic Law that do not include the Natural Law. Christians are not required to circumcise their children or present them in the temple while offering a sacrifice of purification for the ritual guilt of childbirth; not required to observe the restrictions and complexities of keeping a Kosher household; not required to number their steps and abstain from doing much of anything on the Sabbath; no longer become unclean by touching blood or a corpse or by having relations with a wife, even in her flowers. The eunuch and the leper are no longer excluded from all contact with society. The myriad of animal and cereal sacrifices of the Mosaic Law have been replaced with the single Sacrifice of the Cross and Its Eucharistic renewal in time and place.

In some ways the Law has been augmented. As we have seen, there is no longer any cause which justifies putting away one's wife. The hospitality and the mercy and the fair dealing that used to be required among Israelites is now required toward all men. Forgiveness of the repentent has become unlimited. We have now the Sacraments of the New Law.
Some of the changes to the Mosaic Law come directly from our Lord: the Mass and Sacraments, of course; the prohibition of divorce, and our different understanding of the Sabbath day, for example. The Kosher food laws were almost entirely repealed in the vision given to Saint Peter on his way to baptize the centurian Cornelius, the events of which Baptism were themselves a confirmation of the Church's mission to all nations.\(^2\)

Not all of the new Christians were pleased with this abrupt departure from the Mosaic Law. For many who had been raised Jews, doing away with the Law was unthinkable. This was a constant problem for Saint Paul in his efforts among the gentiles. Just about everywhere he went, he began his preaching in the synagogue, so some number of his converts were from Judaism. His gentile converts, however, had no enthusiasm for being circumcized, or for keeping kosher, or for any of the other innumerable regulations of the Mosaic Law. To make matters worse, not all of the Apostles wanted to argue the point with the converts from Judaism. Saint Peter and Saint Barnabas feigned the practice of the Law before the Jewish converts, for which Paul rebuked the former "to his face.... For I through the Law have died to the Law that I may live with God"\(^3\) Yet, we know that Paul himself yielded to the pressure of the former Jews and circumcized Saint Timothy.\(^4\)

Saint Paul's dissimulation came surprisingly soon after the Apostles met in Council at Jerusalem and declared that henceforth converts were to required only "to abstain from anything that has been contaminated by idols, and from immorality and from anything strangled and from blood."\(^5\) The prohibition of idolatry and immorality was essentially a statement that Christians were required only to keep the Natural Law, the first and second "tablets" of the Ten Commandments, respectively. Even without any recourse to the revelation given to Moses, this Natural Law could be known through human reason. It could also be found in embryonic form in the earliest chapters of Genesis: the worship of the true God, the permanence of marriage, the prohibition of murder, intelligent dominion over creation, and the command to be fruitful and multiply.\(^6\) Jerusalem's prohibition on strangulation and taking blood may not be so obvious to unaided human reason. In Genesis,

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2 Acts x.
3 Galatians ii: 11-21
4 Acts xvi: 3.
Noe was given the law demanding that human bloodshed be punished by the same, and also that animals killed for food not be eaten with their blood. Blood represented life, so Noe was commanded to drain the blood from his food -- this developed into the slitting of the animal's throat to kill it instead of bringing on death by strangulation.\textsuperscript{7}

(It is this writer's opinion that both the Old and New Testament prohibition on eating blood was God's way of making the reception of Holy Communion the unique exception to His own Law. We find a similar exception -- in this case to the Mosaic prohibition of graven images -- in the carved figures of cherubim and seraphim adorning the Temple and the oracle of the Holy of Holies. And, of course, the Blessed Virgin Mary is the woman uniquely competent to say of her Son, "This is my body," and to offer that Body on the Cross -- and unique as a woman in being able to thus refer to herself as His priest.\textsuperscript{8})

Christian man could still sin -- that is why our Lord established the Sacrament of Confession. Jerusalem was powerless to abolish the Natural Law -- but the various ritual observances, impurities, and purifications of the Mosaic Law were no more.

\textsuperscript{6} Genesis ii: 24; iv: 26; ix: 1-17
\textsuperscript{7} Cf. Council of Trullo (691)Canon LXVII.
\textsuperscript{8} 3 Kings vi, vii.
THE APOSTLES

No matter how one translates the "άδελφην γυναίκα" of 1 Corinthians ix: 5, Saint Paul was saying, at least, that he was the only one of the Apostles who “washed his own socks.” Whether the women who accompanied the other Apostles were "sisters" or "wives" is a question that cannot be fully resolved by resort to Scripture, Tradition, or history. While we know that some of the Apostles were married, we cannot say precisely how many. Nor to we have much information as to which wives accompanied their Apostle-husbands on the mission. Tasteful people generally avoid thinking about when a particular child might have been conceived -- and the birth, death, and marriage records of the period are so utterly lacking that it impossible know when the Apostles fathered their children relative to their becoming Apostles. The most important birth date in all history is known only in terms of terms of a census taken by Caesar Augustus, while Cyrinus was governor of Syria.¹

Yet, we do know something about some of the Apostles and their families. The broadest account would lead us to believe that of the original twelve, Saint John alone was unmarried. In the "Passing of the Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God" of St. Melito, Bishop of Sardis (circa 180 A.D. -- the earliest written account we have of the Assumption), has Saint Peter bidding Saint John to lead the funeral procession because "Thou only of us art a virgin chosen of the Lord...."² While this might not constitute strict historical proof, it certainly does indicate that the idea of married Apostles was not alien to Catholics of the second century. Peter and the Apostles would have been an unusual group of Jewish men if most of them had not been married. Even the Nazarite vow, said to have been taken by Saint James, did not exclude a man from marriage or family.³ They were not, after all, dwellers in one or another of the few Jewish monastic communities, but men who earned their bread by the sweat of their brows, and who would have relied on dividing their labors with a family.

SAINT PETER

From Scripture we know that Peter's mother-in-law lived in his and Andrew's house in Galilee -- none of the evangelists mention his wife.\(^4\) For this we have to look elsewhere. An important source for the period is the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius Pamphili (c. 260-340), the bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine. Discussing the heresies that influenced the Church at the beginning of the second century, Eusebius quoted the *Stromata -- Miscellanies* of Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), himself something of an historian,\(^5\) who wrote to rebut the idea of certain philosophers that marriage is evil:

> Clement, whose words we have just been reading, goes on from the passage I have quoted to rebut those who deprecated marriage, by listing the apostles known to have been married men. He says:

> Or will they condemn even the apostles? For Peter and Philip had families, and Philip gave his daughters in marriage, while Paul himself does not hesitate in one of his epistles to address his yoke-fellow, whom he did not take round with him for fear of hindering his ministry.

> While I am on the subject, I may as well quote another of Clement's interesting stories, to be found in Book VII of his Miscellanies:

> We are told that when blessed Peter saw his wife led away to death he was glad that her call had come, and that she was returning home, and spoke to her in the most encouraging and comforting tones, addressing her by name: 'My dear, remember the Lord.' Such was the marriage of the blessed, and their consummate feeling towards their dearest.\(^6\)

For our purposes, it would have been better if Eusebius had quoted a little more, for the passage in Clement's *Stromata* goes on to say:

> Thus also the apostle says, "that he who marries should be as though he married not," [Clement appears to be quoting Paul (1 Cor. vii: 29), and not Peter] and deem his marriage free of inordinate affection, and inseparable from love to the Lord; to which the true husband exhort his wife to cling on her departure out of this life to the Lord.

> Was not then faith in the hope after death conspicuous in the case of those who gave thanks to God even in the very extremities of their punishments? For firm, in my opinion, was the faith they possessed, which was followed by works of faith.\(^7\)

Both Saint Paul, and Saint Peter, if he uttered the same phrase, "that he who marries should be as though he married not," wrote in times of persecution, when having friends and family, and *a fortiori*, a wife could be used by the persecutors to turn one away from the Faith

\(^4\) Matthew viii: 14; Mark i: 29; Luke iv: 38.

\(^5\) Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, Book I, Chapter I, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02101.htm

for fear that loved ones would be harmed. It is best to reserve judgment on Peter or Paul's meaning until we have the opportunity to look more closely at the latter's writings.

As we have written elsewhere, there is at least tenuous evidence that Ss Peter and his wife Concordia Perpetua were the parents of Saint Petronilla.\(^7\) \textit{Butler's Lives} quotes an early \textit{Roman Martyrology} as saying: "St. Petronilla, Virgin [and Martyr], daughter of the blessed apostle Peter, who refused to marry the nobleman Flaccus. Given three days for consideration, she spent them in fasting and prayer. On the third day, having received Christ sacramentally, she gave up her spirit." Saint Peter is known to have instructed and baptized Flavia Domitilla, daughter of the important patrician family of the Flavii, together with her mother, Flavia Plautilla, and two servants (who may be erroneously identified as), Nereus and Achilleus.\(^8\) Domitilla received the veil from Pope Saint Clement, refused marriage, was sent into exile at Pontia, and was martyred at Terracina, set on fire together with her foster sisters Theodora and Euphrosyne.\(^9\) Saint Petronilla's body was found in the catacomb of Flavian Domitilla, suggest that she was a member of the Roman senatorial family of the Flavii. The inscription on her tomb reads "Aure' Petronill' Fili' Dulcissim'," possibly indicating relationship to an earlier branch of the Flavii, known as the Aurelii. The conjecture is that, while yet alive, Peter's daughter, Petronilla, was taken in by Domitilla's family as a testimony to Peter's memory and that of their three martyred daughters, and that they buried Petronilla in their cemetery when she died.\(^10\) A rather sad story about Peter's daughter is to be found at the beginning of the apocryphal Acts of Peter, written in Greek, not later than A. D. 200.\(^11\)

\textbf{SAINT PHILIP THE APOSTLE}

Eusebius also quoted an extant letter from Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus (c. 190) to Pope Saint Victor. The letter deals primarily with the tradition of the Churches of Asia Minor or observing Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon, without regard to the day of the week --

\begin{footnotes}
\item[7]\medskip Clement of Alexandria, \textit{Stromata}, Book VII, Chapter XI, \url{http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02107.htm}
\item[8]\medskip Our Lady of the Rosary Bulletin, November 2000 \url{http://www.geocities.com/pelicanlara/answers/qa112000a.html}
\item[10]\medskip \textit{Roman Breviary}, Matins of the feast of Ss. Nereus, Achilleus, and Domitilla, May 12.
\item[11]\medskip CE s.v. "Saint Petronilla." \url{http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11781b.htm}
\item[12]\medskip Acts of Peter, Coptic fragment, \url{http://wesley.nnu.edu/noncanon/acts/actpete.htm}
\end{footnotes}
the same controversy in which Saint Irenaeus of Lyons was involved. In order to establish the importance of these Churches, Polycrates mentions that the Apostles John and Philip are buried there.

For in Asia great luminaries have gone to their rest, who shall rise again in the day of the coming of the Lord, when He cometh with glory from heaven and shall raise again all the saints. I speak of Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who is laid to rest at Hierapolis; and his two daughters, who arrived at old age unmarried; his other daughter also, who passed her life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and reposes at Ephesus; John, moreover, who reclined on the Lord's bosom, and who became a priest wearing the mitre, and a witness and a teacher—he rests at Ephesus. Then there is Polycarp, both bishop and martyr at Smyrna; and Thraseas from Eumenia, both bishop and martyr, who rests at Smyrna. Why should I speak of Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who rests at Laodicea? of the blessed Papirius, moreover? and of Melito the eunuch, who performed all his actions under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and lies at Sardis, awaiting the visitation from heaven, when he shall rise again from the dead? These all kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month, in accordance with the Gospel, without ever deviating from it, but keeping to the rule of faith.13

"Melito the eunuch ... lies at Sardis." Melito of Sardis is thought to have been celibate; a eunuch in figurative terms. Apparently, this was unique enough in Polycrates' time (c. 190) to be worthy of mention. More important at the moment is the reference to Philip the Apostle and his three daughters, two of which were buried with the Apostle at Hierapolis, while the third was buried at Ephesus. Eusebius also cites Papias as one who heard directly from the lips of one of Philip's daughters of a miraculous resurrection worked, presumably by her father in Hierapolis.14

Eusebius also quoted a fragment from a Dialogue of Gaius with Proclus, in which the former refers to "four prophetesses at Hierapolis in Asia, daughters of Philip. Their grave is still there, as is their father's."15 Eusebius fails to distinguish Philip the Apostle from Philip the Deacon (a.k.a. Philip the Evangelist) and mentions the reference of Saint Luke in the Acts of the Apostles when he and Saint Paul "came to Cæsarea, where we went to the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy."16

While scholars may debate which Philip died at hierapolis and was buried with some number of his daughters -- the apostle, the deacon, or both -- it matters little in any discussion.

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14 HE, III: 39.
15 In Eusebius HE, III: 31
of celibacy in the apostolic age. Both Philips can be accurately described as men in Major Orders, with daughters, and ordained either by Jesus Christ Himself or by the Apostles. For those who think it relevant, dating the birth of these three to seven girls is problematic. We know very little about Philip the Apostle beyond what is mentioned above. Philip the Deacon was among the seven ordained by the apostles in Acts vi, probably in 33 AD or 34. While ordained to minister to the needs of the widows of Jerusalem, persecution drove Philip to Samaria where he began preaching and baptizing at all of the places through which he passed on his way to Cæsarea. The Scriptures make no reference to him with a family in tow during his partly miraculous journey. The visit to his home in Cæsarea by Paul and Luke wasn't until about 58 AD, during Paul's third missionary journey. Papias is thought to have been born around 65, and to have been bishop in Hierapolis around 130 AD, with his works being written in old age, somewhere between 115 and 140. Placing the birth of one or more of Philip's four daughters after his ordination seems appropriate, but not absolutely compelling.

**SAINT JUDE**

Among Catholics it is generally held that Jude Thaddeus was the brother of James the Less, and the author of the canonical Epistle of Saint Jude. Eusebius quotes Saint Hegesippus in presenting the story of the Apostle’s two grandsons brought before the Emperor Domitian.

1 "Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh.

2 Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming ing of Christ as Herod also had feared it. And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had only nine thousand denarii,

4 half of which belonged to each of them; and this property did not consist of silver, but of a piece of land which contained only thirty-nine acres, and from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor.”

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17 Acts viii: 4-40.
19 CE s.v. Jude, Epistle of Saint www.newadvent.orf/cathen/08542b.htm
20 Eusebius, HE: III, xix, xx, xxii
5 Then they showed their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies and the callousness produced upon their hands by continuous toil as evidence of their own labor.

6 And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works.

7 Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass judgment against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the Church.

8 But when they were released they ruled the churches because they were witnesses and were also relatives of the Lord. And peace being established, they lived until the time of Trajan. These things are related by Hegesippus.  

SAINT PAUL

In his Epistle to the Philadelphians, Ignatius of Antioch lists Saint Paul among the married:

Not, however, that I blame the other blessed [saints] because they entered into the married state, of which I have just spoken. For I pray that, being found worthy of God, I may be found at their feet in the kingdom, as at the feet of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; as of Joseph, and Isaiah, and the rest of the prophets; as of Peter, and Paul, and the rest of the apostles, that were married men. For they entered into these marriages not for the sake of appetite, but out of regard for the propagation of mankind.

Eusebius, quoting Clement of Alexandria (above) said that "Paul himself does not hesitate in one of his epistles to address his yoke-fellow, whom he did not take round with him for fear of hindering his ministry." But it is difficult to believe that Paul's "yoke-fellow" was a wife. He seems to say clearly in 1 Corinthians vii: 8 that he is unmarried, or maybe a widower. The"yoke-fellow" -- "Συντύχην" -- "Syntychen" of Philippians iv, seems to be a bit of apostolic humor, intended to flatter someone who was such a devoted helper that Paul made "yoke-fellow" into a proper name. In the original, Paul did not use the same word as he used in 2 Corinthians vi: 14 (έτεροζυγέω - heterozugeo, a mismatched joining of effort), and even that idea of "bearing the yoke" seems unrelated to the "conjugal" idea of bearing the "yoke" of marriage.

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22 Ignatius of Antioch to the Philadelphians, Chapter IV
Of all the Apostles, the Scriptures tell us most about Saint Paul, and a lot of what we know is autobiographical. Everything we have suggests a man who was utterly devoted to God and who understood the difficulties of living the Christian life in the real world. Things have not changed much in the almost two thousand years since he wrote. The vast majority of Catholics must live in the world -- even the most devout amongst us must earn his living, feed and clothe his family, raise his children, and deal with the society in which he lives. Only the privileged very few can have someone else worry about such things while they devote their full attention to the things of God. Paul, himself, was no exception. He lived a life of deep prayer, but it was often interrupted, he tells us, "by the constant anxiety for the care of all the churches," not to mention all of the hardships he endured in persecution by the Jews and the Romans: "five times I received forty lashes less one, three times I was scourged, once I was stoned, three times I suffered shipwreck...."24 He supported himself with the work of his own hands -- Paul was a tentmaker, and he practiced that trade, so as not to place a financial burden on those whom he brought to he Faith.25

In a number of his epistles, Saint Paul urged detachment from the things of the world. Some of this was an intellectual detachment, requiring a firm belief in the things of heaven revealed by God Himself and His only-begotten Son. God's truth, and God's truth alone, must be firmly held by everyone claiming to be a Christian: "If we or an angel from heaven should preach another gospel to you, let him be anathema."26 Paul would have been death itself to our twenty and twenty-first century Modernists; he was ready to resist even Peter himself: "When Cephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was deserving of blame."27 The blame in this case was acquiescence to the Judaizing heresy, about which we have heard, and about which no honest history of celibacy can fail to say more.

Saint Paul also, and perhaps most importantly, urged a detachment from the world based on the proper use of things in the world, rather than demanding their total repudiation. Men were urged to take stock of the things which they had and the circumstances in which they lived and use them in the way most consonant with the goal of eternal life. After all, our Lord had come not to annihilate the universe, but to redeem it -- "all creation groans and

24 2 Corinthians xi.
travails in pain until now." 28 A Christian man's proper relationship to the governor, the husband, the wife, the parent, the child, the master, or the slave, was an important part of his salvation -- "above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." 29

The kernal of Paul's teaching on marriage, abstinence within marriage, and celibacy is found in 1 Corinthians. There are, of course, sinful abuses of human sexuality. He treats of these sumarily in chapter six, ending with a reminder that the human body is not only good but is intended to be a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Chapter seven is eminently practical. Paul recognizes that "each person has his own gift from God, one in this way, and another in that." Some people are called to celibacy, some are not. It is certainly better for those who are not called to it to have their own spouse. Between those who are married, there is a marriage debt, a requirement to fulfill the legitimate desires of the spouse. By mutual agreement, as long as it does not lead to temptation, a couple may for a time abstain from relations in order to devote themselves to prayer, returning together when self control begins to wain. He urges the unmarried to remain so, but admits that marriage or remarriage may be appropriate except in the case of divorce, which is disallowed by the Lord Himself. Marriage is a holy estate, which Paul speculates may bring sanctification to an unbelieving spouse. 30

Paul's opinion on virginity - he has "no commandment of the Lord" - is twofold. These are turbulent times (they always are and will be), and it may be best not to change one's manner of living; not with respect to marriage, or virginity, or much of anything else. And the unmarried person is not distracted by the need to please a spouse, and is therefore in a position to devote full time to the things of God. Virginity is the better course, but no one sins by entering legitimate marriage. Of course, even the married can consent to live for a time as though they were not married, even as we are all free to deny ourselves some of the other innocent pleasures of the world. 31

Familiar with the gnosticism of the ancient world, Saint Paul warned against those who would come along and teach that material things were evil in and of themselves, and

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27 Galatians ii: 11.
28 Romans viii: 18-25.
29 Ephesians vi; Romans xiii; Colossians iii
30 1 Corinthians vii: 1-16.
could not be put to morally positive or even neutral uses: "giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy... Forbidding to marry, to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, and by them that have known the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected that is received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."32 A little wine is good now and again for the digestion, and other infirmities.33

The qualities expected of deacons and bishops (simple priests are not as yet considered as separate from bishops) are set forth by Saint Paul, more or less identically, in his letters to Timothy and Titus.34 Paul was leaving them in charge of the local Churches is Asia Minor and Crete, and gave them directions as to what to look for in their prospective clergy. These men are not chosen with an eye toward extended missionary activity, but to fulfill a role in the local Church. What Paul describes, in both accounts, is a good family man. He is to be married but once; someone who is capable of maintaining discipline; someone who doesn't spend his time in wasteful and dissipating activities.

The notion that "continent" in Titus i: 8 must be equated with sexual abstinence is as fatuous as the idea that Saint Paul was absolutely requiring that bishops have wives.. In English or Latin, "continent" or "continentem" refers primarily to "self control" -- only as a secondary meaning, and then somewhat ambiguously, might it mean "abstinent." A man is said to be "incontinent," not for being amorous with his wife, but for taking his love to the wrong women; not for moving his bowels, but for moving them in the wrong place. The Greek "έγχρατή -- egkrate" refers to power, power over one's self, self restraint, and so forth. To demand abstinence of a married man would completely fly in the face of Paul's own teaching on the marriage debt, the relief of concupiscence, and the voluntary nature of abstinence within marriage outlined in 1 Corinthians. And if marital abstinence had been Paul's demand, one would have expected it to be made of Timothy's Ephesians as much as of Titus' Cretans -- and one would have expected it to be well known throughout the Catholic world shortly thereafter.

