

A Sampling of Comments from Priests who Participated in Mandatory Celibacy Survey

(for all 547 comments visit www.futurechurch.org and click on survey results)

In Favor of Discussion of Mandatory Celibacy Rule

“I know several priests who resigned to get married. They are brilliant, wonderful and holy men. They would return tomorrow if allowed.” (Denver priest)

We have to get realistic about the priest shortage so that Catholics will not be without Eucharist. We also cannot rely on foreign born priests who do not know our culture and frequently do not hold women in high esteem in the Church. (Fresno priest)

Keep up the good work! Thanks for bringing this topic to our local Church. If we are to remain a SACRAMENTAL/EUCHARISTIC CENTERED Community that is nurtured through the Sacraments then we need a viable and diverse PRIESTHOOD. We are on a dangerous theological track that puts the sacraments at the service of a celibate priestly ministry. (Monterey Priest)

I have not yet been able to understand how bishops of our Eucharistic Church can absolve themselves of the responsibility of exploring every avenue of possibilities for priestly vocations. I do not understand how Pope John Paul can arrogate to himself the right to prohibit bishops from fulfilling their sacred responsibility and expect them to comply. One has to wonder what kinds of fears are operative in this scenario.(Covington priest)

“We can discuss this all we want, but unless the bishops find courage to confront the Vatican on this policy, nothing will happen. And this is most unlikely.”(Cleveland priest)

YES-- PLEASE...I have married priests in my parish who would be more than willing to help if they could. I am overwhelmed! (Ft Wayne, S. Bend)

“The failure of our church to enter into dialogue is a reflection, for me, of a lack of trust in the presence of the Spirit in all members of our church.”(Green Bay Priest)

“And I am in favor of an open discussion on the ordination of women.”(Green Bay Priest)

In spite of all of the theological rationalization, I believe the only real reason authorities are so adamant about maintaining enforced celibacy is control. Go CTA! (Indianapolis priest)

It's time our Bishops hear us out. They treat us like we are children, as though only they have the gift of knowledge. Thanks for this survey.(Wisconsin priest)

God bless your efforts. The Holy Spirit is with you, and so are the majority of priests, still active or laicized. My prayers and support always and everywhere. (P.s. I like your approach—it will reap more truthful, realistic results.) Keep persevering. I would have signed my name if requested.(Wisconsin Priest)

There are problems with married deacons and divorce. Those problems would be magnified with married priests. I'd rather talk about celibate women priests. But I'm not opposed to married priests, just wary. (Wisconsin priest)

The crisis of staffing our parishes and giving our people the Eucharist is deepening. Our bishops, as leaders and visionaries have/are failing the church. (Michigan priest)

It boggles my mind that we can't even discuss issues that need discussion in our church. Our LEADERS have done a POOR JOB and yet we, those in the trenches, can't discuss this or other IMPORTANT issues. Why can't we have an OPEN DISCUSSION - what are we, Rome, or the bishops afraid of??? (Michigan priest)

I also favor an open discussion on the ordination of women. (Michigan priest)

Available competent ordained ministers are more important than maintaining obligatory celibacy. (Oakland priest)

I support women's ordination too because in Christ there is no Jew or Gentile, no Roman or Greek, no women or men, all are one in Christ. (Oakland priest)

The problem with the Roman priesthood's mandatory celibacy is this: we are expected to act like men but treated as boys and dressed up like girls. (Oklahoma City priest)

I believe celibacy is of great value to the church, and a great gift. But I also think the availability of the Eucharist is an even greater gift.(Oklahoma City priest)

How can our religious leaders prefer that thousand and millions of Catholics (USA) have no Sunday Eucharist than to have them attend a Eucharist celebrated by someone who shared his bed legally with a loving spouse? (Oklahoma City Priest)

I would not be afraid to put my name to this, but I appreciate that this will make it possible for many to express their opinion. Isn't it a shame that we cannot speak without fear! (Cleveland priest)

Thank you for doing the survey. Open discussion and conversation bring clarity, mutual understanding and grace. The whole question of admission to orders must be reviewed in our time. (Oakland priest)

There is no vocation crisis in the U.S. Studies show we would have a surplus of candidates if we allowed married men to be candidates for the priesthood. Mandatory celibacy contravenes

psychological development of individuals, our own Tradition (the Eastern Church) and stifles the Holy Spirit ...What are we afraid of? (Orange priest)

Celibacy may not cause sexual predation, but we have to face the question: to what degree has it deterred otherwise excellent candidates who are wholesome and godly, and to what degree has it attracted inappropriate candidates who are running from their own sexuality? (Orange Priest)

“Thanks for this courageous and timely initiative! I have been a vocal advocate for optional celibacy, the readmission of married priests, and the ordination of married men (and women). I am a member of CTA.” (Patterson, NJ priest)

Although I would be more in favor of an open discussion on women’s ordination! (Phoenix, priest)

The discussion is long past due. (Phoenix, priest).

