INTRODUCTION

Clerical celibacy is the permanent state of attachment solely to Jesus Christ. At present, celibacy is required of those to be ordained in the Roman Catholic rite. This paper attempts to answer the question, "how do we best harness the dynamics thus set up?" What will be developed is the paradigm of marriage applied to the clerical state.

Various Christological models have been proposed to describe the role of the priest in the Church: shepherd, servant-leader, wounded healer, victim-priest, saviour, mediator, intercessor, pontifex, living branch, sent, liberator, and many others. What will be examined, SPOUSE, may serve as a supplement to these.

LIFELONG BOND

This paradigm is rooted in Scripture. The Gospels and Epistles, directly and indirectly, portray Christ as the spouse of his Church. As a preparation, the Old Testament prophets speak of Yahweh and his spouse, the Chosen People. Indications can be detected in Canon Law, Patristics, Liturgy, and in general in the life of the Christian community. This is not surprising in a religion of love.

After establishing the paradigm and determining its meaning, suitable pastoral consequences can be drawn in terms of recruitment policy, formation, spirituality and apostolate. Reasoning will be by analogy. Complete one-to-one correspondence
cannot be expected, but only selective comparisons. For example, in comparing Christ with Adam, we are aware that there are more discrepancies than similarities.

Ordination is the act by which the Christian enters a new status, that of the clergy. Initiation to this rank is by ordination to the diaconate. The members of the clergy are the deacons, the presbyters and the bishops. By ordination, the cleric is configured to Christ as head.

Bishops are the successors not of individual Apostles but of the Apostles as a college. The universal Church is the body of Christ but each Particular Church is fully Church and entrusted to a residential Bishop. The bishop exercises pastoral care of his Church with the assistance of the Presbyterium, the priests of his diocese. The fullness of the priesthood resides in the bishop and the priests cannot exercise their powers without authorization from their bishop. The priest exercises his priesthood as a helper of the bishop.

The bond between the bishop and his church is so permanent and intimate that it is compared to the bond of marriage. While Christ is married to the whole Church, the bishop is married to his diocese. An analogous bond exists between the priest and the diocese, which is called incardination. Incardination means one is ordained for sacred ministry in a specific diocese. Incardination means there is no ordination of unattached clerics. Bishops do get asked to care for other dioceses and priests do get incardinated in other dioceses. Permanency means total commitment to the church one is assigned to serve.

Canon law has a detailed procedure for the incardination of priests. There is none for the incardination of bishops. There is however the episcopal ring which symbolizes love and fidelity to the diocese. The marital significance of the ring is explicit in the words, "With this ring I thee wed," in some marriage rites.

The primary role of the priest is to help the bishop in the care of the diocese, in diocesan-wide affairs. However in the concrete, the priest is the pastor of a part of the diocese, the parish. The bond between the pastor and his parish can also be compared to the marriage bond. This was intuitively known at least by Fr. Arthur Shea, S.J. As guest speaker at the 1992 Jesuit Mission Dinner, he recalled,
My first parish was Initao, Misamis Oriental in 1940. My first love! A life-time commitment. I did not abandon it during the Japanese Occupation. But my Superior annulled that marriage. I was transferred to Mambajao, Camiguin. Another life-time commitment. Then came the inevitable annulment by my Superior. I was like a widower who had lost two wives, both of whom I loved. There followed other parishes. I loved them all.

MONOGAMY, MUTUALITY AND FERTILITY

The model is now further described, and practical and concrete consequences are explored. Procedures that make for a successful and fruitful marriage between man and wife can be adapted to the relation between pastor and flock.

The marriage of pastor to parish is not the romantic type but is more like the arranged marriage. The parish did not ask for this priest and the priest did not ask for this parish. So how can an arranged marriage work? The dynamics that makes the arranged marriage between man and wife work can be examined to provide clues. In general this will entail sustained effort, good will, sharing, communication, mutual respect, prayer, and the like. It need not be a loveless union. The goal is that the pastor may make his own the words of Paul to the community at Thessalonica, “We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”

The call “Come! Follow me,” translates to “Come! I have a marriage arranged for you.” The ultimate matchmaker is Christ, but in the concrete it is the bishop. The bishop certainly would not want to foist an unsuitable pastor on a parish. Justice requires the need of a good formation program and a sufficiency in the number of pastors. Cooperation between bishop, priests and laity are needed to solve the pressing vocation problem.

