

## **RCIA – Class 12 – Sacraments of Holy Orders and Marriage – December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

### **-Prayer**

**-Remind them of the Potluck this Saturday. Also, to return their RCIA forms.**

**-Remind them of the RCIA Potluck this Saturday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> @12:00 – O’Neill Hall**

### **-Holy Orders**

-One of two sacraments of service, along with Marriage. Recipients who receive these sacraments dedicate themselves towards the salvation of others.

-Instituted by Christ at the Last Supper.

-Imprints an indelible mark/character on the soul of the recipient and configures them to Christ.

-Only baptized men can receive this sacrament. It can only be received only once in each of its degrees: deacon, priest, bishop.

-In the western Church (Latin Rite), only men willing to embrace celibacy may be ordained as priests and bishops. (In the Eastern Church, married men may be ordained deacons and priests, but not bishops.)

-Unmarried men may be ordained deacons; married men can be ordained deacons if they are unwilling to remarry, even at the death of their spouse.

-Deacons and priests both enter a rigorous multi-year formation program to prepare them for receiving the sacrament of Holy Orders.

-Only bishops can confer the sacrament of Holy Orders on recipients.

-No one has the right to receive Holy Orders; one has to be called.

-Bishops are said to have the fullness of Holy Orders, as they are the successors of the Apostles. They have responsibilities both to the universal Church and a local Church (diocese).

### **\*Why Can’t Women Be Ordained Priests?**

-There are essentially two reasons: One is historical and the other theological.

-First, the historical. Jesus clearly chose a precedent when he chose 12 men as the first bishops and priests of the Church. No one has the authority to change what Jesus established.

-Again, no one has a right to be a priest. One has to be called by the Church to this vocation.

-A calling to be a priest, or a deacon as well, is a two-way street of discernment. Not only does an individual discern whether they are called to Holy Orders but also the Church. (Give an example of "Adrian" from my seminary formation days)

-The Church is often accused of oppressing women and being sexist and chauvinistic since they don't allow women to be priests. History would prove otherwise as some of the greatest doctors and saints of the Church are women whose lives and writings are some of the greatest treasures of the Church (St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Therese of Lisieux, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.)

-Lest anyone criticize the Church as having "no place for women", read these beautiful words from our late, great pope, JP II:

*"The presence and the role of women in the life and mission of the Church, although not linked to the ministerial priesthood, remain absolutely necessary and irreplaceable." -Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*

-Now, the theological reason for not ordaining women. The Church does not ordain women because they cannot conform and configure their lives totally to the person of Jesus Christ in the same way men that men can. One of the main tenets of seminary formation is to form and conform men into the person of Christ, (*Alter Christus*), meaning "another Christ." This total conformity and configuration to the person of Jesus Christ means that we, as priests, are among many things, also conformed into his masculinity, sexuality,

and fatherhood. Women simply cannot conform themselves *totally to the person of Christ as men can because they are not male.*

-At the ordination of a priest, a sublime, profound change occurs, at the very essence of the person. An indelible (unchangeable, immortal) mark has been placed on our soul--more powerful than any mere nuclear fission! What existed 30 seconds prior to his consecration *does not exist anymore*. He is a new creation: a priest, configured to Christ. Ontologically (that is, at one's very essence), there is a change in his being. He may *look* like the same man, but what has just occurred is earth-shatteringly sublime! Just like in our sacrament of the Eucharist: "to observe that after bread becomes the Sacred Body of Christ, it still tastes like bread and feels like bread, but is now the Body of Christ? There has been an ontological change. A cup of wine still smells like wine and tastes like it, but it is now the Blood of Christ.

### **\*Why Does the Church Require Celibacy for Priests?**

-First of all, we must understand that celibacy is not an inherent quality of the priesthood, something essential to its nature. Rather, it is a discipline, not a doctrine, of the Church. Disciplines can be changed. Doctrine pertains to faith and morals, and cannot be changed.

\*Many ancient priests and bishops were married at some point, including St. Peter, the Church's first pope.

-St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 7:32-34, *"But a married man is anxious about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided."* In light of this observation, the example of Jesus Christ himself, and the long historical experience, the Church has conducted that the celibate priest may be better able to devote himself more single-heartedly both to God and his flock.

-Talk about how incredibly difficult it would be for me to be married and have a family, and also minister to 1000 families and 3 parishes.

-Give the story of a Lutheran pastor who was envious of his Catholic priest friend and how he was totally available to his flock as the result of his celibacy.