31 1 Corinthians vii: 17-35.
32 1 Timothy iv: 1-5.
33 1 Timothy v: 23.
34 1 Timothy iii: 1-13; Titus i: 5-9.
In only the second century, Clement of Alexandria reminded his readers that our Lord’s counsel of self-renunciation was far more encompassing than Holy Matrimony. There are many ways in which man and even angels can be incontinent: “Continentia est pecuniam despicere; voluptatem, possessionem, spectaculum magno et excelsa animo contemnere; os continere, ratione qua: sunt mala vincere. Jam vero angeli quoque quidam, cum fuissent incontinentes, victi cupiditate, huc e coelo deciderunt.”

It is instructive to see how the Church Itself uses the word “continence” in Its official prayers. There are at least three such uses in the Masses and Offices of Lent: in the last collect of the blessing of Ashes, in the secret of the following Friday, and in the collect of Tuesday of the third week. In all three cases, the priest prays for “continéntiæ” in the name of the entire congregation, or, perhaps, the entire Church. Only the naïve might suppose that the prayer expresses the hope that all Catholics will henceforth cease having marital relations! (Such a prayer might get the priest run out of town.) In fact, if one looks at the various translations found in hand missals and breviaries, “continéntiæ” is translated along the lines of Clement of Alexandria, as “self denial” or “temperance” or the “avoidance of sin.” Even the votive collects given in the Missal “ad postulándam continéntiam” do not speak of sexual abstinence, but, rather of “chastity of body” and “purity of mind”—something surely possible for the faithful married man.

Webster’s definition of continence: “n. self restraint, esp. in regard to sexual passion or activity; temperance; moderation. Also con’ ti nen cy [ME < L continentia see continent, -ence].”

When, at Lateran I, the Church got around to mandating more or less universal celibacy for those in major Orders, it made use of no ambiguous word like “continence”: “We totally forbid priests, deacons, and subdeacons the intimacy of concubines and wives, and cohabitation with other women except those with whom, only by reason of necessity, the Synod of Nicaea (Canon 3) permits; which is to say: mothers, sisters, aunts, and other relatives who will arouse no suspicion.”

36 Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (N.Y. Portland House, 1989)
ORTHODOXY AND HETERODOXY

The spread of Christianity throughout the Empire was rather remarkable. Even before it became a legal religion, Saints Peter and Paul brought the Faith to Rome, whence it spread southward along the Italian peninsula. From the Eternal City, Peter's disciple, Saint Mark founded the See of Alexandria, which evangelized the northern rim of Africa. Saint Paul and Saint James are said to have traveled by sea to northern Iberia in person -- and even if they did not, they appointed bishops known as the "Seven Apostolic Men" who crossed from Africa at Gibraltar to establish the Church in the south.\(^1\) In its Gallican iteration, Catholicism came from Saint Polycarp's Ephesus to the Lyons of Saints Pothinus and Irenaeus, spreading north along the Rhone into the traditionally barbarian territories then claimed by the Empire -- Gaul, Britain, and eventually what we would today call Ireland, northern Italy, and western Germany. Well before Constantine built his city on the Bosporus, there were thriving Christian communities in the Holy Land, in Asia Minor, and in the Greek Islands.

But Christianity was not the only ideology spreading through the Empire in those first three centuries AD. Though Arianism and the other various Christological heresies would trouble the Church and the Empire, they were non-existent or altogether insignificant until the reign of Constantine and the legalization of Christianity. The early Church and civilization within the Empire and beyond was troubled with the general class of heresies known broadly as Gnosticism.

Gnosticism comes in various sizes and shapes, but always claims to offer salvation to its followers by means of special knowledge - often secret. In some versions gnosticism is permissive; the initiate can "sin mightily" and do as he pleases once he has received the *gnosis*. In other versions it is highly restrictive, at least theoretically demanding high degrees of asceticism from its followers -- but often recognizing that its ideals are set entirely too high for the average man, and reconciling itself to an even greater permissiveness among the majority than would have otherwise been tolerated. Highly ascetic gnosticisms usually have two castes; a few hardy souls who actually keep to the prescribed privations, and majority made up of people who think the *gnosis* is wonderful but who are unwilling to keep the

\(^1\) Saints Torquatus at Guadix near Granada, Cæcilius at Granada, Ctesiphon at Verga, Secundus at Avila, Indaletius at Urci near Almeria, Hesychius at Gibraltar and Euphrasius at Andujar.
discipline, and who must be saved through their association with the "perfect." For the common man ascetic gnosticism quite often culminates with the idea that, "I am trapped by my material body, and am therefore damned, and since nothing I can do will make a difference, I may as well enjoy it mightily." Book III of Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, which deals with the excesses of the gnostics is considered by most translators to be too obscene to be put into English. Sometimes the hatred of the material "trap" leads to abortion, suicide, or murder.

There is Jewish gnosticism -- probably a reaction to the crushing defeat suffered by the chosen people at the hands of the Empire, although the pre-Roman Essenes exhibited a gnostic stripe. There is pagan gnosticism -- Mani (215-276), the founder of what we call Manichæism, was a Babylonian. There is Christian gnosticism as well, combining the outward appearances of rigorist Catholicism with the *gnosis* -- at Rome, Marcion (c. 85-160); also at Rome, the antipope Novation (fl. 250); and in Spain, Priscillian of Ávila (d. 385?) and a few of his followers, all were bishops. Novation’s doctrine which claimed that some sins were so serious that the penitent could not be reconciled, *even at the point of death*, would be repeated in the canons of the synod at Elvira.²

Undoubtedly, some gnostics are simply con men. In almost every society there is a marginal living to be made by selling the "secrets of the universe." If the salesman is good, the living may be much more than marginal. We have this even in our own, supposedly sophisticated, time. But some of the gnostics were obviously sincere. Mani gave his life, being crucified, flayed, and stuffed by the Persian King Bahram I, and Bishop Priscillian had the distinction of being the first heretic executed by the Empire.³ Manichæism produced more than just a few gullible followers -- it was firmly established in Carthage well before Aurelius Augustine (354 - 430) joined it around 373. A council at Braga (563?) condemned Priscillianism, but the history of Spanish piety suggests that it was never completely abandoned. In its incarnation as Catharism, gnosticism lasted from the eleventh to the fifteenth century in the heart of Christian Europe.⁴

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human life and hatred of conceiving new life led to violent repression by the civil authorities. We have mentioned the downfalls of Mani and Priscillian -- the Albigensian crusades were literally a "holy war" against the Cathars in southern France.

The ascetic gnosticisms are generally based on a dualistic conception of creation. In simple terms, they posit a good god who made the spiritual components of the universe and a rival bad god who created the material components. The stand off between the two gods became critical when spirit somehow became trapped in matter -- when spirit came to animate matter in the form of men and perhaps animals. In practice, the dualistic metaphysic -- the gnostic description of being -- can be much more complex. One need only read a description of Mani's universe to see just how complicated a reality can be imagined in a "tightly wound" human mind.\footnote{CE s.v. "Manicheism," http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09591a.htm}

Other heresies plagued the early Church, not always exactly gnostic, but often accusing Catholics of being lax in their ascetic practices. Some of these heresies were followed by men who would have otherwise been among the greatest lights of the patristic era -- men whose early works are nonetheless included among those of the Fathers of the Church. At Alexandria, Origen (185-254?) castrated himself in order to maintain his reputation for purity.\footnote{HE, Book VI, Chapter 8, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250106.htm} But Origen’s influence -- often a good influence -- on the Fathers and Doctors of the Church was enormous.:

None of the great fathers, from the Cappadocians to Augustine, to Dionysius, Maximus, Scotus Eriugena, and Eckhart, managed to elude the almost magical, radiating power of the "man of steel," as they called him. Some fell completely under his sway.

Take away the Origenist brilliance from Eusebius, and all that would remain is a dubious half-Arian theologian and an industrious historian. Jerome continues to copy straight from Origen's pages when he comments on the scripture, even when he has in an outwardly tough and scornful way broken the chains and denied the bonds that linked him to the master.

Basil and Gregory Nazianzen make a collection in enthusiastic wonder of the most fascinating passages from the virtually endless works of the one to whom they return all through their lives when their day-to-day struggles allow them a moments rest. Gregory of Nyssa fell under his sway even more profoundly; the Cappadocian writings mediate him almost intact to Ambrose who also knows copies from him firsthand.

Many of the breviary readings from Ambrose (like those, of course, from Jerome and Bede) are practically word for word from Origen. Thus, flowing from several sides at once, the heritage of Origen, already in anonymous form, already become a universal resource of the Church, pours over Augustine and through him to the middle ages.\footnote{Hans urs von Balthasar http://www.praiseofglory.com/origen.htm}
Even as a Catholic, Tertullian of Carthage (160-220+) was known as a rigorist, and became more so as he went over to the Montanists, and as he founded his own pentecostal sect. At Rome, Saint Hippolytus (d. 236) accused Pope Callistus of various moral laxities, and went so far, even, as to have himself consecrated as bishop and the first antipope of Rome.

And not even the saints of the early Church had every item of doctrine and morality down exactly right. The patristic era was one of philosophical development to meet the needs of Christian revelation. Human language did not even have adequate terminology to think about the truths of the faith until the Fathers of the Church developed it through trial and error. Though they can, in no way, be called non-Catholics, both Saint Jerome and Saint Augustine held moral ideas that are a bit "off" by Catholic standards. Jerome (c. 320-420), seems to have thought, for example, that the only legitimate reason for marital relations was the begetting of virgins -- the parents have done no good, but perhaps their offspring yet will, by remaining virgins. He answers the argument that the world and the Church would quickly come to an end if everyone remained virginal, not with any explanation of why that would be good, but simply with the obvious observation that it was not about to happen. He seems as well, to have esteemed bathing to be morally dangerous activity.

Letter CVII. To Laeta (daughter in law of Saint Paula). … For myself, however, I wholly disapprove of baths for a virgin of full age. Such an one should blush and feel overcome at the idea of seeing herself undressed. By vigils and fasts she mortifies her body and brings it into subjection. By a cold chastity she seeks to put out the flame of lust and to quench the hot desires of youth. And by a deliberate squalor she makes haste to spoil her natural good looks. Why, then, should she add fuel to a sleeping fire by taking baths?

While skilled as a translator, Saint Jerome seems not to have noticed that our Lord did not mention virginity in the Gospels apart from comparing "wise virgins" to "foolish virgins" in Matthew's account; and that He gave “no command” to Saint Paul about the matter. In

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10 St Jerome, Letter XXII to Eustochium (20); Against Jovinian (36) In the Medieval Sourcebook, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/jerome-marriage.html
addition to being the translator of the Latin Vulgate, Jerome exercised great influence in Rome during the pontificate of Saint Damasus

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), a Manichean in in his youth, spoke against those “who would outlaw marriage, claiming that it was something evil, begun by the devil,” but he also held that since the fall of man, in practice, marital relations are always at least shameful, if not venially sinful. They avoid mortal sin if directed solely toward the procreation of children, but post-lapsarian man must yield to lust (rather than procreating solely under the influence of his intellect) in order to bring about physical union with his wife.

Wherefore the devil holds infants guilty who are born, not of the good by which marriage is good, but of the evil of concupiscence, which, indeed, marriage uses aright, but at which even marriage has occasion to feel shame. Marriage is itself "honourable in all" the goods which properly appertain to it; but even when it has its "bed undefiled" (not only by fornication and adultery, which are damnable disgraces, but also by any of those excesses of cohabitation such as do not arise from any prevailing desire of children, but from an overbearing lust of pleasure, which are venial sins in man and wife), yet, whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very embrace which is lawful and honourable cannot be effected without the ardour of lust, so as to be able to accomplish that which appertains to the use of reason and not of lust. Now, this ardour, whether following or preceding the will, does somehow, by a power of its own, move the members which cannot be moved simply by the will, and in this manner it shows itself not to be the servant of a will which commands it, but rather to be the punishment of a will which disobeys it. It shows, moreover, that it must be excited, not by a free choice, but by a certain seductive stimulus, and that on this very account it produces shame. This is the carnal concupiscence, which, while it is no longer accounted sin in the regenerate, yet in no case happens to nature except from sin. It is the daughter of sin, as it were; and whenever it yields assent to the commission of shameful deeds, it becomes also the mother of many sins. Now from this concupiscence whatever comes into being by natural birth is bound by original sin, unless, indeed, it be born again in Him whom the Virgin conceived without this concupiscence. Wherefore, when He vouchsafed to be born in the flesh, He alone was born without sin.

It is unclear whether this is a hold over from his Manichean days, represents an over reaction to his sensual youth, or perhaps to the early death of his son, Adeodatus. Nonetheless, his influence in North Africa and on the Church as a whole is incalculable. His

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13 Augustine, Treatise IX on John.


15 Augustine, Confessions, Book IV, 6-8; Book VI: 15; http://www.augnet.org/AugustineSECTION3/AugustinesTimes/AugustinesEra/AugustinesContemporaries/0361-Adeodatus.html
follower, Fulgentius of Ruspe (467-533), “traced the inheritance of original sin through the
*concupiscence* of the parents.”

Augustine is quoted by virtually every Catholic writer, including the Popes of our own age. But it is useful to contrast the passage above with the more mature (and presumably more authoritative) theology of marriage in *Arcanum Divinæ* or *Casti connubii*, encyclicals which both quote the more correct parts of the Saint’s teaching.

9. But what was decreed and constituted in respect to marriage by the authority of God has been more fully and more clearly handed down to us, by tradition and the written Word, through the Apostles, those heralds of the laws of God. To the Apostles, indeed, as our masters, are to be referred the doctrines which “our holy Fathers, the Councils, and the Tradition of the Universal Church have always taught,”[9] namely, that Christ our Lord raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament; that to husband and wife, guarded and strengthened by the heavenly grace which His merits Rained for them, He gave power to attain holiness in the married state; and that, in a wondrous way, making marriage an example of the mystical union between Himself and His Church, He not only perfected that love which is according to nature,[10] but also made the naturally indivisible union of one man with one woman far more perfect through the bond of heavenly love. Paul says to the Ephesians: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it... So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies... For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church; because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church.”[11] In like manner from the teaching of the Apostles we learn that the unity of marriage and its perpetual indissolubility, the indispensable conditions of its very origin, must, according to the command of Christ, be holy and inviolable without exception. Paul says again: “To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband; and if she depart, that she remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.”[12] And again: “A woman is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband die, she is at liberty.”[13] It is for these reasons that marriage is "a great sacrament";[14] "honorable in all,"[15] holy, pure, and to be reverenced as a type and symbol of most high mysteries.

[9] Trid., sess. xxiv, "in principio"

The sage Ambrosian, Pope Pius XI seconds Pope Leo’s pronouncement (of which the last sentence is of particular importance for our purposes) in *Rerum novarum*, in which the latter says:

In choosing a state of life there is no doubt but that it is in the power and discretion of each one to prefer one or the other: either to embrace the counsel of virginity given by Jesus Christ, or to bind himself in the bonds of matrimony. To take away from man the natural and

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17 Pope Leo XIII, “Arcanum Divinæ, 10 February 1880 www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/113cmr.htm
primeval right of marriage, to circumscribe in any way the principal ends of marriage laid down in the beginning by God Himself in the words "Increase and multiply," is beyond the power of any human law."

To the degree that any of Augustine’s erroneous attitudes were incorporated into churchmen’s' thinking about the celibacy of the clergy, it is clear that such thinking would be overly rigorous if not erroneous. It would even become the occasion of sin for those who had been legitimately married before becoming deacons, priests, and bishops -- only to be told sometime later that they must give up relations with their wives. The sad reality is that precisely this was permitted to happen several times during the first thousand or so years of the Church's history.

The situation in Africa was apparently well known. Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) instructed one Bishop Squillacinus:

> You should for no reason receive Africans and unknown foreigners who seek ecclesiastical orders, because some of the Africans are Manichaeans, others have been rebaptized [the reference here is to the Donatist heresy], and many foreigners, even those established in minor orders, have often been claimed to have shown a higher rank.

A bit of a generalization to say the least, but apparently conditioned on some bad experiences. The Pope’s recommendation appeared in *The Collection in Seventy-Four Titles*, a canon law text at the time of the Gregorian reform, and was preserved in Gratian’s *Decretals*. Re-baptism had been taught by the first Council of Carthage in 198(?), and would remain a point of contention for several hundred years before being definitively condemned. Most likely, Africans had similar feelings for Rome – were it not for the support of the Roman clergy and people, we would not even know the names of antipopes like Hippolytus and Novation.

Before we move on, one more North African is worthy of mention. Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage from 249 until his martyrdom in 258 experienced a devastating plague and two Roman persecutions first hand, concerned not only for himself but for his flock. He

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held out against Rome in condemning the validity of heretical Baptism, yet firmly defended the unique role of the Catholic Church, and staunchly supported the newly elected Pope Cornelius against the anti-pope Novation around 251. A martyr (beheaded), he follows Cornelius in the Canon of the Mass. Perhaps because of his narrow views on Baptism, but more certainly because of the long and difficult penances he assigned, Cyprian is often portrayed as a rigorist, in comparison with the milder policies of the Holy See.

For our purposes, two things are significant about Cyprian’s teaching. The first is that while his penances – especially for those who sacrificed to the idols, or pretended to do so during the persecution – were severe. But while they were severe, they were always medicinal; intended to eliminate recidivism and to discourage others who might be tempted to take the easy way out in the next persecution. At some point his penances came to an end and the penitent was reconciled to the Church and allowed to receive the Sacraments. When a new persecution under Gallus loomed on the horizon, the penances were reduced (at both Carthage and Rome) with the hope of allowing the penitent to be strengthened against the coming temptation through the aid of our Lord in Holy Communion. Cyprian’s concern was clearly for the good of souls and for the consequent good of the Church. Later on we will have to contrast his penitential practices with others that are life long and which never re-admit certain penitents to Holy Communion. When compared to Cyprian’s medicinal penances, some of these others seem toxic; instead of saving they appear damning.

A second significant matter is Saint Cyprian’s conception of how a person might become defiled. Moral theologians today define sin in terms of an objective evil that is subjectively sought by the sinner. Without some knowledge of the evil and some commitment of the will to the evil there is no sin. There are no longer any “ritual impurities” like those of the Old Testament from things like accidentally or necessarily touching a corpse or a leper or blood or semen. The surgeon trying to aid a patient does not sin even though he may actively let blood or drain bodily fluids – there has to be an intent to do harm to the innocent before sin enters. Cyprian, however, in dealing with apostates who ate food as part

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Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. (Toronto : Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), page 158, para. 159.
of a sacrifice to the pagan gods, goes beyond those who willingly betrayed the Faith by doing so -- to an infant incapable of betraying the Faith, and incapable of knowing or resisting the evil of being fed such food; holding that the infant was defiled:

But the girl was no more able to speak, or to indicate the crime that had been committed, than she had before been able to understand or to prevent it. Therefore it happened unawares in their ignorance, that when we were sacrificing, the mother brought it in with her. Moreover, the girl mingled with the saints, became impatient of our prayer and supplications, and was at one moment shaken with weeping, and at another tossed about like a wave of the sea by the violent excitement of her mind; as if by the compulsion of a torturer the soul of that still tender child confessed a consciousness of the fact with such signs as it could. When, however, the solemnities were finished, and the deacon began to offer the cup to those present, and when, as the rest received it, its turn approached, the little child, by the instinct of the divine majesty, turned away its face, compressed its mouth with resisting lips, and refused the cup. Still the deacon persisted, and, although against her efforts, forced on her some of the sacrament of the cup. Then there followed a sobbing and vomiting. In a profane body and mouth the Eucharist could not remain; the draught sanctified in the blood of the Lord burst forth from the polluted stomach.  

Saint Paul speaks to this rather precisely. The only sin in eating the idol offering is in the scandal taken by those who see it as an intellectual and willful recognition of the false god. Surely, no infant can give scandal to any sane person by anything it does. And if Christians are to be judged by all of the possible scandals that might be taken by the insane, we are all doomed. This concern of Christians with “ritual defilement,” a hold over from Judaism, as though the Mosaic Law remained in force will appear again and again.

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23 1 Corinthians viii.
THE SUB-APOSTOLIC CANONS

In modern terms, when we speak of “canons” or “canon law” we think of authoritative and well organized code of law, prepared by a committee of canon lawyers over a period of years, and finally approved by the Pope. But before the 1917 Code, things were no where so nicely organized. Before that time, canon law consisted of the disciplinary decrees issued by the ecumenical councils, and collections of the extant decrees issued by the Popes. In some places this was supplemented by the decrees of local synods and bishops. Custom also played an important part in all governance. Often the canonical collections were “free enterprise” efforts by canon lawyers.

One of the first major collections of Papal decrees was an outright forgery, the Pseudo-Isadorean collection, also known as the “False Decretals.” Attributed to one Isidore Mercator, it claimed to be a collection of the decrees issued by the Popes from Saint Clement (88-97) through Saint Melchides (311-314), but appears not to have existed prior to the ninth century. Psuedo-Isidore combined false documents with a smattering of authentic ones, apparently in an attempt to strengthen the rule of individual bishops at the expense of the archbishops and the choir-bishops. It was regarded as authentic and incorporated in legitimae works for centuries. Around 1150, the Calmoldolese monk, John Gratian, undertook the compilation of an authentic collection under the title “Concordantia discordantium canonum” – “A Concordance of Discordant Canons.” Gratian’s collection, usually referred to simply as “Decretem Gratiani” was a didactic work, arranged like Saint Thomas’ Summa: a problem was presented, various answers proposed, their pros and cons discussed, and finally a preferred answer given. Since the answers were no more than Gratian’s learned opinion they invited commentary by other legal scholars, and annotated versions of “Decretem” soon appeared. Only in 1234 did Pope Gregory IX issue an official, five volume, collection of extant decrees – the work of Raymond of Peñafort, OP. Boniface VIII, a canon lawyer in his own right, issued a sixth volume -- Liber sextus -- in 1298.