It’s clear from scripture that all the apostles were married. 1 Corinthians 9:3-5 where Paul says, “Do I not have the right to take a woman with me as Peter and the other disciples?” Tradition also backs up a married clergy up until the 9th century – including Bishops! Apart from the above, who is “moi” to contradict what Christ allowed and approved? He chose the apostles. (Sacramento priest)

Bringing clergy in from other cultures is a travesty and will ultimately make matters worse! (Sacramento priest)

Justice also demands the ordination of women! Universal unity is both a burden and a blessing... We don’t all develop at the same pace. What a huge challenge is globalization...(Sacramento priest)

I personally feel that the optional celibacy is not the real issue here, although I do favor and open discussion on the topic. Here are my priorities: We need to zero in on “fixing the leadership personnel problem” in our Catholic Church by considering these 3 groups of people first:

- Priest who have left and could be available for full time-part time ministry...*
- Permanent Deacons who have discovered a call priesthood...*
- Capable religious and lay women who also have discerned a call to priestly ministry...*
- Lastly – optional celibacy (Toledo priest)*

“I know of several priests who are struggling with celibacy and it is starting to weigh on them and affect their ministry. It is scary to think that we might lose them because they are good priests and love what they do.” (Philadelphia priest)

“Let me quote the words of the Cardinal Archbishop of Edinburgh: ‘I cherish my celibacy, but if celibacy should wither away tomorrow, it would not bother me in the least... For almost 50 yrs. of ministry, celibacy is fine [for me], but imposed celibacy has destroyed many a fine priest.’” (Philadelphia priest)

Do Not Favor Discussion of Mandatory Celibacy Rule (sampling)

Dear Members of Call to Action, The peace of our Risen Lord be with you. I am returning your survey because I do not wish to participate in it. I do not believe your survey is constructive, nor do I think the question, as asked, is useful. I also don't believe it is at all useful to release the figures to the press; that causes me to doubt the purity of your motives. Sincerely yours in Christ. (Denver priest)

Your organization is not one steeped in obedience. While I am not the judge, I doubt your duplicitous ways are leading many souls to greater intimacy with Jesus Christ. (LaCrosse priest)

"I am busy enough as a priest and have deep admiration for marriage and families. I could not imagine having enough time to dedicate to wife and children as a priest." (Philadelphia priest)

Shame on you (CTA)...John Paul II on several occasions has stated that any change on the rule of celibacy was not open to discussion or debate. You show some disobedience and disrespect to our Holy Father on your movement. (Madison priest)

Stop wasting your time and our time. Celibacy is a gift, not a burden. Your goals are misdirected.

Call to Action should be excommunicated! (Orange priest)

Perhaps if you (FutureChurch) spent as much time encouraging young men to consider the priesthood instead of pushing your Anti-Catholic propaganda we would have more vocations. On second thought, we don't need any more priests or religious with the same bigotry that you possess. (Cleveland priest)

"I thought the Pope had settled this issue?" (Patterson, NJ priest)

I feel certain the celibacy should be kept in the priesthood. Priests are another Christ—"in personal Christ." We give over our total lives over to Christ & His Church. Married priests: You are committed to Christ & wife divided – choose one or other. (Phoenix, AZ priest)

Unsure *The next question is: Are Catholic people ready to support a Pastor and his wife/children? How many wives would want to live in a rural parish, a poor parish, or a Black parish? A married clergy may solve some problems but it would create others. Divorces can be nasty. (Phoenix, AZ priest)*

I do not think the shortage of priests is due to the mandatory rule of celibacy. The charism of celibacy has been part of our church since it's inception and only a rule for about 800 years. The dearth of vocations is due to many factors such as: materialism, contraception, abortion, secularism and religious apathy. (Pueblo, CO priest)

“Be authentic to the teaching of the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church & give your anger to God in the Sacrament of Confession.” (Paterson NJ priest)

“I believe that the rule of celibacy is vitally necessary to the health of the Church, and that any discussion with its accompanying publicity would be very damaging. The media would have another field day at our expense and that of the Church.” (Paterson, NJ priest)

I believe the question of mandatory celibacy is settled for our own time by the response of the Holy Father. The desires of the world for the spirituality of the church should look toward God more than the desires of men. Whatever the Holy Father says even when it is not infallible is very powerful and a sign of God’s will for the church. We are living in a very difficult time in the church, probably the most difficult times. (Oklahoma City priest)

Groups like this are divisive and do nothing but cause confusion and division. Don’t you have enough to do other than cause problems for those of us who have embraced celibacy? Please stop the mean spirited attacks! (Oklahoma City priest)

I was married 36 years. Marriage is a full time commitment. Now I am a priest, that also is a full time commitment. If you want a married clergy you have to redefine the role of priesthood to be more of an avocation than a vocation. Ask some married deacons if they honestly believe they could step up to full time priesthood. In my opinion it won't work. It may produce excellent preachers and teachers and great experience of family life but not dedicated priests. (Monterey priest)