



**"Not all can accept this teaching, but only those to whom that is granted...Some, because they have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:11-12)**

#### **IV. Standing Outside the Cave Celibacy for the Kingdom**

Jesus introduces celibacy for the Kingdom (CTK) in discussion about marriage in Mt. 19, why?

Disciples, hearing that Jesus will not allow divorce, say that's too hard; they want to give up on marriage, find an easier way

Jesus says don't give up on marriage; marriage reflects the love of God, and marriage teaches us how to love like God

Jesus wants to find a way to inspire those who choose marriage to stay married, and He employs the strategy of "hierarchy of inspiration"

"Hierarchy of Inspiration"

We are inspired by others who live a more heroic, sacrificial life

    Firefighters of 9/11

    Blessed Mother Teresa

    Men and women in military

"Hierarchy of inspiration" operates where you see another who lives for a higher purpose, and endures greater sacrifices

We know that earthly experiences are "shadows" of heavenly things, even marriage

Most people in cave spend their life experiencing the shadow of marriage

But in order for those shadows accurately to reflect the love of the Trinity, people have to avoid divorce

    "For I hate divorce, says the Lord, God of Israel"  
    (Malachi, 2:16)

Those who choose CTK inspire those who are married to avoid divorce. How? They live a harder life, they make the difficulties of marriage more bearable

Have you ever wondered why priests and nuns don't marry?

What do you think when you see a celibate priest or a celibate nun; why do they choose that?

"There is no doubt that Christ issues his call to continence...[which is]...joined with the **will to participate in the redeeming work of Christ**" (*TOB*, 21 April 1982)

Those who choose CTK inspire those who are married to live the fullness of marriage, as a reflection of God's own love

How do celibates do that? By doing something harder than marriage: not having sex is harder than having sex, otherwise everyone would use NFP, and there would be no vocations shortage!

"Hierarchy of mediocrity"

Some young people are selfish, lazy and get into trouble.  
Why? Often, the example of their parents – next level in hierarchy – is mediocre, no higher purpose, no sacrifices  
Alert teachers can tell in 15 minutes which students come from stable, loving homes and which come from dysfunctional homes: "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree"

Hippies: "make love not war"

Bumper sticker: "We're spending our grandkids' inheritance"

Parents are mediocre and shun sacrifice because the example of parish priests – the next level of inspiration – is self-centered

"The mass exodus from the priesthood in the two decades following the Council – 46,000 priests abandoned their ministry around the world, the largest such defection since the sixteenth century Reformation – and the steep decline in U.S. seminary enrollment after the Council ended in December 1965 were the most obvious manifestations of this crisis of priestly identity" (*Courage to be Catholic*, 28)

Priests settle for mediocrity because their role models, nuns and monks, are self-centered and lack sacrifice

"[I]f someone were to regard with an unprejudiced mind the Church of today, and compare it with the Church of 1956, what would strike him?...Nuns who formerly even by their habits radiated a life completely consecrated to God, and withdrawn from all that is worldly, now confront us in make-up and miniskirts" (*The Devastated Vineyard*, 66)

Young people look to gangs for a "higher purpose" and "sacrifice"

If you want to change society, start from the top. Change the nuns and monks, who will inspire the priests, who will inspire the parents, who will inspire their children

Where I like to vacation

Jesus' point in Mt 19 requires understanding "hierarchy of inspiration"

Married couples who see priests and nuns living a harder life – living CTK – will be inspired to keep marriage vows, and not divorce

What do you see more at work in the Church today: the "hierarchy of inspiration" or the "hierarchy of mediocrity"?