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2 Ibid., p. 3.
Before this medieval period of decree collections, and particularly before the legalization of Christianity in the Empire, the Church relied more on collections of law that claimed -- somewhat tongue-in-cheek -- to have been given by our Lord or the Apostles. That is not to say that they were falsifications, but merely that the well meaning custom of the ancient world was to attribute writings to a famous person in order to give the work greater authority. The "Apostles’ Creed" is a good example -- though it existed in a variety of different forms, and its contents can be found in writings as far back as Tertullian, the form to which we give that name dates from around the sixth century. Yet, some of the early works could lay claim to have come from the words of our Lord and His disciples, either directly or with only a few oral intermediaries. They were collections of the customs of the early Church, yet, sometimes, they were invoked as though they had the force of law.

**THE DIDACHE**

The earliest known written set of customs, the Didache, or The Lord's Instruction to the Gentiles Through the Twelve Apostles, is known to have existed around 80 or 90 A.D. (perhaps as early as 65 -- it does mention the possibility of a visit by an apostle, and makes no mention of simple priests), probably composed in Egypt or Syria. For our purposes chapter 15 is relevant; for completeness we include chapters 11 and 13, as the bishops and deacons "also render ... the service of prophets." The concerns mentioned are humility, the absence of greed, truthfulness, and knowledge of and rectitude in teaching and practicing the Faith; there is no mention of marital status:

**Chapter 15. Bishops and Deacons; Christian Reproof.** Appoint, therefore, for yourselves, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek, and not lovers of money, and truthful and proved; for they also render to you the service of prophets and teachers. Therefore do not despise them, for they are your honored ones, together with the prophets and teachers. And reprove one another, not in anger, but in peace, as you have it in the Gospel. But to anyone that acts amiss against another, let no one speak, nor let him hear anything from you until he repents. But your prayers and alms and all your deeds so do, as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord.

**Chapter 11. Concerning Teachers, Apostles, and Prophets.** Whosoever, therefore, comes and teaches you all these things that have been said before, receive him. But if the teacher himself turns and teaches another doctrine to the destruction of this, hear him not. But if he teaches so as to increase righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as

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the Lord. But concerning the apostles and prophets, act according to the decree of the Gospel. Let every apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain more than one day; or two days, if there's a need. But if he remains three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodges. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet who speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not every one who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he holds the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known. And every prophet who orders a meal in the Spirit does not eat it, unless he is indeed a false prophet. And every prophet who teaches the truth, but does not do what he teaches, is a false prophet. And every prophet, proved true, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself does, shall not be judged among you, for with God he has his judgment; for so did also the ancient prophets. But whoever says in the Spirit, Give me money, or something else, you shall not listen to him. But if he tells you to give for others' sake who are in need, let no one judge him.

Chapter 13. Support of Prophets. But every true prophet who wants to live among you is worthy of his support. So also a true teacher is himself worthy, as the workman, of his support. Every first-fruit, therefore, of the products of wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and of sheep, you shall take and give to the prophets, for they are your high priests. But if you have no prophet, give it to the poor. If you make a batch of dough, take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment. So also when you open a jar of wine or of oil, take the first-fruit and give it to the prophets; and of money (silver) and clothing and every possession, take the first-fruit, as it may seem good to you, and give according to the commandment.  

THE EGYPTIAN CHURCH ORDER
A.K.A THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION OF HIPPOLYTUS

For many years it was assumed that the following was a product of the Church of Alexandria, but recent scholarship ties it to Hippolytus of Rome (died c. 236). the rigorist opponent and anti-pope of Pope Saint Callistus (217-222). Any discussion of the actual authorship is beyond the scope of this paper. In any event, this is a "church order" of the early third century, written in one of the two major sees of Western Catholicism.

For bishops, the primary qualification is the election by the people. Of course, bishops will be selected from those who meet the qualifications of the lower orders:

Chapter 2. He who is ordained as a bishop, being chosen by all the people, must be irreproachable.  
When his name is announced and approved, the people will gather on the Lord's day with the council of elders and the bishops who are present. With the assent of all, the bishops will place their hands upon him, with the council of elders standing by, quietly.  
Everyone will keep silent, praying in their hearts for the descent of the Spirit.  
After this, one of the bishops present, at the request of all, shall lay his hand upon him who is being ordained bishop, and pray, saying,

Chapter 3. God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you who live in the highest, but regard the lowest you who know all things before they are, you who gave the rules of the Church through the word of your grace, who predestined from the beginning the race of the righteous through Abraham, who instituted

http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0714.htm
princes and priests, and did not leave your sanctuary without a minister; who from the beginning of the world has been pleased to be glorified by those whom you have chosen, and did not leave your sanctuary without a minister; who from the beginning of the world has been pleased to be glorified by those whom you have chosen, 3pour out upon him the power which is from you, the princely Spirit, which you gave to your beloved Son Jesus Christ, which he gave to your holy apostles, who founded the Church in every place as your sanctuary, for the glory and endless praise of your name. 4Grant, Father who knows the heart, to your servant whom you chose for the episcopate, that he will feed your holy flock, that he will wear your high priesthood without reproach, serving night and day, incessantly making your face favorable, and offering the gifts of your holy church; 5in the spirit of high priesthood having the power to forgive sins according to your command; to assign lots according to your command; to loose any bond according to the authority which you gave to the apostles; to please you in mildness and a pure heart, offering to you a sweet scent, 6through your son Jesus Christ, through whom to be glory, power, and honor, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Church, now and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen.

Chapter 7. When an elder is ordained, the bishop places his hand upon his head, along with the other elders, and says according to that which was said above for the bishop, praying and saying: 2God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look upon your servant here, and impart the spirit of grace and the wisdom of elders, that he may help and guide your people with a pure heart, just as you looked upon your chosen people, and commanded Moses to choose elders, whom you filled with your spirit which you gave to your attendant. 4Now, Lord, unceasingly preserving in us the spirit of your grace, make us worthy, so that being filled we may minister to you in singleness of heart, praising you, 5through your son Christ Jesus, through whom to be glory and might, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit, in your Holy Church, now and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen.

Chapter 8. When one ordains a deacon, he is chosen according to what has been said above, with only the bishop laying on his hand in the same manner. In the ordination of a deacon, only the bishop lays on his hand, because the deacon is not ordained to the priesthood, but to the service of the bishop, to do that which he commands. 3For he is not part of the council of the clergy, but acts as a manager, and reports to the bishop what is necessary. 4He does not receive the spirit common to the elders, which the elders share, but that which is entrusted to him under the bishop's authority. 5This is why only the bishop makes a deacon. 6Upon the elders, the other elders place their hands because of a common spirit and similar duty. 7Indeed, the elder has only the authority to receive this, but he has no authority to give it. 8Therefore he does not ordain to the clergy. Upon the ordination of the elder he seals; the bishop ordains. 9The bishop says this over the deacon: 10O God, you who have created all and put it in order by your Word, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you sent to serve by your will, and to manifest to us your desire, 11give the Holy Spirit of grace and earnestness and diligence to this your servant, whom you have chosen to serve your church and to offer up in holiness in your sanctuary that which is offered from the inheritance of your high priests, so that serving without reproach and in purity, he may obtain a higher degree, and that he may praise you and glorify you, 12through your son Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom to be glory, and power, and praise, with the Holy Spirit, now and always, and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen.

Chapter 12. Hands are not laid on a virgin, for a decision alone makes her a virgin.

If it seems that there were no particular moral qualifications proposed for the clergy, that may be because all of the faithful were held to a high standard. Those who would not live a moral life were presumably screened out before Baptism. The "order" was indifferent to the marital status of the catechumen, provided only that chastity be maintained according to his state in life:
Chapter 15. Those who are newly brought forward to hear the Word shall first be brought before the teachers at the house, before all the people enter. Then they will be questioned concerning the reason that they have come forward to the faith. Those who bring them will bear witness concerning them as to whether they are able to hear. They shall be questioned concerning their life and occupation, marriage status, and whether they are slave or free. If they are the slaves of any of the faithful, and if their masters permit them, they may hear the Word. If their masters do not bear witness that they are good, let them be rejected. If their masters are pagans, teach them to please their masters, so that there will be no blasphemy. If a man has a wife, or a woman has a husband, let them be taught to be content, the husband with his wife, and the wife with her husband. If there is a man who does not live with a woman, let him be taught not to fornicate, but to either take a wife according to the law, or to remain as is. If there is someone who has a demon, such a one shall not hear the Word of the teacher until purified.

Chapter 16. They will inquire concerning the works and occupations of those are who are brought forward for instruction. If someone is a pimp who supports prostitutes, he shall cease or shall be rejected. If someone is a sculptor or a painter, let them be taught not to make idols. Either let them cease or let them be rejected. If someone is an actor or does shows in the theater, either he shall cease or he shall be rejected. If someone teaches children (worldly knowledge), it is good that he cease. But if he has no (other) trade, let him be permitted. A charioteer, likewise, or one who takes part in the games, or one who goes to the games, he shall cease or he shall be rejected. If someone is a gladiator, or one who teaches those among the gladiators how to fight, or a hunter who is in the wild beast shows in the arena, or a public official who is concerned with gladiator shows, either he shall cease, or he shall be rejected. A military man in authority must not execute men. If he is ordered, he must not carry it out. Nor must he take military oath. If he refuses, he shall be rejected. If someone is a military governor, or the ruler of a city who wears the purple, he shall cease or he shall be rejected. The catechumen or faithful who wants to become a soldier is to be rejected, for he has despised God. The prostitute, the wanton man, the one who castrates himself, or one who does that which may not be mentioned, are to be rejected, for they are impure. A magus shall not even be brought forward for consideration. An enchanter, or astrologer, or diviner, or interpreter of dreams, or a charlatan, or one who makes amulets, either they shall cease or they shall be rejected. If someone's concubine is a slave, as long as she has raised her children and has clung only to him, let her hear. Otherwise, she shall be rejected. The man who has a concubine must cease and take a wife according to the law. If he will not, he shall be rejected.

If the author of the Apostolic Tradition or Egyptian Church Order was indeed Hippolytus, there is evidence that he was aware of some earlier set of canons, for elsewhere, in his "Refutation of All Heresies" he charges Callistus with violating the canons by his laxity:

In his [Callistus'] time, bishops, priests, and deacons who had been twice or thrice married began to be installed among the clergy and if one of the clergy married he continued in the clergy as if he had not sinned. 

Quotations from The Apostolic Tradition are from the translation of Kevin P. Edgecomb in Berkeley, California. http://www.bombaxo.com/hippolytus.html

The concern was not that Callistus ordained married men -- for that was the general practice -- but simply that he had violated the custom or law that they were to be "husbands of one wife" and the custom or law against the marriage of those already in Major Orders.

The Didascalia – The Apostolic Constitutions

The *Didascalia* is an early third century work (c. 225?), more fully named “The Catholic Teaching of the Twelve Apostles and Holy Disciples of Our Savior.” It is believed to be the work of a Syrian bishop, composed for converts from paganism, based on the Didache and a number of early Fathers. The Greek text of the *Didascalia* is lost, but it exists in a Syrian version. It forms the basis for the first six books of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, published around 380.8

BOOK II.
OF BISHOPS, PRESBYTERS, AND DEACONS.
SEC. I.—ON EXAMINING CANDIDATES FOR THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE.

A bishop must be well instructed and experienced in the word.

I. BUT concerning bishops, we have heard from our Lord, that a pastor who is to be ordained a bishop for the churches in every parish, must be unblameable, unreprovable, free from all kinds of wickedness common among men, not under fifty years of age; for such one is in good part past youthful disorders, and the slanders of the heathen, as well as the reproaches which are sometimes cast upon many persons by some false brethren, who do not consider the word of God in the Gospel: "Whosoever speaketh an idle word shall give an account thereof to the Lord in the day of judgment." (1) And again: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (2) Let him therefore, if it is possible, be well educated; but if he be unlettered, let him at any rate be (3) skilful in the word, and of competent age. But if in a small parish one advanced in years is not to be found, (4) let some younger person, who has a good report among his neighbours, and is esteemed by them worthy of the office of a bishop, -- who has carried himself from his youth with meekness and regularity, like a much elder person, -- after examination, and a general good report, be ordained in peace.

For Solomon at twelve years of age was king of Israel, (5) and Josiah at eight years of age reigned righteously, (6) and in like manner Joash governed the people at seven years of age. (7) Wherefore, although the person be young, let him be meek, gentle, and quiet. For the Lord God says by Esaias: "Upon whom will I look, but upon him who is humble and quiet, and always trembles at my words?" (8) In like manner it is in the Gospel also: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (9) Let him also be merciful; for again it is said: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (10) Let him also be a peacemaker; for again it is said: “Blessed sons of God.” (11) Let him also be one of a good conscience, purified from all evil, and wickedness, and unrighteousness; for it is said again: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (12)

WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE CHARACTERS OF A BISHOP AND OF THE REST? OF THE CLERGY.

II. Let him therefore be sober, prudent, decent, firm, stable, not given to wine; no striker, but gentle; not a brawler, not covetous; "not a novice, test, being puffed up with pride, be fall into condemnation, and the snare of the devil: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abused." (13) Such a one a bishop ought to be, who has been the “husband of one wife,” (14) who also has herself had no other husband, “ruling well his own house.” (15) In this manner let examination be made when he is to receive ordination, and to be placed in his bishopric, whether he be grave, faithful, decent; whether he hath a grave and faithful-wife, or has formerly had such a one; whether he hath educated his children piously, and has “brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” (16) whether his domestics do fear and reverence him, and are all obedient to him: for if those who are immediately about him for worldly concerns are seditious and disobedient, how will others not of his family, when they are under his management, become obedient to him?

IN WHAT THINGS A BISHOP IS TO BE EXAMINED BEFORE HE IS ORDAINED.

III. Let examination also be made whether he be unblameable as to the concerns of this life; for it is written: “Search diligently for all the faults of him who is to be ordained for the priesthood.” (1)

SEC. II.--ON THE CHARACTER AND TEACHING OF THE BISHOP.

On which account let him also be void of anger; for Wisdom says: "Anger destroys even the prudent." (2) Let him also be merciful, of a generous and loving temper; for our Lord says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." (3) Let him be also ready to give, a lover of the widow and the stranger; ready to serve, and minister, and attend; resolute in his duty; and let him know who is the most worthy of his assistance.

The author of the Didascalia was aware of the false philosophies of Mani and of the gnostics; the dualisms which categorized material things as evil. He replies that Christians should “use all His creatures with thankfulness, as the works of God, and having no evil in them”:

BOOK VI.

XIV. On whose account also we, who are now assembled in one place,--Peter and Andrew; James and John, sons of Zebedee; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus who is surnamed Thaddeus; and Simon the Canaanite, (3) and Matthias, who instead of Judas was numbered with us; and James the brother of the Lord and bishop of Jerusalem, and Paul the teacher of the Gentiles, the chosen vessel, having all met together, have written to you this Catholic doctrine for the confirmation of you, to whom the oversight of the universal Church is committed: wherein we declare unto you, that there is only one God Almighty, besides whom there is no other, and that you must worship and adore Him alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in the most holy Spirit; (4) that you are to make use of the sacred Scriptures, the law, and the prophets; to honour your parents; to avoid all unlawful actions; to believe the resurrection and the judgment, and to expect the retribution; and to use all His creatures with thankfulness, as the works of God, and having no evil in them; to marry after a lawful manner, for such marriage is unblameable. For “the woman is suited to the man by the Lord;” (5) and the Lord says: “He that made them from the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be one flesh.” (6) Nor let it be esteemed lawful after marriage to put her away who is without blame. For says He: “Thou shalt take care to thy spirit, and shalt not forsake the wife of thy youth; for she is the partner (7) of thy life, and the remains of thy spirit. I and no other have made her.” (8) For the Lord says: “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” (9) For the wife is the partner of life, united by God unto one body from two. But he that divides that again into two which is become one, is the enemy of the creation of God, and the adversary of His
providence. In like manner, he that retains her that is corrupted is a transgressor of the law of nature; since “he that retains an adulteress is foolish and impious.” (10) For says He, “Cut her off from thy flesh;” (11) for she is not an help, but a snare, bending her mind from thee to another. Nor be ye circumcised in your flesh, but let the circumcision which is of the heart by the Spirit suffice for the faithful; for He says, “Be ye circumcised to your God, and be circumcised in the foreskin of your heart.” (12)

XVII. We have already said, that a bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon, when they are constituted, must be but once married, whether their wives be alive or whether they be dead; and that it is not lawful for them, if they are unmarried when they are ordained, to be married afterwards; or if they be then married, to marry a second time, but to be content with that wife which they had when they came to ordination. (5) We also appoint that the ministers, and singers, and readers, and porters, shall be only once married. But if they entered into the clergy before they were married, we permit them to marry, if they have an inclination thereto, lest they sin and incur punishment. (6) But we do not permit any one of the clergy to take to wife either a courtesan, or a servant, or a widow, or one that is divorced, as also the law says. Let the deaconess be a pure virgin; or, at the least, a widow who has been but once married, faithful, and well esteemed. (7)

There are times when a roof over one’s head, a loving family, or the artistic trappings of holy religion will serve to enhance piety; but not always, and not for everyone. What follows suggests that all such material attachments are expendible, and must be abandoned should they begin to allure us from the profession of the true Faith:

BOOK V

VI. Let us therefore renounce our parents, and kinsmen, and friends, and wife, and children, and possessions, and all the enjoyments of life, when any of these things become an impediment to piety. For we ought to pray that we may not enter into temptation; but if we be called to martyrdom, with constancy to confess His precious name, and if on this account we be punished, let us rejoice, as hastening to immortality. When we are persecuted, let us not think it strange; let us not love the present world, nor the praises which come from men, nor the glory and honour of rulers, according as some of the Jews wondered at the mighty works of our Lord, yet did not believe on Him, for fear of the high priests and the rest of the rulers: “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (2) But now, by confessing a good confession, we not only save ourselves, but we confirm those who are newly illuminated, and strengthen the faith of the catechumens. But if we remit any part of our confession, and deny godliness by the faintness of our persuasion, and the fear of a very short punishment, we not only deprive ourselves of everlasting glory, but we shall also become the causes of the perdition of others; and shall suffer double punishment, as affording suspicion, by our denial that that truth which we gloried in so much before is an erroneous doctrine. Wherefore neither let us be rash and hasty to thrust ourselves into dangers, for the Lord says: “Pray that ye fall not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (3) Nor let us, when we do fall into dangers, be fearful or ashamed of our profession.

Whoever wrote the following paragraph was clearly familiar with the Judaizing Heresy from personal experience – the sentiments are those of Saint Paul himself. Without a great deal of technical language he points out that the ritual impurities of the Old Law are meaningless for those in the state of sanctifying grace. The last few sentences are particularly significant for our purposes.

BOOK VI
XXVII. Now if any persons keep to the Jewish customs and observances concerning the natural emission and nocturnal pollutions, and the lawful conjugal acts, (1) let them tell us whether in those hours or days, when they undergo any such thing, they observe not to pray, or to touch a Bible, or to partake of the Eucharist? And if they own it to be so, it is plain they are void of the Holy Spirit, which always continues with the faithful. For concerning holy persons Solomon says: "That every one may prepare himself, that so when he sleeps it may keep him, and when he arises it may talk with him." (2) For if thou thinkest, O woman, when thou art seven days in thy separation, that thou art void of the Holy Spirit, then if thou shouldst die suddenly thou wilt depart void of the Spirit, and without assured hope in God; or else thou must imagine that the Spirit always is inseparable from thee, as not being in a place. But thou standest in need of prayer and the Eucharist, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, as having been guilty of no fault in this matter. For neither lawful mixture, nor child-bearing, nor the menstrual purgation, nor nocturnal pollution, can defile the nature of a man, or separate the Holy Spirit from him. Nothing but impiety and unlawful practice can do that. For the Holy Spirit always abides with those that are possessed of it, so long as they are worthy; and those from whom it is departed, it leaves them desolate, and exposed to the wicked spirit. Now every man is filled either with the holy or with the unclean spirit; and it is not possible to avoid the one or the other, unless they can receive opposite spirits. For the Comforter hates every lie, and the devil hates all truth. But every one that is baptized agreeably to the truth is separated from the diabolical spirit, and is under the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit remains with him so long as he is doing good, and fills him with wisdom and understanding, and suffers not the wicked spirit to approach him, but watches over his goings. Thou therefore, O woman, if, as thou sayest, in the days of thy separation thou art void of the Holy Spirit, thou art then filled with the unclean one; for by neglecting to pray and to read thou wilt invite him to thee, though he were unwilling. For this spirit, of all others, loves the ungrateful, the slothful, and the careless, and the drowsy, since he himself by ingratitude was distempered with evil mind, and was thereby deprived by God his dignity; having rather chosen to be a devil than an archangel. Wherefore, O woman, eschew such vain words, and be ever mindful of God that created thee, and pray to Him. For He is thy Lord, and the Lord of the universe; and meditate in His laws without observing any such things, such as the natural purgation, lawful mixture, child-birth, a miscarriage, or a blemish of the body; since such observations are the vain inventions of foolish men, and such inventions as have no sense in them. Neither the burial of a man, nor a dead man's bone, nor a sepulchre, nor any particular sort of food, nor the nocturnal pollution, can defile the soul of man; but only impiety towards God, and transgression, and injustice towards one's neighbour; I mean rapine, violence, or if there be anything contrary to His righteousness, adultery or fornication. Wherefore, beloved, avoid and eschew such observations, for they are heathenish. For we do not abominate a dead man, as do they, seeing we hope that he will live again. Nor do we hate lawful mixture; for it is their practice to act impiously in such instances. For the conjunction of man and wife, if it be with righteousness, is agreeable to the mind of God. "For He that made them at the beginning made them male and female; and He blessed them, and said, Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." (3) If, therefore, the difference of sexes was made by the will of God for the generation of multitudes, then must the conjunction of male and female be also acceptable to His mind.

