A. CELIBACY


An investigation into the core motivation for celibacy. Good notations on aloneness versus loneliness.


A short section treats the historical development of celibacy. Then a much longer one presents the theological interpretation of celibacy, i.e. it shows that the celibate state of the priest is essentially meant to signify and represent Christ the saving Mediator; it also gives a wealth of other values contained in priestly celibacy rightly understood. A brief third part treats objections to celibacy. Very good insights. The somewhat labored style of the article betrays the fact that it is a translation. The author is Professor of Moral Theology at the University of Tübingen.


Insists on the positive aspect of celibacy as the state of one who is so fascinated by Christ that marriage is no longer possible. This article is a chapter of the author’s book Called by Name. Good.


A consideration of celibacy in theological terms. Very clear presentation. Some excellent remarks on the inadequacy of certain formulations in connection with Christian celibacy. Regrettably the style is a bit too impersonal and cold.

A rather technical paper addressing the topics of sexuality, psychosexual maturity, intimacy, celibacy and some problems about the effects of a homogeneous environment on preparation for celibacy. Interesting but difficult reading.


Addressed to the seminarian who feels he has a call to ministry but not to celibacy. Follows Schillebeeckx in a highly personal and suggestive way. No in-depth analysis. Interesting.


A general description of the changes that should be introduced in the formation of priests in order to meet the new needs of a changing society. This description refers to independence, openness to change, acceptance of self, sensitivity to others, etc. A rather sketchy treatment, but clear and sound.


The author insists that celibacy is not primarily oriented to apostolic service but to an interpersonal relationship with God. Masterful.


The author, a professional psychologist, shows convincingly that celibates can stand the frustrations involved in a deprivation of the sex need if other needs are adequately met, such as needs for affection, security, achievement and self-worth.


A series of 9 papers read at a Symposium on Clerical Celibacy at the University of Notre Dame in 1967. These papers are usually scholarly and objective in tone. They all advocate optional celibacy for priests. None of them is however really convincing. The best paper is the one entitled “Psychological Reflections on Enforced Celibacy.” The common weakness of all the papers is that, while rightfully challenging enforced celibacy, they do not seem to conceive that under certain conditions obligatory celibacy might also be truly free.

An unusually daring investigation of sexuality. It courageously attempts to integrate psychology, Scripture and spirituality. Some of the author’s positions may seem a bit extreme to many readers. The whole book is most interesting.


An emotional and irritating plea in favor of obligatory celibacy for priests. This book is a good example of a worthy cause propped up with bad arguments. Few people will have the patience to read beyond the first 30 pages.


Very conservative and polemic. Often irritating because of its pre-Vatican views. Some good points.


A medical doctor, who is also a priest, explores the inner journey of human aloneness. He deals with intercession and prayer, with healing and becoming a healing person, with service and the counseling ministry, with the mystery of evil, etc. Most of all he speaks of the life that has been fulfilled by God. A very beautiful and meditative analysis of the human predicament.


Especially concerned with the psycho-sexual dimensions of celibacy. Very positive and pastoral. A very fine article.


The author, a clinical psychologist and a professor of psychol-
ogy, is married and has two children. Here he explores the areas of repression, suppression, gratification, sublimation and respectful integration as regards genital sexuality in religious life. A very balanced study.


Probes the various aspects of sexuality: primary, genital, affective. This is followed by a chapter on the different kinds of love and the various ways of sexual expression. Finally, the author shows how each stage of life brings its special problems in the area of sexuality. Very good.


Considers the main biblical basis for celibacy and indicates its motivational character for the young man of today. An excellent formulation of the eschatological dimension of celibacy.


Using the categories of "gift" and "threat," the author analyses as a moral theologian the Christian meaning of human relationships and their sexual dimension. Very abstract style. Difficult reading.


The author contends that true celibacy is possible if the celibate is conscious of his sexual dreams, fantasies and emotions, for such an awareness is a prerequisite for an authentic spiritual choice. Good all-around Jungian approach, but difficult reading. Furthermore, it is not very clear how the theory can be applied practically.


According to the author the choice of a vocation or social identity is properly a phenomenon of adolescence, whereas the choice for marriage or for celibacy belongs to a later developmental stage of the person. The author believes therefore that connecting the decision to become a priest and the decision for celibacy is a psy-
chological error. He feels that quite possibly a man may have a vocation to the priesthood but no vocation to celibacy — this from a psychological point of view. Advocates a freedom of choice between married priesthood and celibate priesthood. A suggestive piece of writing, although rather sparsely documented.


A thoughtful and honest study of the entire topic of priestly celibacy. Chap. 6 on “The Diaconate and Training for Celibacy” and chap. 7 on “The Reform of Seminaries” are particularly good. The author convincingly pleads in favor of ordination being delayed until one is around 30 years of age. Many illuminating developments on the relationship between psychological maturity and freely chosen celibacy. Excellent.


The author is a Catholic priest and a Freudian psychoanalyst. He presents here a clinical study of negative celibacy as well as of positive celibacy. This is followed by a brief presentation of institutional celibacy. This pioneering work is really excellent.