The cleric is a professional. Therefore whoever wants to practice that profession has to have the qualities and skills specific to that profession. Those qualities and skills should enable the cleric to sanctify, teach and govern in the Church. Canon law and seminaries have complete lists of those skills, e.g., competence in theology, spirituality, etc. Now the use of
the model of spouse calls for the qualities needed to be a good husband and a good father. This could mean additional formative training or it could just provide the filter or orientation of present formation programs. The model affects too the selection of candidates.

The spousal model requires personal pastoral attention by the priest. But priests have oversized parishes. How can he say, "I know my sheep and my sheep know me?" The standard solution calls for more vocations and smaller parishes. But other creative solutions can be found if clergy and laity work out how they can know each other.

The model of marriage brings in the notion of mutuality. It is obvious that the pastor should sanctify his flock, but the truth that flock should sanctify him is not obvious. Just as man and wife sanctify each other, so can pastor be sanctified by his flock. Sanctification is not a one way street but an interactive process. And similarly for other actions. Thus the cleric teaches but is also taught. He speaks and he listens. They pray for each other. The bishop offers the Sunday mass pro populo for the diocese, and the parish priest for his parishioners. In turn the bishop is remembered in the Eucharistic Prayers in his diocese.

Since of necessity there is bureaucracy, there is the danger that clerics harden into bureaucrats, that they evolve into functionaries. There is the danger of clericalism. There is danger that the parish priest considers himself merely the implementor of holy laws.

The celibate faces occupational hazards. He could be virgin pure but sterile as a eunuch. He could be a model ascetic and a cold unfeeling bachelor, self-sufficient and self-satisfied. Having the spousal model in mind, the cleric is given disturbing topics for self-examination.

The same parish action can have different modalities. Building a material church is one action. One purpose is to have a suitable place for worship. Another is to use the efforts to get it constructed to build up and nurture the community. One is result oriented, the other family oriented. Which one predominates depends on the role that the pastor sees himself fulfilling. The spousal model inclines the pastor to choose those apostolates and activities that better foster growth of the laity and make them
co-partners. Which pastor gets promoted? Which pastor gets rewarded? This all depends on which model is favored by the bishop.

Marriage is monogamous. Businessman Concepcion once stated that he had two wives, his business and his family. He stated this indicating that total devotion to his work did not detract from giving quality time to his family. In the case of golf widows no marital infidelity is involved. Rather, the question is: Who or what gets first priority?

Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), married late in life. But he had to admit, "I know how my wife, Suha, is suffering. Still, she is my second wife. My first wife is my people."

The requirement of celibacy symbolizes that for the celibate priest, his parish should be not just his first wife, but his only wife. The requirement of celibacy in the Orthodox Church at least for the bishop implies total and undivided devotion by the bishop for his diocese. This fulfills Paul's injunction to Titus and Timothy that the bishop should be a man of only one wife.

In the marriage ritual, the text of Ephesians 5 tells husbands to care for their wives as Jesus does for the Church. The same can be more obviously directed to pastors. "Give yourself up for her. Purify her in the bath of water by the power of the word. Present her holy and immaculate, without stain or wrinkle or anything of that sort."

The fruitfulness of marriage has applicable parallels. One fruit is love between pastor and flock. Another is the growth of the Church. Children are born to the Church. The life of God is given and nurtured by the ministry of the word and of the sacrament. Growth does not refer only to numbers. It means also growth of community qua community. Fittingly the pastor is called "father."

The parish referred to above is the territorial parish. But there are other types of parishes, namely, personal parishes. One can be espoused to the deaf, or to lepers as Peter Damien was, or to prisoners. Like Ruth, the priest says, "Your people shall be my people." The choice of Ruth has marital undertones. The call in the Gospels to follow Christ also has marital undertones.
What has been said above refers directly to the diocesan clergy. But they can easily be applied to the religious clergy, *mutatis mutandis*.

CONCLUSION

Recent papal documents on marriage, the priesthood, religious life and the family point out that celibacy and marriage complement each other. In this paper we have seen another way, how celibacy and marriage illuminate and help each other.

The marriage between man and woman is the sacramental sign of the love that Christ has for his Church. A more direct sign is the spousal love of the pastor for his flock.

How Christ loves his Church provides the standard for the love that husband should have for his wife. On the other hand, the human ways that make for a successful marriage between husband and wife indicate ways for the fruitful love between pastor and flock. The fertility, exclusivity and mutuality in the marriage between man and wife have analogues in the marriage between pastor and flock.

The spousal model elaborated here may supplement the various facets brought out by the other well known models. It contributes the elements of affection and passion. It helps overcome occupational hazards of celibacy.

The spousal model reveals that clerical celibacy is a call to love as Jesus loved his church, his body. It gives some measure of justice to the requirement of celibacy.