BOOK VII

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS THEY OUGHT TO HAVE WHO ARE TO BE ORDAINED.

XXXI. Do you first ordain bishops worthy of the Lord, (7) and presbyters and deacons, pious men, righteous, meek, free from the love of money, lovers of truth, approved, holy, not accepters of persons, who are able to teach the word of piety, and rightly dividing the doctrines of the Lord. (8) And do ye honour such as your fathers, as your lords, as your benefactors, as the causes of your well-being. Reprove ye one another, not in anger, but in mildness, with kindness and peace. Observe all things that are commanded you by the Lord. Be watchful for your life. (9) "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye
like unto men who wait for their Lord, when He will come, at even, or in the morning, or at
cock-crowing, or at midnight. For at what hour they think not, the Lord will come; and if they
open to Him, blessed are those servants, because they were found watching. For He will gird
Himself, and will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” (10)
Watch therefore, and pray, that ye do not sleep unto death. For your former good deeds will
not profit you, if at the last part of your life you go astray from the true faith.

THE APOSTOLIC CANONS

The Apostolic Canons – Canones ecclesiastici Apostolorum - make up chapter 47 of
The Apostolic Constitutions, published around 380.9 They appear to be adapted from the
canons of Antioch (341) and Laodicea (343-381). In the West, the first fifty canons were
generally accepted, and were published in the collection of Dionysius Exiguus, even though
there is some debate on the precise meaning of canons 46 and 47 which deal with the validity
of Baptism administered by heretics.10 For our purposes, the only canon excluded by
Dionysius is number 51, the substance of which was found in Canon V, and was repeated by
Pope Saint Gregory the Great and preserved in the Gregorian Reform era canonical Collection
in Seventy Four Titles (74T), which will be mentioned in greater detail in a subsequent
chapter: “There are some who say that marriages ought to be dissolved for the sake of
religion. Truly it must be known that even if human law permitted this, nevertheless divine
law prohibited it…”11

In the East the Canons were approved by the Council in Trullo called by Justinian II
in 692. (“Trullo” is the name of the domed meeting hall in Constantinople where the Council
met.) The actæ of Trullo including canons of its own which occasionally contradict the
Apostolic Canons, were submitted to Rome but received off again, on again, off again
approval (or lack thereof) from Popes Sergius I, John VII, and Constantine.12 Phrased as laws
rather than as generally accepted Church customs, they do seem to impeach a number of
Roman practices. Except for the Apostolic Canons, the larger work, the Apostolic
Constitutions was rejected as being Arian by the Council.

9 http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07158.htm (toward the end). The entire text of The Apostolic
Constitutions may be found in the range of URLs between /fathers/07151.htm and /fathers/07158.htm, or in its
Reform (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Title 64, No 273, p. 225.
CANON V. (VI.) Let not a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, put away his wife under pretence of religion; but if he put her away, let him be excommunicated; and if he persists, let him be deposed.

CANON XVII. He who has been twice married after baptism, or who has had a concubine, cannot become a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any other of the sacerdotal list.

CANON XVIII. He who married a widow, or a divorced woman, or an harlot, or a servant-maid, or an actress, cannot be a bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any other of the sacerdotal list.

CANON XIX. He who has married two sisters, or a niece, cannot become a clergyman.

CANON XXI. An eunuch, if he has been made so by the violence of men or [if his virilia have been amputated] in times of persecution, or if he has been born so, if in other respects he is worthy, may be made a bishop.

CANON XXII. He who has mutilated himself, cannot become a clergyman, for he is a self-murderer, and an enemy to the workmanship of God.

CANON XXIII. If any man being a clergyman shall mutilate himself, let him be deposed, for he is a self-murderer.

CANON XXIV. If a layman mutilate himself, let him be excommunicated for three years, as practising against his own life.

CANON XXV. (XXV. and XXVI.) If a bishop, presbyter, or deacon be found guilty of fornication, perjury, or theft, let him be deposed, but let him not be excommunicated; for the Scripture says, “thou shall not punish a man twice for the same offence.” In like manner the other clergy shall be subject to the same proceeding.

CANON XXVI. (XXVII.) Of those who have been admitted to the clergy unmarried, we ordain, that the readers and singers only may, if they will, marry.

CANON L. If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any one of the sacerdotal list, abstains from marriage, or flesh, or wine, not by way of religious restraint, but as abhorring them, forgetting that God made all things very good, and that he made man male and female, and blaspheming the work of creation, let him be corrected, or else be deposed, and cast out of the Church. In like manner a layman.

CANON LXXVII. If any one be deprived of an eye, or lame of a leg, but in other respects be worthy of a bishopric, he may be ordained, for the defect of the body does not defile a man, but the pollution of the soul.

CANON LXXVIII. But if a man be deaf or blind, he may not be made a bishop, not indeed as if he were thus defiled, but that the affairs of the Church may not be hindered.13

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13 Canons And Rulings Not Having Conciliar Origin But Approved By Name In Canon Ii. Of The Synod In Trullo. The Canons Of The Holy And Altogether August Apostles. http://www.ccel.org/fathers/NPNF2-14/7appndx/apcanons.htm
THE COUNCILS AND SYNODS

THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS OF ANCYRA, GANGRA, NEOCAESAREA, ANTIOCH AND LAODICEA

(Which canons were accepted and received by the ecumenical synods)

HTTP://WWW.CCEL.ORG/FATHERS/VPN2-14/2ANCYRA/

Contrast the reasonableness of these with those of Elvira

ANCYRA

After the death of the Emperor Maximin in 310, a council was held in Galatia at Ancyra, the provincial capital. About a dozen bishops were present. The primary topic of discussion was the appropriate treatment of those who had succumbed to the persecutions and repudiated the Faith. Celibacy of the clergy and religious, as well as a few moral problems were also considered. Where the canons prescribed penances they were considerable but finite. No one was perpetually excluded from Communion. Of the nineteen canons, two are of interest in our study:

**Canon X.** They who have been made deacons, declaring when they were ordained that they must marry, because they were not able to abide so, and who afterwards have married, shall continue in their ministry, because it was conceded to them by the bishop. But if any were silent on this matter, undertaking at their ordination to abide as they were, and afterwards proceeded to marriage, these shall cease from the diaconate.

For canon X to make any sense, it is must be that the married clergy were not restricted from relations with their wives. It also suggests that if dispensations from the normal laws are to be made they are made locally by the bishop.

**Canon XIX.** If any persons who profess virginity shall disregard their profession, let them fulfil the term of digamists. And, moreover, we prohibit women who are virgins from living with men as sisters.

NEOCÆSAREA

The Synod of Neocæsarea in Pontus, took place within a year or two of that of Ancyra – perhaps 315. The canons deal with the administration of the Sacraments, including Baptism

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1 Unless otherwise noted, all of the material concerning the provincial synods is taken from Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. XIV
and Holy Orders. It is presumed that the penances for various sins are standard and generally known.

**Canon I.** If a presbyter marry, let him be removed from his order; but if he commit fornication or adultery, let him be altogether east out [i.e. of communion] and put to penance.

**Canon VIII.** If the wife of a layman has committed adultery and been clearly convicted, such [a husband] cannot enter the ministry; and if she commit adultery after his ordination, he must put her away; but if he retain her, he can have no part in the ministry committed to him.

**Canon IX.** A Presbyter who has been promoted after having committed carnal sin, and who shall confess that he had sinned before his ordination, shall not make the oblation, though he may remain in his other functions on account of his zeal in other respects; for the majority have affirmed that ordination blots out other kinds of sins. But if he do not confess and cannot be openly convicted, the decision shall depend upon himself.

**Canon X.** Likewise, if a deacon have fallen into the same sin, let him have the rank of a minister.

**GANGRA**

The date for the Synod of Gangra in Armenia is uncertain. Its canons mention Nicaea, so it cannot have been before 325. Scholars assign various dates between then and 381. The synod was called not to deal with the effects of the earlier persecutions, but with the rigorous heterodoxy of one named Eustathius, which seems to have taken hold of a number of the faithful.

**Synodical Letter of the Council of Gangra.**

Eusebius, Aelian, Eugenius, Olympus, Bithynicus, Gregory, Philetus, Pappus, Eulalius, Hypatius, Proaeresius, Basil and Bassus, assembled in the holy Synod at Gangra, to our most honoured lords and fellow-ministers in Armenia wish health in the Lord.

Forasmuch as the most Holy Synod of Bishops, assembled on account of certain necessary matters of ecclesiastical business in the Church at Gangra, on inquiring also into the matters which concern Eustathius, found that many things had been unlawfully done by these very men who are partisans of Eustathius, it was compelled to make definitions, which it has hastened to make known to all, for the removal of whatever has by him been done amiss. For, from their utter abhorrence of marriage, and from their adoption of the proposition that no one living in a state of marriage has any hope towards God, many misguided married women have forsaken their husbands, and husbands their wives: then, afterwards, not being able to contain, they have fallen into adultery; and so, through such a principle as this, have come to shame. They were found, moreover, fomenting separations from the houses of God and of the Church; treating the Church and its members with disdain, and establishing separate meetings and assemblies, and different doctrines and other things in opposition to the Churches and those things which are done in the Church; wearing strange apparel, to the destruction of the common custom of dress; making distributions, among themselves and their adherents as saints, of the first-fruits of the Church, which have, from the first, been given to the Church; slaves also leaving their masters, and, on account of their own strange apparel, acting insolently towards their masters; women, too, disregarding decent custom, and, instead of womanly apparel, wearing men's clothes, thinking to be justified because of these; while many of them, under a pretext of piety, cut off the growth of hair, which is natural to woman; [and
these persons were found] fasting on the Lord's Day, despising the sacredness of that free
day, but disdain[ing and eating on the fasts appointed in the Church; and certain of them abhor
the eating of flesh; neither do they tolerate prayers in the houses of married persons, but, on
the contrary, despise such prayers when they are made, and often refuse to partake when
Oblations are offered in the houses of married persons; contempting married presbyters, and
refusing to touch their ministrations; condemning the services in honour of the Martyrs and
those who gather or minister therein, and the rich also who do not alienate all their wealth, as
having nothing to hope from God; and many other things that no one could recount. For every
one of them, when he forsook the canon of the Church, adopted laws that tended as it were to
isolation; for neither was there any common judgment among all of them; but whatever any
one conceived, that he propounded, to the scandal of the Church, and to his own destruction.

Wherefore, the Holy Synod present in Gangra was compelled, on these accounts, to
condemn them, and to set forth definitions declaring them to be cast out of the Church; but
that, if they should repent and anathematize every one of these false doctrines, then they
should be capable of restoration. And therefore the Holy Synod has particularly set forth
everything which they ought to anathematize before they are received. And if any one will not
submit to the said decrees, he shall be anathematized as a heretic, and excommunicated, and
cast out of the Church; and it will behove the bishops to observe a like rule in respect of all
who may be found with them.

**Canon I.** If any one shall condemn marriage, or abominate and condemn a woman
who is a believer and devout, and sleeps with her own husband, as though she could not
enter the Kingdom [of heaven] let him be anathema.

**Canon IV.** If any one shall maintain, concerning a married presbyter, that is not lawful
to partake of the oblation when he offers it, let him be anathema.

**Canon IX.** If any one shall remain virgin, or observe continence, abstaining from
marriage because he abhors it, and not on account of the beauty and holiness of virginity
itself, let him be anathema.

**Canon X.** If any one of those who are living a virgin life for the Lord's sake shall treat
arrogantly the married, let him be anathema.

**THE SYNOD OF ANTIOCH IN ENCAENIIS.**

A synod was held at Antioch in 341. (“Encæniis” refers to the feast of the dedication
of the church, which occurred along with the synod.) The canons reiterated the ruling of
Nicæa on computing the date of Easter. For the most part, they dealt with organizational and
jurisdictional matters for the hierarchy.

**THE SYNOD OF LAODICEA.**

Laodicea is in Phrygia Pacatiana (i.e. not in Syria) and a synod was held somewhere
between 343 and 381. It treated of the relationships of Christians with heretics, prohibited the
ordination of women (canon XI), and set forth certain liturgical practices.
EARLY LEGISLATION: ELVIRA, NICÆA,

SYNOD OF ELVIRA

The earliest known legislation concerning clerical celibacy comes to us from the Iberian synod of *Elliberis* or *Illiberis*, the ruins of Elvira, near Granada, in modern day Spain. The synod took place somewhere between 295 and 313, and the extant records of its canons, in two major sources, date between the end of the six and the end of the seventh centuries. Some of the canons carry references to the official practice of paganism in the Empire, so no later date is possible. A critical edition of the canons has been published by the University of Barcelona, and will be relied upon herein. The synod was attended by nineteen bishops, and perhaps twenty-six priests, all under the presidency Felix of Acci (modern Guadix) and the influence of Hosius of Cordova (256-358); the canons being subscribed by the bishops alone. Hosius was a major ecclesiastical force both in Spain, and in the Empire as Constantine's personal advisor (not a papal legate) in Church affairs from about 313 until the end of the Nicæan Council. He presided also at the Councils of Nicæa (325) and Sardica (343), and was considered a strong defender of the Faith until signing the second formula of Sirmium (353) together with Pope Liberius.

Anyone reading the canons of Elvira must come away with a feeling of the synod's extreme rigorism. For a number of offenses, the sinner was never to be re-admitted to Holy Communion, even at the hour of death. Other offenses require expulsion from the Church, but give no indication if this is to be permanent. A total fast is to be observed every Saturday, except during July and August when the weak are dispensed. One may not eat with Jews; women may not associate with hairdressers or men with long hair; Jews may not bless their crops. Some of this is understandable in a society plagued by pagan persecution. Those who were likely to compromise the Faith were a danger to the whole Church as well as being a danger to their own spiritual welfare. Laxity with penitents who have sinned seriously --

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3 Canons of Elvira, I, II, VI, VII, VIII, XII, XVII, XXXVII, LXVI, LXXI, LXXV.
4 Canons of Elvira, XXVI, XXIII.
5 L, LXVI, XLIX.
especially apostates -- was seen as a scandal and an inducement to further sin and defection. But at some point, leaving the repentant sinner without hope of receiving the Sacraments goes beyond the Catholic understanding of discipline to erroneous rigorism.

Beyond the fact of Roman persecution, we don't have a great deal of background as to why the specific canons of Elvira were adopted, although, in some cases, we may gain a tentative explanation from the way in which future authorities justified them. The prohibition of celebrating the fortieth day after Easter (c. XLIII) may have been simply xenophobic as the population of the Empire was already in flux before the barbarian invasions. The prohibition of pictures in churches (c. XXXVI), lest they "become objects of worship and adoration," seems positively heretical by later standards.

Two of the canons are cited relative to clerical celibacy: 6

- **XXVII de clericis, ut extraneas feminas in domo non habeant.**
  - A bishop or other cleric may have only a sister or virgin daughter consecrated to God [living] with him; he is not allowed to keep any unrelated woman.

- **XXXIII de episcopis et ministris, ut ab uxoribus abstineant.**
  - Bishops, priests, and deacons in ministerial positions are to abstain from conjugal relations and not produce children. Those who in fact do this shall be removed from the clerical dignity.

Canon XXVII legislates concerning "extraneas feminas," unrelated or exterraneous women. A legitimate wife would not fall into this category. She is related. The public character of marriage would have made the bishops wife well known to the local church as

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6 The Latin is from the Barcelona work mentioned above, the English is my own. The Latin given agrees substantially with that given in Denzinger edition XXIII 52b, 52c/118, 119.
the woman who is supposed to be living in the bishop's residence. We will encounter a similar canon at Nicæa, for the same purpose, forbidding "a subintroducta dwelling with him, except only a mother, or sister, or aunt, or such persons only as are beyond all suspicion"7--the "beyond all suspicion" part is what is significant here. If we were to suppose that Canon XXVII forbade the bishop's wife to live with him, Canon XXXIII would have served no purpose.

Canon XXXIII is a bit problematic. Obviously, it would eventually reduce the number of married men seeking ordination to Major Orders, but it doesn't of itself prohibit such ordinations. We have seen an English translation of this same canon that prohibits men in Major Orders from marrying, but have not found any Latin text equivalent -- although, the custom of not allowing those already ordained to marry must go back to before Pope Leo I, who is said (by Pope Gregory VII) to have prohibited the marriage of subdeacons.8 What seems so glaringly wrong about XXXIII is that it would have applied to couples in a legitimate sacramental marriage contracted in good faith before the man's ordination. The canon would thus create precisely the situation Saint Paul said should be avoided -- abstinence beyond the couple's ability to resist temptation -- it promotes living in the near occasion of sin. In that it proscribes the primary end of marriage, the procreation and education of children, and proscribes the secondary end of reducing concupiscence it is tantamount to requiring the priest to "put away his wife" in violation of our Lord's insistence that no cause can justify such a thing. He has not "made himself a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven"; he has been castrated by Hosius and company.

While the first of these canons (XXVII) can be attributed to the prudent desire to avoid scandal, there doesn't seem to be any way of knowing what motivated the bishops of Elvira to institute XXXIII. We will see, soon enough, that future authorities would look back and justify it by tainting their thinking with gnosticism and the Judaizing heresy.

7 Nicæa, Canon III.
To close this section on Elvira with a refreshing note as to its honesty, we must point out that canon XXVIII forbade bishops to receive offerings from those not allowed to receive Communion.

**Nicaea**

Within the decade following the legalization of Christianity in the Empire, the Arian heresy split the Church into at least two hostile factions. In order to maintain peace, the Emperor Constantine summoned the Council at Nicaea to set the matter straight for all Christians. The Council met at Nicaea, centerally located for the bishops of the Christian world. Saint Athanasius tells us that it was attended by 318 bishops. Most of these were from the East; we know that Pope Sylvester did not attend but was represented by his two priests, Victor and Vincentius. When not directed by Constantine himself, Hosius of Cordoba, the Emperor's personal advisor on religious matters, presided. The Council adopted a creed that was temporarily accepted by most of the participants, but the debate occupied the Church for most of the fourth century and continued in the provinces until about the eighth century. ⁹

Nicaea also attempted to decide the question of Easter, which was celebrated by some Eastern and Gallican Churches based on the Jewish formula for placing the Passover on the fourteenth day of the lunar month of Nissan, without regard to the day of the week. Others insisted on a Sunday celebration. The calculation was debated at least as early as 150 by Saint Polycarp and Pope Saint Anicetus. Around 190 Pope Victor I had even threatened to excommunicate the "quartodecemians" as those who held to the fourteenth day calculation were called, but was deterred by of Irenaeus of Lyons. Even with seeming agreement at Nicaea, some of the Celtic churches continued to follow their own calculations for several centuries. The Calendar reform of Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 renewed the disagreement of East and West, with Orthodox Easter often following the Catholic celebration by a few weeks. ¹⁰

While the acts of Nicaea are no longer extant, we know that someone (Hosius of Cordoba is a likely suspect) moved that the Council adopt rules on clerical celibacy similar to

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those of the Iberian Synod of Elvira. Opposition came from a highly unexpected quarter, the monastic center of Thebes in Egypt, in the person of Bishop Paphnutius, and is described by the historian Socrates Scholasticus:

Paphnutius then was bishop of one of the cities in Upper Thebes: he was a man so favored divinely that extraordinary miracles were done by him. In the time of the persecution he had been deprived of one of his eyes. The emperor honored this man exceedingly, and often sent for him to the palace, and kissed the part where the eye had been torn out. So great devoutness characterized the emperor Constantine. Let this single fact respecting Paphnutius suffice: I shall now explain another thing which came to pass in consequence of his advice, both for the good of the Church and the honor of the clergy. It seemed fit to the bishops to introduce a new law into the Church, that those who were in holy orders, I speak of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, should have no conjugal intercourse with the wives whom they had married while still hymen. Now when discussion on this matter was impending, Paphnutius having arisen in the midst of the assembly of bishops, earnestly entreated them not to impose so heavy a yoke on the ministers of religion: asserting that 'marriage itself is honorable, and the bed undefiled'; urging before God that they ought not to injure the Church by too stringent restrictions. 'For all men,' said he, 'cannot bear the practice of rigid continence; neither perhaps would the chastity of the wife of each be preserved': and he termed the intercourse of a man with his lawful wife chastity. It would be sufficient, he thought, that such as had previously entered on their sacred calling should abjure matrimony, according to the ancient tradition of the Church: but that none should be separated from her to whom, while yet unordained, he had been united. And these sentiments he expressed, although himself without experience of marriage, and, to speak plainly, without ever having known a woman: for from a boy he had been brought up in a monastery, and was specially renowned above all men for his chastity. The whole assembly of the clergy assented to the reasoning of Paphnutius: wherefore they silenced all further debate on this point, leaving it to the discretion of those who were husbands to exercise abstinence if they so wished in reference to their wives.\(^\text{11}\)

Paphnutius simply followed the teaching of our Lord and Saint Paul, recognizing that marriage is a holy thing in itself, that no earthly authority can dissolve it, and that men and women living in lawful marriage would be tempted to exercise their marital rights and demand the marriage debt. He seems to go against both the Judaizing and gnostic ideas that made marriage into something defiling. Presumably, he also understood the injustice of "changing the rules of the game" after a couple had made the life long vow of marriage and the husband had been ordained to Major Orders.

