

What's Wrong With Unmarried Celibate Catholic Priests?

Some food for thought about local church leadership for Catholics and non-Catholics alike



So WHAT is wrong with (or unbiblical about) the Catholic Church policy of having unmarried church leaders? Why do Catholic priests not meet some of the most important biblical criteria for church leaders? Well we need to start this study by looking at what the BIBLICAL criteria for church leadership includes:

“This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop[elder], he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the HUSBAND of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well HIS OWN HOUSE, having HIS CHILDREN in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” 1 Timothy 3:1-5

God wants His TRUE Church [which is NOT the Catholic Church] to choose leaders/elders based NOT primarily on academic qualifications but primarily on MORAL & FAMILY LEADERSHIP qualifications... observable achievements regarding how a man interacts with his own wife and children. Catholic priests have zero experience in the two roles in life that are the FOUNDATION FOR SOCIETY... being a godly husband and a godly father. No wonder so many Catholics priests end up as homosexual child predators. They don't even realize that as bachelors, they are renegades violating God's guidelines for church leaders.

When taken in context, the full passage in 1Timothy chapter 3 is outlining an entire list of attributes of a church leader/elder - not just being married and not just being a father - but raising one's CHILDREN well along with not being a drinker or a brawler or impatient or greedy. A leader is also to be vigilant (watchful of danger to the flock), sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality AND apt to teach, a LOT of which is to be teaching BY EXAMPLE. How in the world can a celibate Catholic priest teach others BY EXAMPLE about being a godly husband and father?

These leadership criteria mentioned by Paul in 1 Timothy are what are called **litmus tests** for *biblically qualified church leaders*. Nowhere in that passage (1 Timothy 3:1-5) is Paul saying that going to a Catholic seminary is a requirement. Nor is he mentioning anything about a sacrificial priesthood. Nor is he mentioning anything about celibacy. And you won't find any mention in the New Testament of church elders wearing special religious robes or any kind of clothing that is different from the rest of the local church. That was only a requirement of the Jewish priests, whose role was abolished at the cross of Christ, at which time the temple curtain was torn in half by a supernatural act of God, signifying that man could now interact directly with God, by way of the Holy Spirit.

“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” Mark 15:37-38

Paul repeats the same biblical requirements for church leaders in his letter to Titus as he outlined in his letter to Timothy:

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be **blameless**, the HUSBAND of one wife, having faithful CHILDREN not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

Titus 1:5-9

A church leader MUST be raised up from WITHIN the local congregation BY that congregation, in order to be able to make an ACCURATE determination as to whether or not a man has the qualifications and moral character outlined in Titus chapter 1 above. Who may I ask, has a greater stake in the selection of a church leader than the local congregation? NO ONE! A godly congregation will want a godly leader whom they have RAISED UP over time and whose life they have closely examined, to ensure that the shepherd of their local flock can be trusted to oversee their families, oversee the **spiritual** health of their families first and foremost. A PLURALITY of elders is another safeguard on the health of the local church but many churches both Catholic and Protestant (and others) omit this additional safeguard - probably because the leaders they have chosen want to get paid for their “services”, rather than have regular employment like everyone else. This brings up another problem with most local churches and their leaders... they think the leadership are supposed to “run the entire show” rather than delegate many things to other church members. By delegating various responsibilities to other members, you can start laying the foundation for raising up future leaders.

We can see that by ignoring clear instructions - from apostles - in the Bible, we end up with man-made ideas about church leaders, ideas that lead to extremely serious problems in the lives of those leaders and in the lives of

people who they have influence over. This does not mean that husbands and fathers are exempt from problems in their lives and the lives whom they shepherd in their local church. However, GODLY husbands and GODLY fathers - **who have been raised up from within the local church and whose lives have been scrutinized over time by the local church**, are a much safer choice for church leaders than someone hired off the street just because he has certain degrees or diplomas from “accredited” religious institutions. I will attest to the fact that Protestant churches and other non-Catholic churches have caused themselves serious problems by hiring “unknowns” based upon nothing more than a resume and a brief trial period. But throwing away most of the Biblical criteria for a church leader is a dangerous practice and a recipe for disaster for both the man in leadership and the local church he has oversight of.

I wish to conclude by saying that the Catholic Church doesn't even preach God's true BIBLICAL plan of salvation by the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, so it is no surprise that they don't follow the BIBLICAL plan for church leader selection. — *RM Kane*

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