Pable, Martin W. “Psychology and Asceticism of Celibacy.” Rev. Rel 34 (1975) 266-76.

Suggests that one of the functions of celibacy is to be an act of radical doubt about a number of things that our culture takes for granted, such as: direct sexual experience is necessary for full human development, marriage is the only way to overcome loneliness, the purpose of life is self-fulfillment, etc. Breadth of vision. Easy reading. Excellent.

Palmer, Paul F. “A Case for Priestly Celibacy.” Thought 43 (1968) 348-64.

Highlights the historical development of priestly celibacy in the Churches of the East and the West, with a particular emphasis on the motives which prompted a somewhat different policy in both Churches. A dispassionate and scholarly defense of the traditional Western position.


Celibacy as a way of loving is conditioned by one’s positive self-
acceptance, by the ability to take sensible risks in loving, by the quality of life it generates in others, and by one’s adult faith. Good.

Paul VI, Encyclical Letter “On Priestly Celibacy” of June 24, 1967. Firmly maintains the obligation of celibacy for priests, but at the same time presents celibacy as a mystery of love. Asks for a careful study of the problems of celibacy and shows openness to new solutions especially in terms of seminary formation, psychological maturing, periods of experimentation before ordination, etc. A courageous document, which will have disappointed many — the third part entitled “Lamentable Defections” is deemed by some as much too judgmental — but which can inspire a more creative approach to priestly celibacy beyond shallow controversy.


Insists that affectivity is gradually integrated through sublimation, i.e. religious motivation. Good.


Shows clearly the connection between celibacy and ministry as found in 1 Cor 7.


Some balanced views in a very simple and appealing style. Covers briefly all important aspects of celibacy.


More a personal testimony than an objective study. Emphasis on self-denial and the cross. Insists on the subjective and “mystery” aspect of celibacy. Some good elements, but not the best Rahner.


Points out the links which exist between the psychic, social and religious dimensions of our being, and places celibacy as a positive value at the very center of the interactions between these dimen-
sions. Good, but a bit sketchy and hard to read.

**Sabourin, Leopold.** "The Positive Values of Consecrated Celi-

A patchwork of biblical texts. Rather weak.


The first half, which is very good, is a historical study on the
origin and evolution of priestly celibacy both in the East and in
the West. The second half, which is even better, is a critical reflec-
tion. This book is really excellent and has rightly become a classic,
although at times it makes for difficult reading.

**Sheets, John R.** "For the Sake of the Kingdom." *The Way — Sup-
plement* 10 (1970) 74-83.

Shows how celibacy is the concentrated expression of the dy-
namics of the kingdom, bringing into a living focus the uniqueness
of the reality of the kingdom. A bit difficult theologically, but ex-
cellent.


Explains that the reality of celibacy derives from the mystery
of the Church herself. Original and valuable.

**Springer, Robert.** "Notes on Moral Theology." *Theological Studies*
32 (1971) 479-83.

Favors K. Mitchell's position on distinguishing the choice of a
vocation and that of a state of life. Mentions approvingly similar
views held by Teilhard de Chardin and M. De Wachter.


A good theological and scriptural presentation of both marriage
and celibacy. A bit abstract, but still quite readable.

**Vatican II, Optatam Totius 10.**

A brief statement geared to the formation of seminarians.

**Vatican II, Presbyterorum Ordinis 16.**

A fuller statement, but still very sketchy. Actually Paul VI had
announced that he would extensively treat of priestly celibacy in a
future document. This explains why the Council did not delve
more deeply into the matter. However, in this document it did
propose several illuminating reflections.
B. MIXED CELIBATE FRIENDSHIPS


Insists on the need to integrate the masculine and the feminine within us. Uses Jungian categories. Very good, although somewhat vague at times.


Historical, theological and psychological study of mixed celibate friendship. Good.


The author spells out what conditions must be met if a celibate is to engage profitably into a mixed friendship. These conditions are indeed so rigorous that very few celibates could claim to meet them. A very lucid and thought-provoking paper.


Personal reflections of a laywoman. The book is divided into two equal parts. The first one, more theological, is rather rambling and long-winded. The second one deals with relations between priests and women and is very illuminating.


A first draft of the following book in reduced form. Very good.


The first two chapters are innovative in that they present celibate life as a personal mystery, never adequately justified by reason. Chapters 3 to 7 are rather theological and abstract. Chapters 8 to 10, dealing with celibate life and falling in love, are very enlightening. The ideas are daring and creative, yet quite realistic as it seems.


Mainly historical, but also practical towards the end. Very good.

Balanced and multi-faceted. Very good.


A continuation of the preceding book with some overlapping but also with special added material on the problems of the sufficiency of the love of God, of compatibility between celibacy and friendship, of sufficiency of homosocial friendships, of risk-taking, of celibate asceticism, of sexual temptations, of expression of love, etc. A well-balanced presentation.


 Mostly on man-woman celibate love. Very good.


A case-study dealing clearly and simply with sexuality, friendship, intimacy, commitment and genitality.


Approves tentatively of mixed celibate friendships. Long and rather boring.