Understanding what Nicæa intended with regard to clerical marriage, we see that the only canon it enacted could not have related to bishops and priests living in legitimate marriages.

\(^\text{11}\) Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History, Book 1, Chapter XI
http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-02/Npnf2-02-06.htm#P173_39581
Canon III: The great Synod has stringently forbidden any bishop, presbyter, deacon, or any one of the clergy whatever, to have a subintroducta dwelling with him, except only a mother, or sister, or aunt, or such persons only as are beyond all suspicion.\(^\text{12}\)

To equate a legitimate wife with the "subintroducta" of Nicæa or the "extranea femina," of Elvira would be to fall prey -- accidentally or otherwise -- to the logical fallacy of accidental inclusion.

It has been claimed that Socrates’ account of Bishop Paphnutius’ intervention has has been labeled as a “myth” by modern scholarship and condemned by Gregory VII.\(^\text{13}\) Oddly, the Catholic Encyclopedia, centuries after Pope Gregory, treats it as “un-interdicted” fact.\(^\text{14}\) As we will see, Gregory VII seemed to think he was infallible in a lot of matters far beyond the official teaching of the Church, including launching invasions, king making, and, apparently now history. But all this is beside the point, for if Paphnutius (or his intervention) did not exist, he (like the “god” of the agnostics) would have to be invented by the Church. Without the Egyptian monk She would have been in the self-contradictory position of setting Herself up against Her Founder, against Saint Paul, and against Her own eventual theology of marriage.

\(^{12}\) Council of Nicæa, Canon III  http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-14/Npnf2-14-14.htm#P612_144576


\(^{14}\) CE, s.v. “Paphnutius,” www.newadvent.org/cathen/11457a.htm
### The Popes and the Emperors – Fourth Century

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**The Popes**

**The Emperors**
DAMASUS, WOMEN, AND CELIBACY

EARLY FOURTH CENTURY

The generosity of the Empire to the Church during the early fourth century is without precedent in any other period of history. Constantine not only donated sumptuous buildings and property to the Church, he sent his mother, Saint Helena, to the Holy Land to gather relics to fill the churches of Rome. He put the clergy on salary – not just in Rome, but through his jurisdiction. In modern terms, Constantine gave the Church a book of blank checks drawn on the Imperial Treasury:

Constantine Augustus to Cæcillian, Bishop of Carthage.
Whereas it is our pleasure that grants hould be made in all the provinces of Africa and Numidia and Mauretania to ministers of the lawful and most holy Catholic religions, in order to defray their expenses, I have sent word to Ursus, the illustrious head of finance in Africa, and have directed him to pay to your excellency three thousand folles [$90,000 in 1927 dollars by Loomis and Shotwell’s estimate!] Do you, therefore, when you have received this sum of money, give orders that it be distributed among all the persons I have mentioned, in accordance with the instructions I sent to you by Hosius [Bp. Of Cordova]. If you shold find that anything more is needed to fulfill my purpose for the all, do without hesitation demand whatever else you discover to be necessary from Heracleides, the treasurer of our funds. For I charged him, when he was with me, that if your excellency should ask him for money, he should see that it is paid without delay.¹

Constantine funded the Council of Nicæa (325), and arranged Imperial transportation for those who attended. While Nicæa produced unexpectedly good results for orthodox Christianity (Constantine favored the opposition, Arian, party), it was in many ways a portent of bad things to come during the latter part of the century. Many of the councils and synods of the period would be called by imperial orders. Constantine and some of his heirs may have been well intentioned, but the idea that the Emperor could continue to be the “Pontifex Maximus,” as he had been of the old State Pagan religion, would soon be seen to be incompatible with the true religion of Jesus Christ. The events of the new decades are better read in one of the ecclesiastical histories of the period, but a brief summary will be helpful.

Nicæa, with its declaration that God the Father and God the Son were “of one substance – homoousios” really did not put the Arian heresy to rest. For many in the East the term sounded suspiciously like the terminology of the Sabellian heresy of a few years past. Arius had been deposed as a priest of Alexandria, but retained the sympathy of Constantine,

¹ Shotwell and Loomis, The See of Peter, 454-455.
who would die as an Arian. Around 332 Constantine held a personal meeting with Arius and, convinced of his orthodoxy, tried to require his reinstatement by Athanasius, currently Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius refused and was deposed by synods at Tyre and Jerusalem. Athanasius was tried and convicted on a number of fictitious charges and sent into exile in Gaul, while Arius was readmitted to the Church.²

Julius I (337-352) followed Marcus (336-337) on the throne of Peter, and within months Constantine died, leaving the Empire to be divided among his three sons: Constans, an orthodox Catholic governed Italy, Africa, and part of the Balkans; Constine II ruled in Gaul, Spain, and Britain; and Constantius, an Arian like his father, who ruled the East from Antioch. Hoping to promote peace in the Empire the brothers agreed on a general amnesty for religious prisoners, but this led to great discord, particularly where an imprisoned bishop had already been replaced in his see by another. No such returning bishop was surrounded by greater controversy than Athanasius of Alexandria, who enjoyed the reputation of being the number-one foe of the Arians. A synod was to have been called by Pope Julius at Rome, precisely to deal with the matter of Alexandria, but before it could meet, in March of 339, Constantius was prevailed upon by Eusebius of Nicomedia to eject Athanasius by force and replace him with Gregory of Capadocia. The battle and burnings were bloody in the extreme, quickly being reenacted in other Eastern Sees, so that Rome and the West were soon receiving numerous exiles from the Arian East.³

For about twenty years, there were a number of synods called either to make peace or to denounce Athanasius. Any number of compromise formulæ – ambiguous alternatives to the *homoousios* of Nicæa were proposed. With the backing of Constans, Athanasius was even able to return to Alexandria in 346. But then in 350, Constans was murdered, provoking military action by Constantius who took the territory of his brother while retaliating. Constans reigned as sole augustus, as had his father before him. Pope Julius died of natural causes in 352 and was replaced by Liberius (352-366).

With Arian Emperor Constantius in full charge of Italy and Gaul, there were few bishops willing or able to resist the renewed condemnation of Athanasius – in one instance, at

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³ Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter*, p. 489-482.
Milan in 355, dictated by the Emperor with his sword in hand. Those who refused were immediately exiled, the same fate that would soon overtake Pope Liberius, who departed Rome for Beroea in Thrace where he could be looked after by an Arian bishop. He was accompanied part of the way by one of his deacons, a man named Damasus, who thought the better of things and returned to Rome. At Rome, the people and clergy, proud of the Pope’s resistance to the heretical Emperor, and fired up by the description of events related by Damasus, took an oath to elect no new Pope in Liberius’ place for as long as he lived.\(^4\)

Constantius, of course, would not hear of having the eternal City of Rome without a bishop, and moved quickly to fill the See with one more cooperative than the exiled Liberius. From his perspective it did not matter that the lawful Pope had neither died nor resigned. Shrewd enough not to attempt the introduction of a foreigner, the imperial choice fell on Felix, the Archdeacon of Rome. Late in 355 he was consecrated Bishop of Rome as Felix II, at the Lateran (or in Milan, if Athanasius was correct) by a number of Arian bishops. Joined in breaking his oath to support Pope Liberius by the deacon Damasus, Felix reigned dubiously until the return of the true Pope in 358 – and even more dubiously thereafter until his death late in 365. Somewhere after Liberius’ return, Damasus again switched his allegiance, this time back to Pope Liberius.

Precisely because of his alleged capitulation to the Emperor (the historical details are still debated) Liberius is probably the most well known name among the Popes of the fourth century. As the thirty-fifth Pope, he was the first not to be honored as a saint. The hagiographers were, of course, disappointed by the fact that he was not “gloriously martyred for the orthodox Faith.” But without judging the character of Liberius either way, it is not hard to come to the realization that while a holy Pope might accept martyrdom rather than give bad example to his Church, Liberius was in fact “sold out” by those to whom he had the greatest obligation of not giving scandal, his own Roman clergy. When they elected Felix II, shortly after taking an oath to do no such thing, he may have been quite correct in recognizing that his most important duty was to return to Rome alive, and worry about martyrdom later.

Emperor Valentinian (364-375) certainly supported Damasus against his rival Ursinus. He restored much of the property that had been confiscated during the reign of Julian the

\(^4\) Shotwell and Loomis, *The See of Peter*, p. 536-540.
Apostate, although not that which had been taken from the pagans to begin with. He was a catechumen, and a friend of Saint Ambrose, who preached his funeral oration after dying unexpectedly of a stroke.

**DAMASUS**

Damasus (366-384) was almost certainly of Iberian decent, but it seems likely that he was born in Rome around 305. He and his sister Irene were the children of Antonius, the priest of San Lorenzo and his wife Laurentia, who lived for sixty years as a widow, until the age of eighty-nine. Damasus is said to have grown up in his father’s church, and to have extensively refurbished it as Pope, so that it is now called San Lorenzo in Damaso.\(^5\)

Damasus served as a deacon under the ill fated Pope Liberius, accompanying him into exile in 355, but transferring his allegiance to the anti-Pope Felix II, in spite of the oath of the Roman clergy to recognize no new Pope until the death of Liberius. When Liberius returned to Rome in 359, the Emperor urged that he share the papacy with Felix, a completely unacceptable arrangement that was resolved only by Felix’ early death. While Pope Liberius lived, Damasus returned to his service, but at the Pope’s death, those who had been consistently loyal to Liberius immediately elected the deacon Ursinus and had him consecrated in the Basilica of Sta Maria in Trastavere. Less than a week later, on October 1, 366, the former supporters of the anti-Pope elected Damasus. A bloody battle ensued, in which Damasus was able to field a large army of thugs (mostly grave diggers) to attack Ursinus at Sta Maria, and able to call upon the protection of the Emperor, who had engineered the election of anti-Pope Felix. When the imperial Prefect, Viventius, broke up the battle, 137 men were dead, and Ursinus was exiled to Naples (or Cologne, or Milan – the history is not precise, as he was banished several times).\(^6\) And that battle did not end the war, which would go on for years with occasional violence and an attempt to bring criminal charges against Damasus.\(^7\)

Damasus’ pontificate is best remembered for his efforts to integrate the Church into the culture of Rome. He lavishly endowed churches and works of art, turning many of the


\(^6\) Ibid., Duffy; ibid., Kelly: ibid. CE

underground burial vaults of the martyrs into splendid tombs. His architectural contributions were often embellished with poems and epitaphs of his own writing. Church art copied the styles of pagan Rome, and Christian saints were pictured as though they had been members of the Roman nobility. Damasus will always be remembered as the Pope who commissioned Saint Jerome to translate the Bible into a more stately form than the old *Itala Vetus*, and to fix the canon of Scripture as we have it today. The name of Jerome’s “Vulgate” indicates that it was in the Latin language of the educated people, rather than in Hebrew and Greek – not that it was in any way a lower class translation. Damasus personally moved in the upper strata of Roman society, making the papacy more a part of the nobility then it had ever been since the legalization of Christianity at the beginning of the century. He stands out among the early Popes for making Christianity part of the social and artistic heritage of Rome. The Church adopted a truly Roman style in so much that it did, securing its rightful place in the history of the Eternal City.

**EASTERN CHURCHES**

It is difficult to gauge the effect of Damasus’ affluent life style on the average Catholic of Rome – impossible to know just how the common man felt about a successor of Peter and Paul living in a way that made even the important people of Rome comment negatively. We are told that when Pope Damasus asked the Prefect of the City, a pagan, when he would become a Christian, he responded: “To-morrow -- if you will make me Bishop of Rome.”

Ammianus Marcellinus, the pagan Roman historian who recorded the 137 deaths at Sta Maria, puts the struggle between Damasus and Ursinus for the papacy in terms that would fit well in a Christian lament of worldliness:

> Nor, when I behold the pomp of city life, do I deny that men who covet this office [the papacy] in order to fulfill their ambitions may well struggle for it with every resource at their disposal. For when they have obtained it they are ever after so secure, enriched with offerings from the ladies, riding abroad seated in their carriages, splendidly arrayed, giving banquets so lavish that they surpass the tables of royalty. They might in truth be blessed if they disdained the greatness of the city with which they compete in vice, and live in imitation of some of the provincial bishops, who eat and drink plainly and sparingly, wear poor clothing and keep their faces bent upon the ground and so commend themselves continually to the divinity and his true worshippers as pure and godfearing men.

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AMBROSE (PAGE 883) ON VIRGINS TAKING SPOUSE FROM HEAVEN (may fit better with piece on Damasus).

Any examination of the pontificate of Pope Saint Damasus must raise the question of just how the Church related to women during the patristic era. We know from the marriage legislation of the early Church that women significantly outnumbered men, at least in the upper social classes. If they legally married “down,” they lost their own personal status, so there was a temptation to avoid marriage or to enter into some unrecognized form of union. In addition to criticizing Pope Callistus for allowing the ordination of canonically bigamous priests, Hippolytus rebuked him for allowing uncanonical unions:

He has even permitted women who were unmarried and who were inflamed by passion unfitting to their age or were unwilling to forfeit their rank by a legal marriage, to have whatever man they choose as concubine, whether he were slave or free, and to regard him as their husband, although they were not legally married to him.10

The synod of Elvira codified the antipope’s rebuke:

Canon XV. Christian girls are not to marry pagans, no matter how few eligible men there are, for such marriages lead to adultery of the soul.

Canon XVI. Heretics shall not be joined in marriage with Catholic girls unless they accept the Catholic faith. Catholic girls may not marry Jews or heretics, because they cannot find a unity when the faithful and the unfaithful are joined. Parents who allow this to happen shall not commune for five years.

Canon XVII. If parents allow their daughter to marry a pagan priest, they shall not receive communion even at the time of death.

The disparity between the numbers of men and women was not surprising. Apart from the times of organized persecution women who stayed mainly in the household were in little danger for practicing Christianity, and would rarely be required to compromise the Faith. On the other hand, men in public life or military service were required to participate in pagan worship as proof of their loyalty to the Empire. No doubt there was also concern about being thought odd or unmanly for adopting the revolutionarily mild religion of the Christ – with a consequent fear of loosing business or social connections. The problem perpetuated itself in
that, even if they are looking for romance, men are unlikely to join groups dominated by women. As the marriage laws we have considered suggest, the Church was concerned for maintaining the chastity of these “excess” women.

There was, as well, an important economic issue. Men tended to leave their property to their younger wives and children, while women more often than men had less clearly determined obligations. The women who survived childbirth generally lived to inherit their husbands’ property. Pope Damasus’ had something of a reputation for maintaining close contact with a number of widowed Roman matrons, and he does not seem to have been unique among the clergy. The Breviary touts the accomplishment of Pope Saint Marcellus (306-308) that “it was by his counsel that a Roman matron named Lucina made the Church of God the heir of all her property.” Damasus is unique, however, in having an imperial law directed against his attempts to solicit the property of the matrons.

Valentinian addressed a law to Damasus, Pope of Rome in 370, which forbade ecclesiastics to marry widows or female wards of the state. The purpose of this law was to stop churchmen from obtaining the wealth of such women through inheritance.

Actually, there were not enough ecclesiastics to go around, and marrying them off to the top five or ten percent of the “widows or female wards of the state” would not have been an “efficient use of resources.” Women tend, quite reasonably, to be possessive – they may enthusiastically accept the idea of financing a promising new husband’s career – but most get extremely agitated when they discover that they are not to be the only wife of the new husband!

But somewhere around Damasus time – at least as early as Saint Cyprian of Carthage, the Church began to speak of its dedicated virgins and widows as “brides of Christ.” Even before religious were taking vows, this entirely appropriate term began to be applied to women who had given up the opportunity to enter legitimate marriages in order to lead a more Christ centered life. The advent of religious vows would make the term even more appropriate, with the vow of chastity approximating the lifetime fidelity taken by a wife. The

11 Nocturn of the feast of Saint Marcellus, 16 January.
13 Cf. Epistle LXI (LXII), para 4 http://ccej.org/fathers2/ANF-05/anf05-86.htm
earliest brides of Christ in any organized sense seem to have been the widows mentioned by Saint Paul in his epistle to Timothy: women of sixty years (the younger widows he urges to re-marry, lest they break their *troth* to Christ) who will be supported by their relatives, or by the local church if they are worthy and in need.\(^{14}\) Soon there would be women in the desert of the Upper Nile – the first community of religious women is attributed to St. Pachomius (292-346), who built a convent for women including his own sister.\(^{15}\) Damasus’ matrons were something different, representing not only a group of souls dedicated to Christ, but also an important source of wealth to the Church.

Damasus’ motives were his own, and probably beyond the objective grasp of history. The population disparity between unmarried Catholic men and women had to be dealt with – and Damasus did magnificent things to establish the Church as a part of Roman society. But apparently the complaints from disinherited relatives reached the emperor’s ears in sufficient numbers that he felt compelled to act. Then, too, while the building of lavish churches contributed to the Roman economy, they may not have made the same kind of contribution that the same capital would have made in the City’s productive economy. Later on the buildings would attract tourists and pilgrims, but conditions in the empire in the late fourth century were not suitable for that sort of economy – the barbarian invasions were clearly in the offing, and in the event that they came, sumptuous buildings might do more to attract looters than improve the economy. In any event, Valentinian issued a law forbidding Damasus to engage in further “fund raising”:

| CTh.16.2.20 | Codex Theodosianus, XVI, 2.20.  
| Imppp. valentinianus, valens et gratianus aaa. ad damasum episcopum urbis romae. ecclesiastici aut ex ecclesiasticis vel qui continentium se volunt nomine nuncupari, viduarum ac pupillarum domos non adeant, sed publicis exterminentur iudiciis, si posthac eos adines earum vel propinquii putaverint deferendos. censemus etiam, ut memorati nihil de eius mulieris, cui se privatim sub praetextu religionis adinixerint, liberalitate quacumque vel extremo iudicio possint adipisci et omne in |

\(^{14}\) 1 Timothy v: 3-15.  
\(^{15}\) CE s.v. “Nuns,” www.newadvent.org/cathen/11164a.htm
It must be understood that the Emperor was not anti-Catholic, nor even against Pope Damasus personally – indeed, Damasus was one of those who had gone along with the anti-Pope Felix in assenting to the wishes of the Emperor against the true Pope, Liberius – Damasus was the “Emperor’s man.” Valentinian was just doing his duty to the Roman people. Shotwell and Loomis (The See of Peter) include an interesting footnote with a comment by Pope Damasus’ secretary, Saint Jerome:

Jerome said of it in 394: “I do not complain of the law; I only regret that we have deserved it. The prohibition was a sagacious measure, designed to strengthen discipline, but after all it has not checked the avarice of the clergy or the religious.” Epistolæ, LII, 6. The law was repealed by the emperor Marcian. Novella, 3.18

(Jerome spoke from personal experience – the “we” in “we have deserved it” was not the editorial “we,” but an admission of his own involvement. From 382 to 385, while secretary to Pope Damasus, Jerome was supported by the very wealthy widow Paula. His letters suggest that he was a very frequent visitor if not a house guest.19 Paula and her daughters Blesilla and Eustochium were taken by the combination of Jerome’s erudition, asceticism, and forceful personality – combined with the expectation that he would be elected to succeed Pope Damasus. Jerome’s irascible tongue probably cost him the election, so on

16 Imperatoris Theodosiani Codex Liber Decimus Sextus
17 Shotwell and Loomis, The See of Peter, p. 633-634.
18 Ibid., 634.
Damasus death in 385 Jerome, Paula, and Eustochium set out for a tour of the Holy Land and ultimately established twin monasteries in Jerusalem where Jerome set about his work of translation of the Bible into Latin. Mercifully, Paula died about the same time as she ran out of money in 419 just short of seventy years of age. Blesilla died while still at Rome, of over asceticism, it is said.  

On at least two occasions Valentinian’s son, the Emperor Gratian, delivered Pope Damasus from serious legal troubles, probably instigated by his rival Ursinus. In 367 a temporary convert to Christianity known as Isaac brought serious moral charges against the Pope. The Liber Pontificalis says that he was charged with adultery, but modern scholars are dubious because Damasus was about seventy at the time – some suggest that it had to be some lesser immorality, or conjecture that the charge related to the bloody treatment of Ursinus’ supporters or other “schismatics.” The bishops loyal to Damasus held a council and declared him innocent, but the city prefect insisted that it was a civil matter (possibly a capital offense) to be tried in his court. Emperor Gratian rescued Damasus by transferring the case to his own imperial court at Milan, where the case was plead by Saint Ambrose, Damasus exhonorated, and Isaac sent into exile. Additional questions about Damasus’ conduct were raised in 381, but these were also dropped through imperial intervention at the behest of Saint Ambrose.  

The Catholic Encyclopedia also speaks well of the relationship between the Gratian and Damasus:  

At the time of his accession (375) he refused the insignia of pontifex maximus, which even Constantine and the other Christian emperors had always accepted. At the instance of St. Ambrose, who became his chief adviser, he caused the statue of Victory to be removed from the senate house at Rome (382). In this same year he abolished all the privileges of the pagan pontiffs and the grants for the support of pagan worship. Deprived of the assistance of the State, paganism rapidly lost influence. Gratian did not go so far as to confer upon the Church the privileges and emoluments which he took from the pagans, but he gave proof of his zeal by undoing the effects of Valens’s persecution, and by taking measures for the suppression of various forms of heresy. Though in general his policy was one of toleration, he made apostasy a crime punishable by the State (383). It was for Gratian that St. Ambrose wrote his great treatise “De Fide”.  