Marriage and celibacy: two sides of same coin

Marriage and sex are half of the picture of God's love because such love is "**exclusive**," one husband loves one wife

Sex necessarily means exclusive love for one person: you cannot physically have sexual intercourse with more than one person at a time  
This exclusivity means that you make a self-gift to one other person, and as a result you choose NOT to love others in this special way

Polygamy is wrong: distortion of marriage,  
**God's exclusive love** for each person

CTK teaches us the other half of God's love: love that is "**inclusive**"

In CTK the lack of sex becomes the sign of the collective experience of God's love, God's love for a bunch of people

CTK does not express love in sexual intimacy, one's love is not "limited" to one other person, but remains "open" to all; it is **inclusive**

This inclusive, non-genital expression of love is an earthly experience of the "communion" we will share with others in heaven

"CTK" is the "communion of saints"

"We believe in the holy, Catholic church, **the communion of saints**, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting" (The Apostles' Creed)

"Christian celibacy gives those who live it authentically an even more intense 'foretaste' of the communion to come with God and with all the saints" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 71)

Sex in marriage and CTK reflect the two sides of God's love: marriage is shadow of God's "exclusive love" for each of us; CTK is shadow of God's "inclusive love" for all

CTK is **superior** to marriage

CTK is already enjoying heavenly "marriage with Jesus," while earthly marriage is "dating Jesus" (Isaac Antony)  
"In a sense, the celibate man or woman steps beyond

the dimensions of history – while living within the dimensions of history – and proclaims to the world that ‘the kingdom of God is here’; the ultimate marriage has come” (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 66)

Recall our broad definition of “sacrament” material portals through which heaven touches earth; in this sense, celibate bodies of priests and nuns are “sacramental”

I look and touch people carefully

“And a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years...came up behind [Jesus] and touched the tassel on his cloak. Immediately her bleeding stopped. Jesus then asked, ‘Who touched me?’...Peter said, ‘Master, the crowds are pushing and pressing in upon you.’ But Jesus said, ‘Someone has touched me; for I know that healing power has gone out from me’” (*Luke 9:43-46*)

CTK is superior to marriage because celibates enjoy now what everyone (hopefully!) will enjoy in heaven, namely, communion of saints or marriage to Jesus

CTK produces fruits

“Fr. John, you’re responsible for this baby!”

CTK produces spiritual offspring

“How does a priest ‘father’ the family of the Church? Think of the ways an ordinary dad fathers his natural children. Fathers give life. They nurture life. As breadwinners, they care for it. They instruct. They raise that life to maturity. In an analogous way, priests give life through baptism; they nourish their spiritual offspring through the Eucharist; they discipline through penance; they instruct through their preaching; they raise their congregations to full Christian maturity” (*Swear To God*, 53-54)

Non-Christians and fruitfulness of celibacy

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and his wife voluntarily chose to be celibate for the sake of peace in India

“Brahmacharya” (*Gandhi*, 109)

Dag Hammerskjöld (1905-1961), Secretary-General of the UN, was celibate for the sake of world peace

For him who has responded to the call of the Way of Possibility, loneliness may be obligatory. Such loneliness it is true, may lead to a **communion closer and deeper than any achieved by the union of two bodies**” (*Markings*, 120)

Fruit of celibacy – appreciated by non-Christians – is union among people

Inclusive love of celibacy brings about the “spiritual union” of men and women

“Christ’s words (Mt. 19:11-12)...lead man toward...a new

and fuller form of intersubjective communion with others...When he chooses continence for the kingdom of heaven, man has the awareness that in this way he can realize himself 'differently,' and in some sense 'more' than in marriage, by becoming 'a sincere gift for **others**'" (*Gaudium et spes*, 24:3) (*TOB*, 7 April 1982)

Celibacy causes closer union of spouses

"NFP...has no bad social consequences (in fact, wonderful ones – there's a non-existent divorce rate among couples using Natural Family Planning)" (Janet Smith, "Contraception, Why Not?"

"Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder"

Conclusion: personal story of choosing celibacy

I chose celibacy to "do something hard for Jesus", but He has used that desire, that sacrifice, to help others, particularly married couples

My choice of CTK affects my family

My choice of CTK affects you

In both sex in marriage and celibacy for the kingdom we experience one side of God's love, and share it with the world

May we inspire each other to be a true reflection of the Love of the Holy Trinity