-Talk about the Eastern Church which allows married priests and the Western/Latin Rite Church which does not allow married priests. Discuss how the Church, can give a dispensation, however, to allow a married man to become a priest in the case of converting to the Catholic faith.

-Opponents of celibacy often simply assume that such a life is utterly impossible. But this seems to go against Scripture. In Matthew 19:12 where Jesus speaks about marriage and divorce, he says this: "Some are incapable of marriage because they were born so; some, because they were made so by others; some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." Hence, Jesus seems to speak without criticism that some will say "no" to marriage so as to build up his kingdom.

-We must remember that Jesus was a celibate priest. And since ordained priests are to configure their lives and priesthood to the life and priesthood of Jesus, it would follow that they would be conformed to his celibacy as well. St. Paul, was also a celibate priest. Peter was a married man and left everything.

-In the early Church some men who were ministers remained unmarried and some married men promised continence before assuming ministry. The Council of Elvira in 305 called for the restoration of continence for clergy. Lateran II, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, declared definitively that clerics could not marry.

-Celibacy is not about a man "white-knuckling" or "gutting" it out. Through years of discernment and with the help of seminary formation staff and spiritual directors, one would have to come to understand that they are being called by God to celibacy. If one discerns that he is indeed called by God to the celibate priesthood, then we also believe that God will not only give them the graces necessary to live out the celibate vocation, but also the desire to do so.

-Celibacy is a sign of the next life. Scripture says that we will not be married in heaven.

-Contemporary western society essentially sees sex as a recreational activity, devoid of personal responsibility. One is expected to have sex. If one is not having sex, something is clearly wrong with that person. It also sees any restraint or restriction of the sex drive as disordered and unhealthy. It basically sees humanity as animals with instincts that are uncontrollable.

### **\*Sacrament of Marriage/Matrimony**

- One of the two sacraments of service, dedicated to the salvation of others.
- Instituted by Christ when he attended the wedding feast of Cana and through his preaching when he taught that the union of a man and woman in marriage should be permanent until death.
- Marriage is a sacrament by which a baptized man and woman bind themselves for the whole of life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to carry out their duties.
- The sacrament of Marriage establishes an indissoluble bond (permanence, foreverness) that can only end at the death of one of the spouses.
- The permanence of marriage, mirroring the permanence of Christ's love, excludes divorce in the sense that divorce ends marriage. This teaching comes from Christ himself in Matthew 19:1-11.

\*Read this passage and explain its contents.

- Spouses are to love one another totally and selflessly just as Christ loved his bride, the Church.
- There can be no 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage for a validly married person while the first spouse is living.
- The fidelity of marriage, imitating the faithful love God has for his people, excludes polygamy and adultery.
- The openness to life, which also imitates God's eternally fruitful love, excludes any form of contraception. Natural Family Planning is the advised method for the planning of one's family.
- An annulment declares that marriages were invalid, not ended.
- A Catholic and baptized non-Catholic may marry and validly contract the sacrament of Marriage. This is called a mixed marriage. However, permission is required from the Catholic diocese to enter into a mixed marriage. As well, the Catholic party also promises to continue practicing their Catholic faith and to raise any children as Catholics.

- Catholics are required to attend pre-marriage classes. Talk about how many couples do not go through these classes and how it adversely impacts their marriage.
- Christian marriages hold two basic purposes of the marital act: 1) unitive; and 2) procreative. When these are separated, chaos results.
- After the fall, Marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving (CCC 1609)
- The parties to a marriage covenant are a baptized man and woman, free to contract marriage, who freely express their consent. "To be free" means 1) not being under constraint; and 2) not impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law. (CCC 1625)
- By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory. (GS 48; 1;50)
- The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called "the domestic church"

### **\*Same-sex marriage**

- Goes against God's definition of marriage (Both in Genesis and in the Gospels).
- Goes against the complementarity of the sexes. A man and a woman's body fit together and complement each other, just as God designed. And that complementarity brings about the possibility of procreation. With bodies of the same sex, the marital act cannot be completed and new life, a child, simply cannot come about. A bride implies a groom in the same way that a lock implies a key. Two locks make no sense together. Two keys make no sense together.
- History and civilization has shown and told us: namely, that marriage existed and was between a man and a woman and that this was universally the norm.

-Every child has the basic right to be raised, where possible, by his or her married father and mother in a stable home. Many in society are telling us that mothers and fathers are replaceable; that two fathers can offer what a mother can offer and that two mothers can offer what a father can offer. That is a lie. *Mothers and fathers, you are irreplaceable. Society and family life desperately needs you.*