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22 CE, s.v. “Gratian” www.newadvent.org/cathen/06729c.htm
ONE SPIRITUALITY FITS ALL?

It may not have been Damasus’ intention, or even his exclusive doing, but he did create a stereotypical role for people who wanted to give up the world for Christ. Damasus’ consecrated matrons were aristocratic women, married to Christ, who thereafter lived their lives centered around their new Husband and the domestic affairs of His hearth. But not all Catholics were women, not even in Damasus’ time – and not all Catholics were aristocrats.

We can point to an earlier model of spirituality in the monks and the nuns of the desert. These men and women were ascetics – there was no question of aristocratic living – they lived pretty much as Christ would have lived, without a great deal of material comfort or security. What they wore and what they ate came from their own efforts, gathered from the local vegetation and worked with their own hands. Likewise their shelter. There would have been little trade with the outside world, for they had fled to places like the Upper Nile precisely to avoid the outside world.

We can see a more active spirituality, but still ascetic and certainly masculine, in the Apostles – particularly Saint Paul. That Epistle we read on Sexagesima Sunday puts it in his own words. It reads almost like an adventure story, complete with shipwrecks, captivity, punishment, labor and hardships, and even an escape scene, “in a basket through a window in the wall.” It speaks to a constant concern for the church he has established, and the danger from those who pretend to be Christians. Paul prides himself on not being a burden to his converts – he had some generous supporters in Macedonia, but he also worked with his hands, making tents, when that opportunity arose. In no way did Paul’s amazing activity interfere with his life as a contemplative: “Whether in the body or out of the body … God knows … caught up to the third heaven … caught up into paradise and he heard secret words that man may not repeat.” Perhaps he was granted the Stigmata, we do not know, but we are sure that “God’s strength was made perfect in his weakness.” A thousand years and more later, the mendicant orders must have looked up to Paul as one of their own.

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23 2 Corinthians xi: 16-33.
24 2 Corinthians xi: 9; Acts xviii: 3.
25 2 Corinthians xii: 1-10.
Even in Damasus’ time there was beginning to form a western version of the Upper Nile’s monasticism. It would culminate in the *Rule of Saint Benedict*, but Benedict was not the first, nor was he alone. Far from aristocracy, the key words were obedience, silence, and humility. Those who followed the *Rule* would work with their hands, for “Idleness is the enemy of the soul; and therefore the brethren ought to be employed in manual labor at certain times, at others, in devout reading.”26 There is a certain fitness in the idea that man would work out his salvation by performing the penance assigned to Adam, “earning his bread by the sweat of his brow.” *Ora et Labora.*

But Benedict’s *Rule* would be perverted not many years later. The great monasteries established after the barbarian invasions were generally the gifts of the nobility, located near to the nobility, and peopled by the children of the nobility. From, perhaps, the ninth until the twelfth century, the *Rule* was distorted to serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful. Benedict of Aniane and his master Charlemagene seem to have been the instigators. No doubt there were exceptions, but in the great houses manual labor was delegated to serfs and servants and laybrothers from the lower classes – if it existed at all among the professed monks and nuns it was more of a ritual of exposing one’s hands to dirt and then washing them off. Important visitors came and went at all times; the powerful and their retinues were to be well fed and entertained. In their official duties the professed came close to being aristocratic wives of Christ, who lived lives centered around their new Husband and the domestic affairs of His hearth. In great houses like Cluny they sang to Him all day. Benedict’s moderate round of communal psalmody went from what today we would call the Cannonical Hours, to include the Office of the Dead, the Office of All Saints, the Penitential Psalms and processions – the music went from plain to complex. As a private “prayer factory” for the nobility, more and more of the monks were advanced to the priesthood in order to be able to offer private Masses for the benefactors. The physical surroundings went from what the monks could construct with their hands to the finest that medieval architecture and money could provide.27 *Ora et Labora* became *Ora et Canta*, or perhaps even *Canta et Canta*. Monasteries came to resemble gilded cages with black robed canaries singing to their husband.

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26 RSB, chapters 5 (obedience), 6 (silence), 7 (humility), and 48 (manual labor).
A great figure of the Cistercian revival of monasticism in the twelfth century, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) had a great deal to say to the monks of Cluny, perhaps the most gilded of the monastic cages:

In the sight of the brethren reading in the cloister, what is that ridiculous monstrosity doing? What is that deformed beauty and that beautiful deformity? Those unclean monkeys? Those ferocious lions? Those battling knights? Those monstrous centaurs? Those huntsmen sounding their horns? Here are several bodies under a single head; there a quadruped with the head of a serpent; there a fish with the head of a quadruped … on all sides one sees such rich and amazing variety of forms that it is more pleasing to read the marbles than the manuscripts.

How do they keep the Rule who wear furs, who feed the healthy on meat, who allow three or four dishes daily with their bread, who do not perform the manual labor the Rule commands.28

But even Bernard, no matter how he emphasized asceticism and hard work, still fell back on the stereotype of spirituality as feminine.

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EARLY POPES: SIRICIUS

Tarragona was the Roman capitol of Hither Spain, and is believed by some to have been established as a Church by Saint Paul himself, before the “Apostolic Men” began to evangelize by way of Gibraltar. The see city is on the Mediterranean, not terribly far south of the Pyrenees, and considerably more accessable from Gaul by water than over those mountains. Toward the end of the fourth century the barbarian invasions had not as yet begun, but barbarian immigration exerted a pressure that tended to move the population of Europe in a south-westerly direction. The bishop, Himerius, was apparently experiencing cultural difficulties as the (non-Roman) Gallican Christians and their clergy migrated into his see – priests who baptized adult catechumens at times other than Easter or Pentecost, and who questioned the theology of the Elviran Synod’s insistence that they cease marital relations. He also faced the problem of dealing with “re-baptizers,” and those who refused absolution to penitents even at the hour of death – not to mention “just plain” laxity among the clergy. Himerius sent one of his priests, a man named Basianus, to Pope Saint Damasus with a letter outlining his problems and asking the guidance of the Holy See, probably in 384.

Himerius may have thought that in Damasus he had a cosmopolitan ally against the rigorists of southern Spain. The Pope was the son of a Roman priest born in Spain, and had served as his father’s deacon; a son who remained devoted to his mother and sister after his father passed away. Himerius may have heard of Damasus’ reputation as a “ladies’ man” and he may have mistakenly understood Damasus’ inclinations as romantic rather than economic. History is a bit vague, but the Emperor quashed some sort of serious moral charge against Damasus without taking the matter to trial to determine his guilt or innocence. Or it may be that Himerius was just “passing the buck upward”; letting Damasus draw any anger that might have resulted from enforcing the canons of Elvira and the natural law. In any event, by the time Himerius’ letter was considered in Rome, Damasus was dead and Pope Siricius reigned in his place.

The letter from Pope St. Siricius addresses several concerns, among them the issue of rebaptizing, of baptising apart from Easter and Pentecost, the reconciliation of heretics, the binding force of canonical betrothal, the imprisonment of incontinent monks and nuns and
their deathbed reconciliation, and, of course, the celibacy of the clergy. Even before coming to that last issue, though Siricius sounds a bit pharasaical.

3. ... Our fellow priests--we speak in indignation--not by reason of any authority but by temerity alone presume this, so that throngs of people, as you report, attain the mystery of baptism randomly and freely at Christmas, or Epiphany, and also on the feasts of the apostles or martyrs, although both with us and in all churches the Lord's Resurrection and Pentecost claim this privilege specially for themselves. On these days alone through the year is it proper for the complete rites of baptism to be bestowed on those coming to the faith, but only on those select people who applied forty or more days earlier, and were cleansed by exorcisms, daily prayers, and fasts, so that the precept of the Apostle is fulfilled that with old leaven having been driven out, new dough comes into being. ... Enough error on this matter! All priests who do not wish to be torn from the solidity of the apostolic rock, upon which Christ built the universal Church, should now hold the aforementioned rule.

The idea that people might very appropriately be baptized on the Epiphany, which, among other things, commemorates our Lord’s Baptism appealed to many of the Churches outside of the Roman ritual influence. But it was “not invented here ... I don’t care what you did back in Gaul” so Siricius thunders about it as though it were somehow sacrilegious – an interesting phenomenon, especially since the Roman Patriarchate lacked liturgical unity until after the Protestant Reformation and the Council of Trent.

7. You indicate, furthermore, that certain monks and nuns, having thrown off the life of sanctity, plunged into so much wantonness that they tangled themselves up in illicit and sacrilegious intercourse, first in secret, as it were under cover of the monasteries, but afterward, led on precipitously by abandonment of conscience they freely produced children with illicit partners, which both civil laws and ecclesiastical regulations condemn. We command, therefore, that these shameless and detestable persons should be banished from the community of monasteries and the congregations of churches, so that having been thrust away in personal imprisonment, bewailing with constant lamentation so great an outrage, they can roast in the purifying fire of repentance so that at least at death, out of consideration of mercy alone, forgiveness through the grace of communion can assist even them.

Sounds terrible on the face of it, but there seems to be here a note of hyperbole. It is difficult to believe that in Spain during Siricius’ time there were monks or nuns living under vows and thus unfree to leave the monastery and resume life in the world – including marriage. Among Catholics, monastic vows are said to originate with Saint Basil the Great (just a little before Himerius wrote his letter) – and that organized monasticism did not take hold in Spain until it began to flourish in France and North Africa in the following centuries. He may have been considering a few men or women who had thrown in with a few friends to live the common life, only to discover that it was not for them – and taking back the use of their house and barn for secular purposes – the castle like monasteries of medieval Spain were centuries in the future. It would be interesting to hear the other side of the story. When
attrition becomes excessive in any organization it is wise to look at the activities of the leaders before blaming the rank and file for desertion. Rome under Damasus and Siricius was hardly a splendid inspiration for Catholic monastics anywhere.

But then Pope Siricius gets to the heart of the celibacy issue:

8. …For we learned that many priests and deacons of Christ, long after their ordination, have produced offspring both from their own wives and even through filthy liaisons, and defend their sin with this excuse, that it is read in the Old Testament that the opportunity to procreate was given to priests and ministers.

One would have hoped for a little less “red herring” from the Supreme Pontiff, but it is not uncommon among those who imagine a divine mandate for priestly celibacy to lump legitimate marriage together with “filthy liaisons” and the other sins of the flesh. Perhaps even more amazing is that some of them will accuse Himerius (or the priests on whose behalf he sent his letter to Rome) of being Judaizers for responding in kind to the argument that the legitimate marital relations of Catholic couples results in a ritual impurity like that of the Mosaic Law. The illogic continues with an ad hominem:

9. Let him speak to me now, whoever is an addict of obscenities and a teacher of vices. If he thinks that here and there in the law of Moses the restraints of indulgence are relaxed by the Lord for sacred orders, why does He admonish those to whom the Holy of Holies was committed saying: <“Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy”? Why indeed were priests ordered to live in the temple, far from their homes, in the year of their service? Just for this reason: so that they could not engage in physical contact even with wives, and that shining in integrity of conscience they might offer acceptable service to God. The period of service having been completed, use of wives was permitted to them for reason of succession alone, because no one from a tribe other than of Levi was directed to be admitted to the ministry of God….

Perhaps it escapes Siricius that God gave mankind wives to “use” for more than just the succession of the Aaronic priesthood – that the command to “increase and multiply” had more to do with “showing forth the goodness of God in this world and sharing His happiness with Him in the next” – or perhaps because God had decided that “It is not good for man to be alone.” But his most significant blunder here is that he continues to describe the “use” of marriage as the opposite of holiness, as though the Mosaic Law were in full force. Indeed, without any support at all, he goes on to suggest that even greater ritual impurities attend the priests of the New Law:

10. Whence the Lord Jesus, when he enlightened us by his advent, testified in the Gospel that he had come to fulfill the law not to destroy it. And he wished thus that the figure of the Church, whose bridegroom he is, radiate with the splendor of chastity, so that on the day of judgment when he comes again he can find her without stain and blemish, just as he taught through his Apostle. All we priests and deacons are bound by the unbreakable law of
those sanctions, so that from the day of our ordination we subject our hearts and bodies to moderation and modesty in order that in every respect we might please our God in these sacrifices which daily we offer. <"They who are in the flesh," says the chosen vessel, <"are unable to please God. But you are not now in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." And where can the Spirit of God dwell except, as we read, in holy bodies?

The assertion that all priests offered daily Mass in the fourth century is, of course, disingenuous. ¹ But that is beside the point: Where did Siricius get the idea that marriage negates the “splendor of chastity”? Where did he get the “unbreakable law” of which he speaks? May we have a copy? Are the bodies of the married devoid of the “Spirit of God”? Does he really believe that Saint Paul was speaking in any other way than metaphorically about “those in the flesh being unable to please God”? This sort of “logic” goes beyond Judaizing – for with it the knife of circumcision would be turned to castration, and ultimately to the suicide endorsed by the Manichæans.

¹1. And because a considerable number of those of whom we speak, as your holiness reported, lament that they lapsed in ignorance, we declare that mercy should not be denied to them, with this condition: if henceforth they strive to conduct themselves continently, they should continue as long as they live in that office which they held when they were caught, without any advancement in rank. But those who lean on the excuse of an illicit privilege by asserting that this was conceded to them in the old law, let them know that they have been expelled by the authority of the apostolic see from every ecclesiastical office, which they used unworthily, nor can they ever touch the mysteries which ought to be venerated, of which they deprived themselves when they were obsessed with obscene desires.

It is safe to say that at least some of the priests mentioned by Himerius were married men ordained with the consent of their bishops and with no representation that they must forsake the “use” of their wives. The clergy of Spain might well have the right to refuse ordination to a married man, but by what authority could they presume to dissolve a legitimate consummated sacramental marriage, or prohibit its “use”? As Siricius will imply below, even this presumed authority is a purely local thing, regulating the Carthaginians, Baeticians, Lusitanians, and Gallicians – the same enthusiasts who had refused reconciliation to the dieing at Elvira:

20. We explicated, I believe, dearest brother, all the things which were set forth as being at issue, and we provided adequate replies, in my opinion, to the individual cases which you referred to the Roman Church, just as to the head of your body, through our son the priest Bassianus. Now, brother, we incite your spirit more and more for observing the canons and adhering to the constituted decretales, so that you make known to all our fellow bishops, and not only those situated in your region, what we wrote back in response to your questions. But these things which were set forth by us in salubrious fashion should even be sent by escort of

your letter to all the Carthaginians, Baeticians, Lusitanians, and Gallicians, and those who border you in neighboring provinces on either side. And although there is freedom for no priest of the Lord to be ignorant of the statutes of the apostolic see and the venerable decrees of the canons, it can, nevertheless, be helpful, and because of the antiquity of your see, beloved, exceedingly glorious for you, if those things of a general sort which were written to you by name are brought to the attention of all our brothers through your cooperative solicitude, so that the things which were salubriously established by us, not haphazardly, but prudently, with very great care and deliberation, might remain inviolate, and that in the future access to all excuses should be blocked, which according to us cannot be available now to anyone. Issued on February 11, in the consulship of Arcadius and Bauto.

If Siricius were here today, it would be necessary to ask him for an explanation of his understanding of the Sacrament of Matrimony. If the primary purpose of the Sacrament is the “procreation and education of children,” and a legitimate secondary end is the “elimination of concupiscence,” how can sin or ritual impurity result from pursuing those ends? Is it a real Sacrament, or just a concession to the weakness of the flesh? A few – not completely facetious – questions may help to demonstrate the absurdity of Siricius’ response: What other ritual impurities are there which the Catholic faithful can contract even after the Council of Jerusalem? Which of the other Sacraments produce a ritual impurity when their intrinsic ends are pursued? (Perhaps Holy Communion, with its eating of blood and human flesh?) If pursuing the ends of Holy Matrimony is a sin, shouldn’t all married couples confess this sin before approaching the Sacraments? If doing so produces a ritual impurity, shouldn’t all married people be notified about how the impurity is to be removed – passage of time, ritual washing, immolation of pigeons, etc.?

What other errors did Peter, James, and Paul make at the Council of Jerusalem? Are you saying that other Popes and Councils might be equally fallible? Or just the Apostles? Or just Siricius?

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http://faculty.cua.edu/pennington/Canon%20Law/Decretals/SiriciusDecretal.htm;
LATER CANONS AND DECREES

NB: This is a list from Free Republic -- probably includes things that do not say what is claimed -- must be checked out!!! And to which must be added material from the Medieval Penitential Manuals

Married but celibate. You continue to leave that part of the equation out. You also fail to point out the following parts of Church history:

Clement of Alexandria (~150-220 AD) "Stromata" Book VII, Chapter XI
Canons XXVII and XXXIII of the Council of Elvira 295-302 AD
Council of Nicea 325 AD
Pope Siricius "Dicret" 385 AD
Pope Siricius "Cum in unum"386 AD
Synod of Rome 386 AD
Second Council of Carthage 390 AD
Codex canonum Ecclesiae Africanae 419 AD
catechesis of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 AD)
"Letter to Pammachius" St. Jerome (347-419 AD)
St. Jeromes' polemic with Vigilantius from Gaul 406 AD
"De conjugiis adulterinis" St. Augustine 419 AD
"Breviatio Ferrandi" ~550 AD
Third Council of Toledo 589 AD
councils held under St. Caesarius of Arles sixth century AD
Irish Penitentials sixth century AD
Poenitentiale Vinniani, no. 27, sixth century AD
Council of Metz 888 AD
Council of Mainz 888 AD
Council of Rheims 909 AD

Synod of Rome 1077 AD

First Lateran Council Canons III, XI 1123 AD

3 (7). We absolutely forbid priests, deacons or subdeacons 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.

11 (21). We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, subdeacons and monks to have concubines or to contract marriages. We adjudge, as the sacred canons have laid down, that marriage contracts between such persons should be made void and the persons ought to undergo penance.

Second Lateran Council Canons VI, VII, XI 1139 AD

COUNCIL IN TRULLO

Canon III. Since our pious and Christian Emperor has addressed this holy and ecumenical council, in order that it might provide for the purity of those who are in the list of the clergy, and who transmit divine things to others, and that they may be blameless ministrants, and worthy of the sacrifice of the great God, who is both Offering and High Priest, a sacrifice apprehended by the intelligence: and that it might cleanse away the pollutions wherewith these have been branded by unlawful marriages: now whereas they of the most holy Roman Church purpose to keep the rule of exact perfection, but those who are under the throne of this heaven-protected and royal city keep that of kindness and consideration, so blending both together as our fathers have done, and as the love of God requires, that neither gentleness fall into licence, nor severity into harshness; especially as the fault of ignorance has reached no small number of men, we decree, that those who are involved in a second marriage, and have been slaves to sin up to the fifteenth of the past month of January, in the past fourth Indiction, the 6109th year, and have not resolved to repent of it, be subjected to canonical deposition: but that they who are involved in this disorder of a second marriage, but before our decree have acknowledged what is fitting, and have cut off their sin, and have put far from them this strange and illegitimate connexion, or they whose wives by second marriage are already dead, or who have turned to repentance of their own accord, having learnt continence, and having quickly forgotten their former iniquities, whether they be presbyters or deacons, these we have determined should cease from all priestly ministrations or exercise, being under punishment for a certain time, but should retain the honour of their seat and station, being satisfied with their seat before the laity and begging with tears from the Lord that the transgression of their ignorance be pardoned them: for unfitting it were that he should bless another who has to tend his own wounds. But those who have been married to one wife, if she was a widow, and likewise those who after their ordination have unlawfully entered into one marriage that is, presbyters, and deacons, and subdeacons, being debarred for some short time from sacred ministration, and censured, shall be restored again to their proper rank, never advancing to any further rank, their unlawful marriage being openly dissolved. This we decree to hold good only in the case of those that are involved in the aforesaid faults up to the fifteenth (as was said) of the month of January, of the fourth Indiction, decreeing from the present time, and renewing the Canon which declares, that he who has been joined in two marriages after his baptism, or has had a concubine, cannot be bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or at all on the sacerdotal list; in like manner, that he who has

1 http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Valley/8920/churchcouncils/Ecum09.htm
taken a widow, or a divorced person, or a harlot, or a servant, or an actress, cannot be bishop, or presbyter, or deacon, or at all on the sacerdotal list.

Canon IV. If any bishop, presbyter, deacon, sub-deacon, lector, cantor, or door-keeper has had intercourse with a woman dedicated to God, let him be deposed, as one who has corrupted a spouse of Christ, but if a layman let him be cut off.

Canon V. Let none of those who are on the priestly list possess any woman or maid servant, beyond those who are enumerated in the canon as being persons free from suspicion, preserving himself hereby from being implicated in any blame. But if anyone transgresses our decree let him be deposed. And let eunuchs also observe the same rule, that by foresight they may be free of censure. But those who transgress, let them be deposed, if indeed they are clerics; but if laymen let them be excommunicated.

Canon VI. Since it is declared in the apostolic canons that of those who are advanced to the clergy unmarried, only lectors and cantors are able to marry; we also, maintaining this, determine that henceforth it is in nowise lawful for any subdeacon, deacon or presbyter after his ordination to contract matrimony but if he shall have dared to do so, let him be deposed. And if any of those who enter the clergy, wishes to be joined to a wife in lawful marriage before he is ordained subdeacon, deacon, or presbyter, let it be done.

