



## **From a Bishop's Journal (611)**

### **For the Kingdom of God (8)**

**T**his year's Pentecost pastoral letter will not have gone unobserved: it have questioned and challenged more than one: What is this celibacy for the sake of the kingdom?

#### **A Path Drawn by God**

“If one looks at things the old-fashioned way, celibates are people who have never been married or separated. Today's singles are certainly more free to do good in society and to respond to the needs of those around them. Celibacy is a lifestyle equal to that of religious life or of marriage. The single person can be one of two ways, in society: he or she can be selfish, and live life with no concern for others. Or he or she can be more committed socially since there are no family obligations or commitments to a religious community. For some people, celibacy is a call of God, while for others, it is circumstantial. In my case, I see a call of the Lord who has used me to improve the life condition of several people, whether that has happened in the teaching profession or among the needy. In this path drawn by God, there are so many services to render, so many people to love and to serve. I think that in order to respond correctly to this call from God, one must feel well in oneself. The single person can witness to society by always having a special place for the Lord in all of life's situations, and in discovering him in every person met. The Lord uses our hearts and hands to carry his message and to give hope to those around us. Celibacy has a future, because people need to find, more than ever, an attentive and compassionate ear and concrete gestures of love of God and neighbour. I know several single people who gave their lives to care for aging parents or family members. These people never had the chance to develop their self-worth because they did not have the education, and they often died alone and penniless. Today, single people who have left their mark in our milieu are those who dedicate themselves to working at the diocesan or parish levels, in pastoral ministry, catechetics, in the Scout movement, with the elderly, the sick, etc. As a single person, I can assure you that this choice of life was, for me, an opening out, a gift of self, a way of serving parents and students and, by the fact itself, society as a whole. I think that I have always given my best, all my love and support to those around me, whether through Catholic Action, catechetics, parish pastoral ministry, Bible sharing, etc. The Lord has been with me throughout these years of celibacy, and this presence has

made my life easier and more intense. In those great quiet moments, I truly feel his presence in my daily existence. I hope to hear his message and respond to his calls for many years to come.” – Lucille

### **A Vital Role**

“Even though it is getting more and more difficult because of laxness and materialism, our world still needs people who live somewhat beyond themselves, and who witness to the values of self-sacrifice, whether at the sexual, moral, or intellectual levels. The world needs this kind of witness if it is to become aware of the different vocation options given us, both young and mature. The Creator diversified His work, and this gives it an infinite richness. Our world also needs people who are in a position to focus all their talents and energy to help others, the sick, the youth, the elderly, the home bound, the forgotten, and the needy. With the gradual disappearance of religious communities, the needs are more and more evident in schools, hospitals, retirement homes, homes for the handicapped, etc. Our world needs more than ever to have people totally dedicated to works of sharing, assistance, and care of others. Even in mission countries, lay people are joining the religious in their missionary work. By their availability of heart and spirit, single people are called to play an ever greater role in our society.” – Sylvie

### **A Call of God**

“My views on celibacy are mixed. I feel in my case it enables me to do more work for my family members and for my Church and Community. I'm not sure of what place it holds in the world today. I greatly admire those persons who can be celibate and do the work of God. As for its place in society, I'm sure it probably should be so. But unfortunately it seems to be less and less of a must. Celibacy is definitely a call of God, in my estimation. I love those members of my family who have entered the married state, and produced children, with God's help. These nieces, nephews and cousins are a great comfort to me. As for celibacy having a future, personally I'm afraid not, unless there are many changes in the way society thinks. There are certainly many single persons who are not members of religious communities, or priests who have left their mark. I have a single cousin, who is a retired nurse, she has left her mark in her love and dedication to all of the members of our family. As well as her own family and her Community.” – Anna

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