

A Note from the Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

As I write these notes, it is being reported that Pope Francis has re-affirmed the church's practice of priestly celibacy. For the majority of the priests in the Church, celibacy has been a requirement for about 1000 years, give or take, but it has been part of Church life for many more centuries. While it is true that the first bishops and priests were not celibate (think of the gospel story of St. Peter's mother-in-law), it was Jesus himself who said. "Not all can accept [this], but only those to whom it is granted. 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. Whomever can accept this ought to accept it." Mt 19:11-12. It is true that some of the words included in this passage are not easily translated, but the Church has referred to this passage for centuries to explain the teaching about celibacy.

People should also know that even today, a small number of priests of the Latin Rite of the Church (to which 95% of us belong) are married. For example, priests who have been received into the Catholic Church from certain other Christian denominations have been ordained in the Catholic Church even though they are married. Also, Catholic priests of the Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church (like Byzantine Catholics) are allowed to marry. Therefore, it is clear that marriage for priests is not absolutely prohibited, but celibacy has been adopted as a good practice recommended by Jesus himself and was the way that Jesus lived during his life on Earth.

Priestly celibacy allows most priests to live their lives dedicated to the Lord and his people with singular devotion. As with every human way of life, there are those who may not live the life properly. However, celibacy is understood as a gift for the Church, even though it is a challenge and a sacrifice at times. If someone accepts celibacy and trusts in the Lord, Jesus will help his bishops and priests to follow his example for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Monsignor Giandurco". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.