Canon XII. Moreover this also has come to our knowledge, that in Africa and Libya and in other places the most God-beloved bishops in those parts do not refuse to live with their wives, even after consecration, thereby giving scandal and offence to the people. Since, therefore, it is our particular care that all filings tend to the good of the flock placed in our harris and committed to us, it has seemed good that henceforth nothing of the kind shall in any way occur. And we say this, not to abolish and overthrow what things were established of old by Apostolic authority, but as caring for the health of the people and their advance to better things, and lest the ecclesiastical state should suffer any reproach. For the divine Apostle says: "Do all to the glory of God, give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Greeks, nor to the Church of God, even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ." But if any shall have been observed to do such a thing, let him be deposed.

Canon XIII. Since we know it to be handed down as a rule of the Roman Church that those who are deemed worthy to be advanced to the diaconate or presbyterate should promise no longer to cohabit with their wives, we, preserving the ancient rule and apostolic perfection and order, will that the lawful marriages of men who are in holy orders be from this time forward firm, by no means dissolving their union with their wives nor depriving them of their mutual intercourse at a convenient time. Wherefore, if anyone shall have been found worthy to be ordained subdeacon, or deacon, or presbyter, he is by no means to be prohibited from admittance to such a rank, even if he shall live with a lawful wife. Nor shall it be demanded of him at the time of his ordination that he promise to abstain from lawful intercourse with his wife: lest we should affect injuriously marriage constituted by God and blessed by his presence, as the Gospel saith: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder;" and the Apostle saith, "Marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled;" and again, "Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed." But we know, as they who assembled at Carthage (with a care for the honest life of the clergy) said, that subdeacons, who handle the Holy Mysteries, and deacons, and presbyters should abstain from their consorts according to their own course [of ministration]. So that what has been handed down through the Apostles and preserved by ancient custom, we too likewise maintain, knowing that there is a time for all things and especially for fasting and prayer. For it is meet that they who assist at the divine altar should be absolutely continent when they are handling holy things, in order that they may be able to obtain from God what they ask in sincerity.

If therefore anyone shall have dared, contrary to the Apostolic Canons, to deprive any of those who are in holy orders, presbyter, or deacon, or subdeacon of cohabitation and intercourse with his lawful wife, let him be deposed. In like manner also if any presbyter or
deacon on pretence of piety has dismissed his wife, let him be excluded from communion; and if he persevere in this let him be deposed.

Canon XXVI. IF a presbyter has through ignorance contracted an illegal marriage, while he still retains the right to his place, as we have defined in the sacred canons, yet he must abstain from all sacerdotal work. For it is sufficient if to such an one indulgence is granted. For he is unable to bless another who needs to take care of his own wounds, for blessing is the imparting of sanctification. But how can he impart this to another who does not possess it himself through a sin of ignorance? Neither then in public nor in private can he bless nor distribute to others the body of Christ, [nor perform any other ministry]; but being content with his seat of honour let him lament to the Lord that his sin of ignorance may be remitted. For it is manifest that the nefarious marriage must be dissolved, neither can the man have any intercourse with her on account of whom he is deprived of the execution of his priesthood.

Canon XXX. Willing to do all things for the edification of the Church, we have determined to take care even of priests who are in barbarian churches. Wherefore if they think that they ought to exceed the Apostolic Canon concerning the not putting away of a wife on the pretext of piety and religion, and to do beyond that which is commanded, and therefore abstain by agreement with their wives from cohabitation, we decree they ought no longer to live with them in any way, so that hereby they may afford us a perfect demonstration of their promise. But we have conceded this to them on no other ground than their narrowness, and foreign and unsettled manners.

Canon XLVIII. The wife of him who is advanced to the Episcopal dignity, shall be separated from her husband by their mutual consent, and after his ordination and consecration to the episcopate she shall enter a monastery situated at a distance from the abode of the bishop, and there let her enjoy the bishop's provision. And if she is deemed worthy she may be advanced to the dignity of a deaconess.
THE POPES

Pope St. Hormisdas, Date of birth unknown, elected to the Holy See, 514; d. at Rome, 6 August, 523.
This able and sagacious pontiff belonged to a wealthy and honourable family of Frosinone (Frusino) in the Campagna di Roma (Latium). Before receiving higher orders he had been married; his son became pope under the name of Silverius (536-537). Under Pope Symmachus (498-514) Hormisdas held the office of deacon of the Roman Church and during the schism of Laurentius he was one of the most prominent clerical attendants of Symmachus. He was notary at the synod held at St. Peter's in 502, and Ennodius of Pavia, with whom he was on friendly terms, expressed the conviction that this Roman deacon, so eminent for piety, wealth, and distinguished birth, would occupy the See of Rome [Ennodii opera, ed. Vogel (Berlin, 1885), 287, 290]. The day after the funeral of Symmachus (20 July, 514) Hormisdas was chosen and consecrated his successor; there is no mention of divisions or disturbances at his election. One of the new pope's first cares was to remove the last vestiges of the Laurentian schism in Rome, receiving back into the Church such of its adherents as had not already been reconciled. From the beginning of his pontificate the affairs of the Greek Church occupied his special attention. At Constantinople the Acacian schism, which had broken out in consequence of the "Henoticon" of the Emperor Zeno, and which had caused the separation of the Greek and Roman Churches, still held sway (see ACACIUS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE). The Emperor Anastasius (491-518), Zeno's successor, maintained the "Henoticon"; he became more and more inclined towards Monophysitism, and persecuted the bishops who refused to repudiate the Council of Chalcedon. The three patriarchs, Macedonius of Constantinople, Elias of Jerusalem, and Flavianus of Antioch had been driven from their sees....

Pope St. Silverius (Reigned 536-37).
Dates of birth and death unknown. He was the son of Pope Hormisdas who had been married

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before becoming one of the higher clergy. Silverius entered the service of the Church and was subdeacon at Rome when Pope Agapetus died at Constantinople, 22 April, 536. The Empress Theodora, who favoured the Monophysites sought to bring about the election as pope of the Roman deacon Vigilius who was then at Constantinople and had given her the desired guarantees as to the Monophysites. However, Theodatus, King of the Ostrogoths, who wished to prevent the election of a pope connected with Constantinople, forestalled her, and by his influence the subdeacon Silverius was chosen. The election of a subdeacon as Bishop of Rome was unusual. Consequently, it is easy to understand that, as the author of the first part of the life of Silverius in the "Liber pontificalis" (ed. Duchesne, I, 210) relates, a strong opposition to it appeared among the clergy. This, however, was suppressed by Theodatus so that, finally, after Silverius had been consecrated bishop (probably on 8 June, 536) all the Roman presbyters gave their consent in writing to his elevation. The assertion made by the author just mentioned that Silverius secured the intervention of Theodatus by payment of money is unwarranted, and is to be explained by the writer's hostile opinion of the pope and the Goths. The author of the second part of the life in the "Liber pontificalis" is favourably inclined to Silverius. The pontificate of this pope belongs to an unsettled, disorderly period and he himself fell a victim to the intrigues of the Byzantine Court....

Saint Gregory the Great (590-604)

With regard to discipline the pope was specially strict in enforcing the Church's laws as to the celibacy of the clergy (Epp., I, xlii, 1; IV. v, xxvi, xxxiv; VII, i; IX, cx, ccxviii; X, xix; XI, lvi a; XIII, xxxvii, xxxix); the exemption of clerics from lay tribunals (Epp., I, xxxix a; VI, xi, IX, lxxvi, lxxix; X, iv; XI, xxxii; XIII, 1); and the deprivation of all ecclesiastics guilty of criminal or scandalous offences (Epp., I, xvi, xlii; III, xlix; IV, xxvi; V, v, xvii, xvii; VII, xiii; VIII, xxv; IX, xxv; XII, iii, x; xi; XIV, ii). He was also inflexible with regard to the proper application of church revenues, insisting that others should be as strict as he was in disposing of these funds for their proper ends (Epp., I, x, lxiv; II, xx-xxii; III, xxii; IV, xi; V, xii, xliv; VIII, vii; XI, xxii, lvi a; XIII, xlvi; XIV, ii).

http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06780a.htm

Pope Adrian II (Reigned 867-872.)

After the death of St. Nicholas I, the Roman clergy and people elected, much against his will, the venerable Cardinal Adrian, universally beloved for his charity and amiability, descended from a Roman family which had already given two pontiffs to the Church, Stephen III and Sergius II. Adrian was now seventy-five years old, and twice before had refused the dignity. He had been married before taking orders, and his old age was saddened by a domestic tragedy. As pope, he followed closely in the footsteps of his energetic predecessor. He strove to maintain peace among the greedy and incompetent descendants of Charlemagne. In an interview at Monte Cassino he admitted to communion the repentant King Lothair of Lorraine, after exacting from him a public oath that he had held no intercourse with his concubine since the pope's prohibition, that he would take back his lawful wife Theutberga, and abide by the final decision of the Roman See. He upheld with vigour against Hincmar of Reims the unlimited right of bishops to appeal to the Sovereign Pontiff. At the Eighth General Council, which he convened at Constantinople in 869, and presided over through ten legates, he effected the deposition of Photius and the restoration of unity between the East and the West. He was unsuccessful in retaining the Bulgarians for the western patriarchate; that nation unwisely determined to adhere to Constantinople, a course which was destined to bring upon it ruin and stagnation. Adrian saved the western Slavs from a similar fate by seconding the efforts of the saintly brothers, Cyril and Methodius. Of enduring influence, for good or evil, was the endorsement he gave to their rendering of the liturgy in the Slavonic tongue. Adrian died towards the close of the year 872.3

If a passage in the annals of Hincmar of Reims is genuine (Mon. Germ. Hist.: Scriptores, I, 447) and Hincmar has not confused two men, then the librarian Anastasius is identical with the Roman presbyter Anastasius who in 874 became titular priest of St. Marcellus, and in 848 fled from Rome, and resided in various cities. On account of his flight he was excommunicated by a Roman synod in 850, and, as he did not return, was anathematized and deposed by another synod in 853. After the death of Leo IV in 855 this Anastasius was elected as antipope by the imperial party, but the rightfully elected pope,

Benedict III, gained the supremacy, and acted kindly towards the usurper. During the pontificate of Adrian II Anastasius became involved in serious difficulties, in 868 a near relative of his named Eleutherius forcibly carried off the daughter of the pope, and soon after killed both her and her mother. The murderer was executed and Anastasius, who was regarded as the instigator of the murder, was punished by excommunication and deposition. He lived at the imperial Court, and sought by the intervention of the emperor to exculpate himself before the pope. Hergenröther (Photius, II, 230-240) maintains, with good reason, that the librarian and the presbyter Anastasius (the antipope) were one and the same person, and weaves all the statements concerning the latter into the biography of Anastasius, while Langen (Geschichte der römischen Kirche, III, 270 sqq.) considers them different persons. In August, 879, Zacharias of Anagni appears as librarian of the Roman Church, so that Anastasius must have died shortly before this date.4

**The Gregorian Reform**

The “Gregorian Reform” is a convenient but not entirely accurate name applied to the activities which only center around the pontificate of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), the former Cluniac monk Hildebrand. Any number of churchmen before and after Gregory understood the need for changes in the arrangements that bound Church and state together in the middle ages – often frustrating both. Medieval society descended from that of the Roman Empire, passed through a series of barbarian invasions, and finally organized to protect itself from further invasion. In spite of any modern criticism, *feudalism* served to make life possible in an otherwise impossible situation. Europe, which by Hildebrand’s time was pretty much coextensive with Christendom, had been invaded from every direction, by all manner of peoples. Vikings from the north, Moslems from the South, Mongolian Huns and Turks from the east – the names of the tribes changed over the centuries, but until the Protestant Reformation there was no greater threat to the very survival of Christendom than invasion from without. Only the division of society into an agricultural and a ruling-fighting class made it possible for Christian Europe to survive.

The contrast between the Church’s patristic and medieval ideas on churchmen being part of the ruling class is staggering. What started out as “our kingdom is not of this world – obey and pray for those in authority” came very close to an attempt to dominate the known world in Gregory VII. A great deal of the conflict which Gregory dealt arose from the impossibility of having it both ways. Willingly or not, Church leaders – Popes, bishops, and abbots – became part of the ruling class during or in the aftermath of the barbarian invasions. They were among the most well educated men of Europe, and tended to rise within the Church because of organizational skills. When the pilaging was over and the invaders had lost interest, churchmen were among those upon whom the lot of rebuilding fell.

The primary problem with which the Gregorian reform had to deal was the dual nature of the Church’s prelates. The bishops and abbots of Christendom were lords temporal as well as lords spiritual. They held enormous land and labor grants from the secular authorities, administered civil justice within their territories, owed military service and the various other feudal “aids” to their civil sovereigns. All of this represented a truly “mixed blessing.” On one hand, the king, the baron, or other civil ruler had a *completely legitimate* interest in being...
sure that appropriate men were appointed as bishops and abbots, for these men were officers within his own civil government. But, on the other hand, allowing the government to appoint the clergy can hardly be a formula for ensuring the salvation of souls. It was more easily said than done, but by Gregory’s time it was pretty clear that the appointment and funding of Church officials had to be separate from that of civil officials – the great problem was how?

Only two brief pontificates before Gregory’s (in 1059) the appointment of the Pope was taken away from that ephemeral body known as “the people of Rome” and vested in the Cardinal Bishops with the approval of the Emperor. (Gregory’s own election violated the decree, but Romans are used to that sort of thing.) For an effective reform, selection and financial support of each and every bishop, abbot, and benefice holder in the Church would have to be made independent of the civil authority.

One of the prime obstacles to this sort of independence of the Church from secular control was the reality that civil appointments to church benefices were often accompanied by a more comfortable living than could have been had anywhere else. In fact, they were lucrative enough that some of them could be “sub-contracted.” A man who was fortunate enough to be appointed Bishop of This, or Abbot of That, might find himself wealthy enough to install a vicar or prior in his stead to actually run the diocese or the monastery, keep the remainder of the revenues, and never have to show up for work. He would “commend” the benefice to someone else with no effort on his part – and very likely went off to find another diocese or two that he could run in the same fashion. (FN) This medieval equivalent of the stock market included the buying and selling of benefices – and that the benefices themselves came to be considered property. After Gregory was long gone, the Church Itself came to replace the civil authority as the property broker, even establishing a futures market in “expectatives” during the Avignon papacy. (FN)

While modern Catholics might be quick to call this traffic in benefices “simony,” at would not have been at all so clear in the medieval mind. In the middle ages, all sorts of things had to be arbitraged – the bishop who owed military service didn’t lead knights into battle, he simply converted his obligation into some mutually agreeable number of knights, horses, suits of armor, and swords that his feudal superior could use. If a feudal lord had
more property than he could manage himself, he commended it to someone who could – and was acknowledged as prudent for doing so, lest valuable resource might have gone unused. In terms of the medieval economy, the modern banker who lends the same money to half a dozen borrowers is a far more serious crook.

The Papacy as land owner:
Norman fiefs in Sicily, England, and ……
Threat of interdict against those who wanted to free Spain w/o vassalage
Lands of Matilda – Cf Eamon Duffy, Saints and Sinners

Sacramental Simony

The economic problem with clerical marriage

And once again, if prelates couldn’t live as moderately poor men, why should they expect men to live without families.

Observe somewhere that virtually all attempts at “reform” were sudden (even violent) demands for immediate change, without any regard to the rights the clergy imagined themselves – for good reason – to have. Maybe a sentence at the beginning, and a paragraph at the end of the section of the Gregorian reform.

**ENGLAND**

Catholicism came to Britain sometime during Roman rule, perhaps from Gaul, by way of Lyons from Marseille, and up the river valleys to the north. Roman influence weakened around the time of Saint Patrick (387-493), as Rome pulled back and consolidated its forces
against the barbarians. Patrick, the son of the Deacon Calpurnius and his wife Conchessa (she a relative of Saint Martin of Tours), and the grandson of the priest Potitus, is well known for having brought the Faith to Ireland; having been ordained priest in Gaul by Saint Germanus of Auxerre (380-448). Germanus, himself, is known to have done missionary work in Wales. Under Saint Aidan, monks from Iona, in Patrick’s Ireland, established themselves in Northumbria at Lindisfarne around 635. When Saint Augustine of Canterbury arrived from Rome in 597 he found a small Catholic remnant in Kent, including the wife of King Ethelbert who welcomed him warmly. By 664 the Synod of Whitby had established Roman customs in most of what we would today call “England.” In spite of various incursions and invasions, the land can generally be said to have been inhabited and governed by Anglo-Saxons from the middle of the fifth century until the Norman Conquest of 1066.

The Normans would play an important role in papal politics for well over a century, beginning, perhaps, in 1059 with their conquest of Sicily. Acting with the sanction of the papacy, the Normans served to counteract powerful figures like the Western Emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Moslems.¹ But, to borrow George Washington’s metaphor, the Normans could be “like fire, a dangerous friend or a fearful master.” They would, for example, be the ones to rescue Gregory VII from the Emperor whom he had humiliated at Canossa, but then turn around and pillage the Eternal City. With respect to England, they seemed simply to use the papacy to further their own agenda, with tragic human consequences.

With the assistance of the Archdeacon Hildebrand and Lanfranc of Bec, William the Conqueror was able to receive the papal blessing of Pope Alexander II for his invasion of England. Thus the Conqueror crossed the Channel to conquer an already Catholic nation, bearing the banner of Saint Peter and wearing a papal ring containing a relic of the True Cross. Lanfranc, Pope Alexander’s former teacher and future Archbishop of Canterbury, together with Hildebrand, the future Pope Gregory VII, convinced the Pope that the invasion of England would solve a number of problems which had developed under the Saxons – not to

mention giving him the impression that William would hold England as a fief of the papacy.\textsuperscript{2} England suffered from the same problems with investiture and simony as the rest of the medieval Church.

England was only beginning to revive its monastic life, which had been severely damaged by the Viking and Danish invasions.\textsuperscript{3} Even at the time of the Conquest, the Danes posed a significant threat, so Anglo-Saxon England never had the respite enjoyed by most of the Continent after the invasions had settled down. The population of England, estimated to have been about 5 million in Roman times, was only about half that – between 2.2 and 2.5 million – in the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{4} The Romans removed their personnel in order to consolidate their forces against the invasion of the Continent, but the long term decline is attributed to invasions and epidemics – both of which tended to target places where the clergy were most often celibate. The cities, monasteries, cathedrals, and churches were all perceived as centers of wealth to be plundered: rich fabrics and gold plate, relatively docile people to be enslaved, and populations willing to pay fabulous ransoms as the price of being left alone. The humble homes of the secular priests staffing rural churches were much more likely to be overlooked, and the priests and their families, able to blend in, were at no greater risk than the rest of the rural population. Epidemics, too, tended to strike the more populated urban areas. In some places the continental practice of staffing the cathedrals with canons regular had been introduced, but many still considered imposition of the regulars to be foreign meddling in the affairs of the island Church.\textsuperscript{5} Particularly in the north, harsh climate and great stretch of rural territory made the division of labor with a wife and family necessary for many of the parish clergy. Even in some cathedral chapters, married priests had replaced monastic clerics as canons.\textsuperscript{6} Yet, just before the conquest, the Anglo-Saxon Witan (parliament) had legislated against clerical marriage, and during the preceding century virtually all of the bishoprics in England had been held by professed monks at least for a time.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{3} Sir Frank Stenton, \textit{Anglo-Saxon England}, pp. 433, 435.
\textsuperscript{7} Sir Frank Stenton, \textit{Anglo-Saxon England}, pp. 456, 668,
Most likely the single thing that caught the Pope’s attention was the Witan’s irregular appointment of Archbishop Stigand to the See of Canterbury after a popular anti-Norman uprising drove the incumbent Robert out of the country.\(^8\) Stigand had been excommunicated by two popes in a row, before receiving the pallium from the anti-Pope, Benedict X who had been elected only a few months before Alexander II. In reality, though, Stigand was being ostracized by the remaining English clergy, and would ultimately prove to be no threat to papal authority. As it turned out, the Conqueror left him in office until he was removed by a commission of papal legates in April of 1070.\(^9\)

It is odd, in any event, though, that the Pepe Alexander would allow himself to be prevailed upon in William’s favor so soon after the death of so notably holy a king as Edward, whose sanctity made it clear that Saxon England still deserved to be called the “Isle of the Saints.” In less than a century (1161) Edward would be canonized by the Pope’s namesake, Alexander III. William’s claim to the the kingdom was shadowy at best, and could be enforced only at a great price.

The bloodshed did not end with the invasion, particularly in the north where resistance, and the revenge taken against the resisters, went on for ten years or more.

After the invasion and the decisive battle of Hastings, William at once marched on London, and there the best and wisest men of the kingdom—for example, such influential prelates as Aldred, Archbishop of York, and St. Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester—came in and tendered submission. Before the end of the year the king was crowned by Aldred (to the exclusion of Stigand) in the newly consecrated abbey-church of Westminster. In 1067 William revisited Normandy, but, owing perhaps in part to the tactlessness or incapacity of the regents, Odo of Bayeux and William Fitzosborn, he was recalled by an alarming series of popular outbreaks: first the south-west, with Exeter for a rallying-point, then the Welsh border, under the Earls Edwin and Morcar, then Northumbria, under Earl Gospatric, to be followed next year (1069) by a still more formidable rising in the north, assisted by the Danes. William met these attempts intrepidly, but sternly. In Northumbria, after the second insurrection, he inflicted a terrible vengeance. The whole country from York to Durham was laid waste, and we learn, for example, from the Domesday Book, that in the district of Amunderness, where there had been sixty-two villages in the Confessor’s time, there were in 1087 but sixteen, and these with a vastly reduced population. Neither was this the only instance of such ruthless severity. A terrible penalty was exacted in other centres of rebellion, and we read not only of a wholesale use of fire and sword, but of mutilation and blinding in the case of individual offenders.\(^10\)

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Through historical chance we have some details of the conquest that come to us from the life of Saint Aelred of Rievaulx, whose father and grandfather endured the persecution. Aelred’s great grandfather, Alfred of Westou, had been a priest and larwa (a sort of liturgical teacher) at Durham who had been assigned the benefice of Hexham, which he served through curates. His son and grandson, both named Eliaf, inherited the benefice, eventually serving in person after the Conquest reached Durham. In 1071 the Saxon bishop, Aethelwine, died in confinement and was replaced by a Norman appointee, thoroughly loyal to the Conqueror and to the principles of Hildebrand’s reform. Bishop Walcher is said to have been surprised to find that the cathedral canons were “clergy accustomed to reciting their Office like the monks their ancestors had once been, but now respectably married with families of their own.”

