

The Church: Part 3: Laity and Consecrated Life

I. The Church:

- A. Clergy: The Hierarchy: The Head of the Body of Christ.
 - 1. **Pope, Bishops, Priests, Deacons: These receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders.**
 - a. Diocesan: Typically they live alone and are sent by the Bishop where he needs them in the Diocese to work in parishes or schools or hospitals...
 - b. Religious: Those in Consecrated Life. They live in community with other religious. For example: Franciscans, Jesuits, Benedictines, Carmelites...
- B. Laity: Members of the Body of Christ
 - 1. **Married People**
 - 2. **Single People**
 - 3. **Those in Consecrated Life**

II. The Laity: Lay People:

- A. At Baptism every Christian lay person was anointed with Christ as:
 - 1. **Priest:** All aspects of our life are a spiritual sacrifice offered to God
 - 2. **Prophet:** We are called to evangelize and witness to Christ
 - 3. **King:** We are called to take authority over our lives—to do good/reject evil
 - a. Self Abnegation
 - b. Self Denial
 - c. Self Discipline

III. Vocation of Lay People:

- A. To seek the Kingdom by engaging in temporal affairs
- B. “Lay people are in the front lines of Church life”
- C. We are God’s image bearers in the world.
- D. Called to live a one-track Life—God is in all of it.
 - 1. The Two track life would separate the secular/mundane from the Spiritual
 - 2. Spiritual things would be associated with the Church and all other normal parts of life would be considered secular—in the two track model.

IV. **Consecrated Life:** Consecrated life is a life dedicated to God. One gives one’s whole heart to Christ for the sake of building his kingdom. In summary, the purpose of Consecrated life is as follows:

- A. To imitate Christ more directly
- B. To give one’s whole heart to Christ—to have an undivided heart
- C. To be freer to spread the Gospel and build the kingdom of God

V. **Consecrated Life is Diverse:** One can live out consecrated life as a priest, brother or sister. There are many ways of living out this call. Usually, it is lived out in community with other religious. However, some live it out in a solitary way. Also, there are many ways of organizing a religious community. Some communities can be totally withdrawn from the world like Carmelite Convents. Others, like the Jesuits can be immersed in the world doing apostolic work through teaching in schools. Others, like the Franciscans and Missionaries of charity can be in the world serving and witnessing the Gospel to the poor. The different types of religious are mentioned directly below. The spirituality of religious is marked by the Evangelical councils which are spelled out below.

- A. Religious Priests
- B. Religious Brothers

C. Religious sisters

VI. Evangelical Councils: Religious Priests, Brothers and Sisters live out these councils:

- A. Poverty: Each religious lives out a different form of poverty in a way spelled out by their rule or by the Bishop.
- B. Chastity: We all are called to chastity. The religious has a call to celibacy—no marriage.
- C. Obedience: Each religious is obedient to the Bishop or the head of their community or to the rule of life of their religious community.

VII. Kinds of Consecrated Life:

A. Monasticism:

1. In the early centuries of the church there were men and women who thought there was too much moral corruption and temptation in the big cities. They decided to withdraw into the desert to seek God and grow in holiness.
2. **They sought to conquer the three main sources of temptation that draw one away from God:**
 - a. The world: They pulled away from the corrupt culture of the cities
 - b. Their own desires: They practiced asceticism, self-denial. They strove to take control of the desires that pulled them away from God. They didn't want their desires to control them but God's will to control them and motivate them.
 - c. The Devil: There are many stories of how the devil interacted and confronted these early Christians in the desert through lies and temptations.

B. Those living in Solitude: This is the oldest form of Monasticism:

1. **Monks**: This is a catch all term that comes from the Greek work "*monos*" meaning alone or solitary.
2. **Hermits**: Comes from the Greek word "*eremites*" ("of the desert")
 - a. They lived on their own in a cell
 - b. However, they would also meet regularly with other monks to pray
3. **Anchorite/ anchoress**: Comes from the Greek word "*anachoreo*" ("to withdraw")
 - a. Like a Hermit, but they were required to take a vow of stability.
 - b. Many walled themselves up in cells that often were attached to a church.
 - c. They went through a special ceremony like a funeral after which they were considered dead to the world
 - d. They were answerable only to the Bishop.
4. **Recluse and "solitary"**: These lived completely on their own.
5. **Saint Anthony of the Desert: (251– 356AD)—Known as Father of Monasticism.**

C. Those Living in Community: Cenobitic Monasticism: As time went on, many realized the need for accountability in their spiritual lives and the need for community. There was wisdom in living with, praying with and working with others. Thus, many different forms of communities emerged.

1. **Cenobitic—From the Greek words *Koine* (common) and *Bios* (life)**
2. **St. Pachomius: (292–348)—Known as the Founder of Cenobitic Monasticism:**
3. **Religious Orders:**
 - a. Augustinians: Founded by St. Augustine (354AD-430AD)
 - b. Basilians: Founded by St. Basil (329AD-379AD). He wrote an Rule of Life.

- c. Benedictines: Lived in a monastery and would pray together 5-7 times a day and work. St. Benedict's (480AD-547AD) Rule of Life for the Monks was one of the most influential Rules.
 - d. Carmelites: Cloistered. Stayed within the walls of the convent or monastery. St. Teresa of Avila (1515AD-1582AD) and St. John of the Cross (1542AD-1591AD) reformed this religious order. St. Therese of Lisieux (1873AD-1897AD) was also a Carmelite.
 - e. Franciscans: St. Francis (1181AD-1226AD) and his brothers were Mendicant Preachers (they travelled about and preached). The Franciscans lived simply, owned nothing and begged for food.
 - f. Dominicans: Founded by St. Dominic (1170AD-1221AD) Another mendicant order. They focused on preaching and teaching.
 - g. Jesuits: Founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491AD-1556AD) One of the first Religious Orders to dispense with gathering regularly to pray the Psalter.
 - h. The Holy Cross: This is the community that built the University of Notre Dame and the University of Portland.
 - i. Missionaries of Charity: Mother Teresa (1910AD-1997AD) founded this community to serve the poorest of the poor. They lived simply.
4. **Secular Institutes**: These people live in the world and sanctify the world from within
 5. **Personal Prelatures**: Opus Dei is an example of this.
 6. **Societies of Apostolic Life**: Live according to their rule of life without religious vows and pursue the apostolic purpose of their society.
 7. **Consecrated Virgins and Widows**: These are constituted to God by a bishop.

VIII. If the Church allowed priests to marry, would there be no more celibacy?:

- A. Yes there would.
- B. There would still be those called by God to give their whole hearts to Christ and live Consecrated life as celibate priests, religious brothers or religious sisters.

IX. Why is Consecrated Life an Eschatological Sign of the life to come?

- A. Jesus said that in heaven there will be no marriage. This is one reason why when you marry, you marry until death do you part. The marriage covenant is only for this life. If your spouse dies, you can remarry.
- B. Those who are living in Consecrated life are already living in the state in life that we all will live out in heaven. We will be sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters with one another. God will be all in all—our primary love and the center of everything.