In 1075, the Conqueror removed the Northumbrian earl, and gave Bishop Walcher all of the civil and military authority of the earldom; an appointment which led to Walcher’s murder by an enraged mob in 1080. Bishop Odo of Bayeux was sent to replace and revenge Walcher, which he did by burning a number of churches and forcing the priests to leave the cathedral unless they were willing to put away their wives and become monks. All but one left. Among those leaving the cathedral, the elder Eliaf took up residence in the burnt out church at Hexham, where, struggling for survival he managed to do little more than establish a decent altar for Mass. The younger Eliaf accomplished a bit more, tiling the roof, cleaning the walls, and placing a new floor under a new altar.

Saint Aelred was born to the younger Eliaf in 1110. Three years later the Norman archbishops began to take an interest in the newly refurbished church at Hexham, and began to move Eliaf out a little bit at a time. In 1138 Eliaf officially relinquished any remaining family claim to the benefice. He died a bit later, being received as a monk in a death-bed profession. Some appreciated his efforts and his generosity – others accused him of misappropriating the church’s funds to feed his family! At twenty-eight, a monk for about four years, Aelred had come to recognize that his father had been “a sinner.”

Paradoxically, in spite of the violence of the conquest, the legislation of Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury concerning clerical marriage was relatively moderate. Instead of the heavy handed orders so common in the past, Lanfranc’s legislation looked primarily to the

future. Had their been proper follow up, clerical marriage could have been eliminated in a
generation. Parish priests were not required to put away their wives, but unmarried priests
were forbidden to marry, and married men could not be ordained. Under Lanfranc’s
regulations there could have been clerical celibacy without destroying families. Only in the
case of the canons were legitimately married men forced to choose between their wives and
their benefices. So, for the most part, men who had entered the priesthood with wives and
families were left unmolested.  

Apologists for the conquest generally argue that the Normans elevated the cultural
level of England far above that of the Saxons. Nonetheless, the bloodshed and destruction of
the conquest – the killing of Catholics by Catholics – was a very high price to pay for the
limited return to the papacy. Hildebrand would later acknowledge that many blamed him
directly for the carnage. The king continued to appoint bishops and abbots as the Witan had
done before him. William vigorously denied that he held England as fief of the papacy. When
Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII, he must have been thoroughly chagrined by “his”
Conqueror’s and Canterbury’s careful neutrality, supporting neither Gregory nor his rival
caliment to the papacy, Clement III – the Stigand affair was insignificant by comparison. For
another century married clergy would remain common in England, ecclesiastical benefices
might continue to pass from father to son, and proprietary churches would be recognized by
the law.  

GERMANY

( ((Cf Ephraim Emerton, *Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII* for material on
Gregory’s relationship with the Conqueror))

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AVIGNON

Simony internalized -- Papal collection of revenues, fees, and expectatives

Commendatory Abbots
Marriage of those Already in Major Orders

The custom of not allowing those already ordained to marry must go back to before Pope Leo I, who is said (by Pope Gregory VII) to have prohibited the marriage of subdeacons.¹

See canons of Ancyra, which allows marriage of certain deacons

Prohibited by Lateran II

COUNCIL OF TRENT
CURRENT PRACTICE

Married Clergy

Another example is the freedom enjoyed by priests of the Oriental and Greek church to remain married to their wives after their ordination (see can. Aliter, dist. 31 and chap. Cum olim, de Clericis Conjugatis). Considering that this practice was at variance neither with divine nor natural law, but only with Church discipline, the popes judged it right to tolerate this custom, which flourished among Greeks and Orientals, rather than to forbid it by their apostolic authority, to avoid giving them a pretext to abandon unity. So does Arcudius assess the matter (Concordia bk. 7, chap. 33).

Nevertheless, incredible though it sounds, some Greeks and Orientals still accuse the Latin church of rejecting marriage simply because it requires celibacy of its subdeacons, deacons, and priests in imitation of the Apostles (see Hincmar of Rheims, Operum, vol. 2, letter 51).\(^1\)

Married deacons

Married ex-Lutherans and ex-Anglicans

How has this worked?

What does it say about claim that mandatory celibacy/abstinence is of apostolic origin?

ORCC Practice and History

\(^1\) [http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Ben14/b14allat.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Ben14/b14allat.htm) ON THE OBSERVANCE OF ORIENTAL RITES Allatae Suni Encyclical of Pope Benedict XIV promulgated on July 26, 1755
ECCLESIASTICAL DISINGENUOUSNESS

http://www.cbcisite.com/celibacyinthecatholicchurch.html The Catholic Bishops Conference of India has a forthright page on celibacy and its history (agrees that Damasus thought of marriage as a ritual defilement and that first written law requiring all western priests to observe celibacy was in 1139 - Lateran II).\(^1\)

CE on Hadrian II

"Saint Damasus was born in Rome at the beginning of the fourth century. His father, a widower, had received Holy Orders there and served as parish priest in the church of St. Laurence" --- Lives of the Saints http://magnificat.ca/cal/engl/12-11.htm

BUT CE has his mother living to 60 years in her widowhood! /cathen/04613a.htm

Jerome calls him "Virgin Teacher of a Virgin Church

BUT Kelly calls him "the tickler of matrons' ears."

SAINT PAPHNUTIUS
Bishop in Egypt
(† Second half of the Fourth Century)

The holy monk Paphnutius was an Egyptian who, after having spent several years in the desert under the direction of the great Saint Anthony, was made bishop in Upper Thebaid. He was one of the confessors under the tyrant Maximin Daia, who lost their right eye and were afterwards sent to work in the mines.

When peace was restored to the Church, Paphnutius returned to his diocese and his flock. The Arian heresy was entering into Egypt, and he was seen to be one of the most zealous defenders of the Catholic Faith. For his eminent sanctity and his glorious title of confessor, that is, one who had confessed the Faith before the persecutors and under torments, he was highly esteemed at the great Council of Nicea in 325. Constantine the Great, during the celebration of that synod, sometimes conferred privately with him in his palace, and never dismissed him without kissing respectfully the place which had once held the eye he had lost for the Faith.

Saint Paphnutius remained always in close union with Saint Athanasius, and accompanied him to the Council of Tyre in 355. We have no particular account of the death of Saint Paphnutius, but his name is recorded in the Roman Martyrology on the 11th of September.

\(^1\) http://www.cbcisite.com/celibacyinthecatholicchurch.html

DeFerari translation of Denzinger on Elvira


“PETRONILLA” has nothing to say about the Roman martyr other than “she was most certainly not the daughter of the Apostle St. Peter as certain traditions have alleged.”2 While it is true that the information surrounding Saint Petronilla is a bit vague, one would think that she would be remembered for something apart from not being Saint Peter’s daughter – after all, most of us are not his daughter.

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CELIBACY, HOMOSEXUALITY, PEDOPHILIA

Is there a feminine spirituality, distinct from masculine spirituality? Slices of pie vs. concentric circles? See Speculum on Cistercian attitudes.¹ Read a bit of St. Gertrude & St. Margaret Mary A.

Could there be two (or more) different masculine spiritualities?

Should either be imposed on one of the opposite gender? opposite "orientation"?

COUNCILS AT ARLES HTTP://WWW.NEWADVENT.ORG/CATHEN/01727B.HTM

THE SYNODS OF ARLES

The first Council of Arles was held in 314, for the purpose of putting an end to the Donatist controversy. It confirmed the findings of the Council of Rome (313), i.e. it recognized the validity of the election of Caecilian of Carthage, and confirmed the excommunication of Donatus of Casae Nigrae. Its twenty-two canons dealing with various abuses that had crept into ecclesiastical life since the persecution of Diocletian (284-305) are among the most important documents of early ecclesiastical legislation. A council held in 353, and attended, among others, by two papal legates, was decidedly Arian in attitude. The legates were tempted into rejecting communion with Athanasius and refused to condemn Arius, an act which filled Pope Liberius with grief. In the synod of 443 (452), attended also by bishops of neighbouring provinces, fifty-six canons were formulated, mostly repetitions of earlier disciplinary decrees. Neophytes were excluded from major orders; married men aspiring to the priesthood were required to promise a life of continency, and it was forbidden to consecrate a bishop without the assistance of three other bishops and the consent of the metropolitan. A council of 451 held after the close of the Council of Chalcedon in that year, sent its adhesion to the "Epistola dogmatica" of Leo I, written by Flavian of Constantinople. (See EUTYCHES.) A council was held on New Year's Day, 435, to settle the differences that had arisen between the Abbot of Lérins and the Bishop of Fréjus. Apropos of the conflict between the archiepiscopal See of Vienne and Arles a council was held in the latter city in
463, which called forth a famous letter from St. Leo I (Leonis I, Opp., ed. Ballerini, I, 998; Hefele, Conciliengeschichte, II, 590). Between 475 and 480 another council was called, attended by thirty bishops, in which the pre-destinationist teachings of the priest Lucidus were condemned. In 524 a council was held under the presidency of St. Caesarius of Arles; its canons deal chiefly with the conferring of orders. Little is known of the councils of 554 and 682. An important council was held in 813, at the instigation of Charlemagne, for the correction of abuses and the reestablishment of ecclesiastical discipline. Its decrees insist on a sufficient ecclesiastical education of bishops and priests, on the duty of both to preach frequently to the people and to instruct them in the Catholic Faith, on the obligation of parents to instruct their children, etc. In 1034 a council was held at Arles for the re-establishment of peace, the restoration of Christian Faith, the awakening in the popular heart of a sense of divine goodness and of salutary fear by the consideration of past evils. In 1236 a council held under the presidency of Jean Baussan, Archbishop of Arles, issued twenty-four canons, mostly against the prevalent Albigensian heresy, and for the observance of the decrees of the Lateran Council of 1215 and that of Toulouse in 1229. Close inspection of their dioceses is urged on the bishops, as a remedy against the spread of heresy; testaments are declared invalid unless made in the presence of the parish priest. This measure, met with in other councils, was meant to prevent testamentary dispositions in favour of known heretics. In 1251, Jean, Archbishop of Arles, held a council near Avignon (Concilium Insculanum), among whose thirteen canons is one providing that the sponsor at baptism is bound to give only the white robe in which the infant is baptized. In 1260 a council held by Florentin, Archbishop of Arles, decreed that confirmation must be received fasting, and that on Sundays and feast days the religious should not open their churches to the faithful, nor preach at the hour of the parish Mass. The laity should be instructed by their parish priests. The religious should also frequent the parochial service, for the sake of good example. This council also condemned the doctrines spread abroad under the name of Joachim of Flora. In 1275, earlier observances, twenty-two in number, were promulgated anew at a Council of Arles.

1 Martha G. Newman, “Real Men and Imaginary Women: Englehard of Langheim Considers a
COUNCIL OF SARDICA & CARTHAGE &

http://www.ccel.org/fathers/NPNF2-14/6sardica/

Sardica c. 347 – canons had to do with qualifications, translations, and judgement of bishops, and proper decorem of bishops with regard to each others subjects. No mention of marriage or celibacy.

CARTHAGE 257 (UNDER ST. CYPRIAN

http://www.ccel.org/fathers/NPNF2-14/Npnf2-14-151.htm#P9998_1850055

The Synod Held at Carthage Over Which Presided the Great and Holy Martyr Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. a.d. 257.

(Found in Beveridge, Synodicon, Tom. I., p. 365, and in Labbe and Cossart, Concilia, Tom. I., col. 786.)

When very many bishops were met together at Carthage on the Calends of September from the province of Africa, Numidia and Mauritania, with the presbyters and deacons (the greater part of the people being likewise present) and when the holy letters of Jubaianus to Cyprian had been read, and Cyprian's answers to Jubaianus, concerning heretical baptisms, as well as what the same Jubaianus afterwards wrote to Cyprian,

Cyprian said: Ye have heard, my dearly beloved colleagues, what our fellow bishop Jubaianus has written to me, taking counsel of my littleness concerning the illicit and profane baptisms of heretics, and the answer which I made him; being of the same opinion as we have been on former occasions, that heretics coming to the Church should be baptized and sanctified with the Church's baptism. Moreover there has been read to you also the other letter of Jubaianus, in which answering for his sincere and pious devotion to our letter, not only he

agrees therewith but offered thanks that he has been so instructed by it. It only remains therefore that we, each one of us, one by one, say what our mind is in this matter, without condemning any one or removing any one from the right of communion who does not agree with us.

For no one [of us\(^1\)] has set himself up [to be] bishop [of bishops \(^2\)], or attempted with tyrannical dread to force his colleagues to obedience to him, since every bishop has, for the license of liberty and power, his own will, and as he cannot be judged by another, so neither can he judge another. But we await the judgment of our universal Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, who one and alone hath the power, both of advancing us in the governance of his Church, and of judging of our actions [in that position].

[ The bishops then one by one declared against heretical baptism.\(^3\) Last of all (col. 796)):

Cyprian, the Confessor and Martyr of Carthage, said: The letter which was written to Jubaianus, my colleague, most fully set forth my opinion, that heretics who, according to the evangelical and apostolic witness, are called adversaries of Christ's and anti-Christs, when they come to the Church, should be baptized with the one (unico) baptism of the Church, that they may become instead of adversaries friends, and Christians instead of Antichrists.

Notes.

Zonaras.

These are the opinions therefore of the fathers, which assembled in council with the great Cyprian: but they do not apply to all heretics nor to all schismatics. For the Second Ecumenical Council, as we have just said [i.e. in the Preface he has placed to the acts of the synod. Vide L. and C., Conc., Tom. i., col. 801] makes an exception of some heretics, and give its sanction to their reception without baptism, only requiring their anointing with the holy chrism, and then anathematizing at the same time their own and all heresies.

Balsamon does not print the acts of the Council at all but only the letter of St. Cyprian (Labbe and Cossart, Concilia, Tom. I., col. 799.) I have not thought it worth while to place here the remarks of the eighty-six bishops, ὅσον μὴ αναγκαία, οἰα μὴ δὲ ενεργοῦσαι, to quotequote Zonaras's words.Binius.
The allusion here is to the decree of Stephen, who was wont, according to the custom of his elders, to be styled "Bishop of bishops," and because he had acrimoniously threatened excommunication to all not agreeing with him.

On the disputed historical fact as to whether St. Cyprian died in or out of the communion of the See of Rome the reader will do well to consult Puller, The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome.

I place here St. Cyprian's Seventieth Epistle in the Oxford Translation (Epistle of St. Cyprian, pp. 232 et seqq.). This letter is ad. dressed to Januarius, Satterninus, etc., and is headed in Beveridge's Synodicon "Canon I."

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Canon III. Of Continence. Aurelius the bishop said: When at the past council the matter on continency and chastity was considered, those three grades, which by a sort of bond are joined to chastity by their consecration, to wit bishops, presbyters, and deacons, so it seemed that it was becoming that the sacred rulers and priests of God as well as the Levites, or those who served at the divine sacraments, should be continent altogether, by which they would be able with singleness of heart to ask what they sought from the Lord: so that what the apostles taught and antiquity kept, that we might also keep.

(This canon is taken from Canon i., of Carthage 387 or 390.)

Canon IV. Of the different orders that should abstain from their wives. Faustinus, the bishop of the Potentine Church, in the province of Picenum, a legate of the Roman Church, said: It seems good that a bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon, or whoever perform the sacraments, should be keepers of modesty and should abstain from their wives. By all the bishops it was said: It is right that all who serve the altar should keep pudicity from all women.

(This canon is taken from Canon i., of Carthage 387 or 390, last mentioned.)

Canon XVI. That no bishop, presbyter or deacon should be a "conductor;" and that Readers should take wives; and that the clergy should abstain from usury; and at what age they or virgins should be consecrated.

Likewise it seemed good that bishops, presbyters, and deacons should not be "conductors" or "procurators;" nor seek their food by any base and vile business, for they should remember how it is written, "No man fighting for God cumbereth himself with worldly affairs."

Also it seemed good that Readers when they come to years of puberty, should be compelled either to take wives or else to profess continence.

Likewise it seemed good that if a clergyman had lent money he should get it back again, but if kind (speciem) he should receive back the same kind as he gave.

And that younger than twenty-five years deacons should not be ordained, nor virgins consecrated.

And that readers should not salute the people.

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2 or www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-14/Npnf2-14-146.htm#TopOfPage
(This canon is made up of Canons xv., xvii., and xx., and added to these Canon j. of the same Second Series of the synod of Hippo, a.d. 393.)

Canon XXV. Concerning bishops and the lower orders who wait upon the most holy mysteries. It has seemed good that these abstain from their wives. Aurelius, the bishop, said: We add, most dear brethren, moreover, since we have heard of the incontinency of certain clerics, even of readers, towards their wives, it seemed good that what had been enacted in divers councils should be confirmed, to wit, that subdeacons who wait upon the holy mysteries, and deacons, and presbyters, as well as bishops according to former statutes, should contain from their wives, so that they should be as though they had them not and unless they so act, let them be removed from office. But the rest of the clergy are not to be compelled to this, unless they be of mature age. And by the whole council it was said: What your holiness has said is just, holy, and pleasing to God, and we confirm it.

(This is founded upon Canon iv. of the Council of Carthage, which met September 13th, 401, but the provisions are more stringent here, subdeacons as well as deacons being constrained to continence.)

Canon XXXVIII. That clerics or those who are continent shall not visit virgins or widows. Neither clerics nor those who profess continence should enter the houses of widows or virgins without the bidding or consent of the bishops or presbyters: and then let them not go alone, but with some other of the clergy, or with those assigned by the bishop or presbyter for this purpose; not even bishops and presbyters shall go alone to women of this sort, except some of the clergy are present or some other grave Christian men.

(This canon is canon xxiv. of the Synod of Hippo, a.d. 393.)

Canon LXX. What clerics should abstain from their wives. Moreover since incontinence has been charged against some clergymen with regard to their own wives it has seemed good that bishops, presbyters, and deacons should according to the statutes already made abstain even from their own wives; and unless they do so that they should be removed from the clerical office. But the rest of the clergy shall not be forced to this but the custom of each church in this matter shall be followed.

(This is Canon iv. of Carthage, September, a.d. 401.)
THE MILITARY ORDERS

(CE) The knights of the great orders were regarded in the Church as analogous to monks whose three vows they professed and whose immunities they shared. They were answerable to the pope alone; they had their chapels, their clerics, and their cemeteries, all exempted from the jurisdiction of the secular clergy. Their landed property was free from tithes. They were not subject to the interdicts which the bishops in those days employed so freely. They did not all follow the same monastic rule. The Templars and orders derived from them followed the Cistercian Reform. The Hospitallers followed the Rule of St. Augustine. Nevertheless, in consequence of the relaxation which manifested itself among them after the period of the crusades, the Holy See introduced mitigations in favour of the non-clerical brethren. For these it was difficult to maintain the rule of celibacy in all its rigour; they were permitted, in certain orders, to marry once, and that only with a maiden. Even where second marriages were tolerated, they had to vow conjugal fidelity, so that if they violated this obligation of the natural law they sinned doubly against the law and against their vow. Besides the three vows, the rule bound the brethren to the exercises of the monastic life such as the recitation of the Hours, for which, in the case of illiterates, a fixed number of Paters was substituted. It also prescribed their dress and their food, and their feast, abstinence, and fast days. Lastly, the rule imposed detailed obligations in regard to the election of dignitaries and the admission of members to the two ranks of combatants -- knights and men-at-arms -- and the two of non-combatants -- chaplains, to whom all sacerdotal functions were reserved, and casaliers, or tenants, who were charged with the management of temporal affairs.¹

Aviz, Military Order of

Military body of Portuguese knights, founded, c.1146; the castle of Aviz was their headquarters. They adopted the Cistercian rule and became affiliated with the Spanish Knights of Calatrava. Under Infante Fernando they achieved deeds of valor in Africa. After 1551 the grand mastership of the order was vested in the king, who used their wealth for his own purposes. The knights were dispensed from the vow of celibacy in 1492. They were suppressed in 1834.
New Catholic Dictionary - Catholic Encyclopedia²

Alcantara, Military Order of

Religious order of Spanish knighthood, founded, 1156, as the Knights of Saint Julian de Pereiro, for defense against the Moors. It became a religious society, 1176, received papal recognition as a military order, 1197, and in 1218 united with the Knights of Calatrava, accepting from them the Cistercian rule and costume, and adopting the name, Knights of Alcantara. The order acquired great wealth and power, resulting in internal dissension. The knights were released from the vow of celibacy, 1540. In 1808 the revenues were confiscated. Since 1875 the title has been conferred by the king for military services.
New Catholic Dictionary³

¹ CE s.v. “Military Orders” www.newadvent.org/cathen/10304d.htm