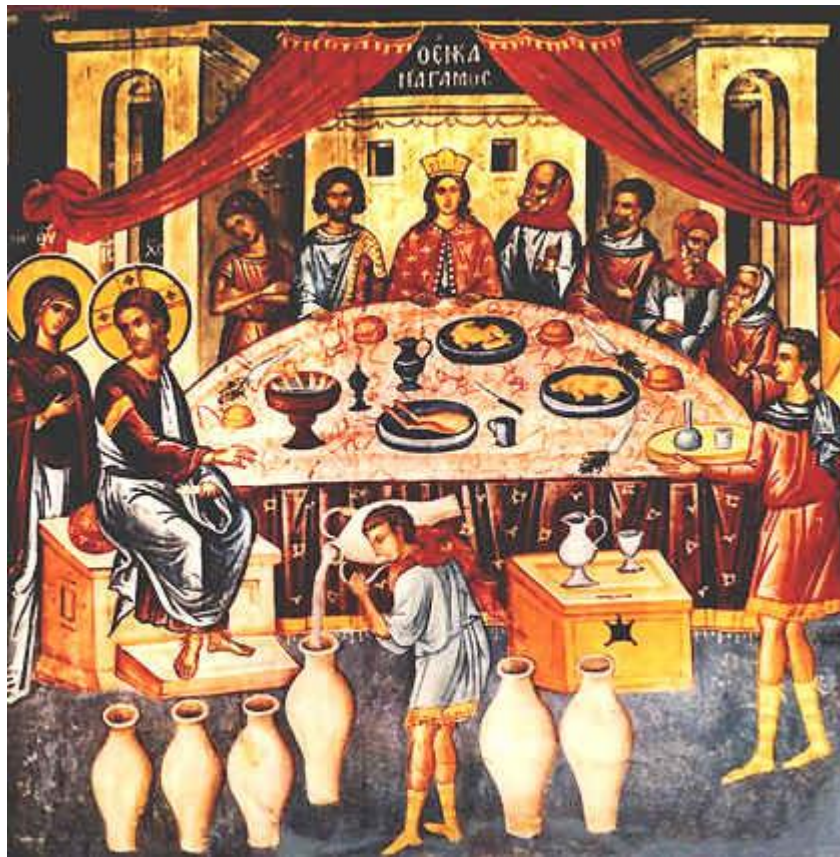


## ORDINATION OF MARRIED MEN IN THE EASTERN CHURCH



MARRIAGE FEAST AT CANA

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, an authoritative compilation of the Church's doctrine issued in 1992, recognizes that the practice of ordaining married men has long been considered legitimate in the Eastern Churches and that married priests exercise a fruitful ministry within their communities. (1) At the same time, priestly celibacy is also very honored in the Eastern Churches. Fr. David M. Petras, SEOD considers the priesthood and celibacy as two separate callings and that celibacy is not superior "to the call a couple may receive to the sacramental mystery of marriage." (2) The practice of having a majority of clergy who were married and some who were celibate existed from the early days of the Church. The two disciplines, which should co-exist in harmony, have often been in tension. The marriage of clerics was practiced from the days of the primitive church. (3). The Gospels emphasize the value of both celibacy and marriage as a means of serving God in the Christian life. Christ is the prime example of celibacy. On the other hand in the defense of marriage, we have the examples of Christ's sanctifying matrimony at the wedding feast in Cana and of Peter and the brethren of Christ who were married. The Lord's teaching is that celibacy is a state of eschatological beatitude, that there is no marriage in heaven. If celibacy is undertaken, it must be assumed freely for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19.12, 19). However, the Lord himself pointed out that not all can accept this teaching (Matthew 19.11-12).

The epistles reflect the Early Church's experience of marriage. Paul, stressing celibacy as a more perfect state (1 Corinthians 7: 26-35), nevertheless did not undervalue marriage and gave abundant advice to married Christians. Paul's teaching is not regarded as a universal law, but as a counsel regarding a particular charism. The pastoral epistles provide clear evidence that the Pauline churches were ruled by married bishops, presbyters and deacons. In setting down the duties of the married clergy, Paul stipulated that a bishop should be married, but only once, and that he should rule well his own household, keeping his children in order and respectful.

During the patristic age, clerical marriage was permitted before ordination and a cleric could have only one wife. Clement of Alexandria, (c. 150-215) commenting on the Pauline texts, emphasized that marriage, if properly used, is a way of salvation for all: priests, deacons and laymen (curiously he did not mention bishops). In both the Apostolic Canons (2nd-3rd centuries) and the Apostolic Constitutions (c. 400) celibacy was not compulsory. A bishop or priest who left his wife "under pretense of piety" was to be excommunicated. New tendencies at the beginning of the 4th century tried to prohibit clerical marriage while individual choice in the matter had been the rule up to this time. At the first Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.) Spanish bishop Ossius of Cordoba wanted the Council to decree celibacy as a requirement for ordination throughout the universal church, but Egyptian bishop Paphnutios (see APPENDIX below) protested that such a rule would be difficult and imprudent and that celibacy should be a matter of vocation and personal choice. The Council endorsed Paphnutios's position. A few scholars today call into question St. Paphnutios's intervention at the Council considering his role to be a legend. (4)

During the 4th century in the Eastern Church the growing influence of monasticism and Neoplatonism with their emphasis on the practice of celibacy led to a need for ecclesiastical legislation to govern the marriage of the clergy. Laws followed regional custom with the Eastern practice being more liberal than the West's. The Eastern practice was codified by the Emperors Theodosius II and Justinian I. Marriage was not permitted for candidates to the episcopacy. Deacons and priests continued to be allowed to marry provided it was before ordination, but marriage was not permitted after ordination. Soon after the 5th century under the influence of monastic life and economic conditions celibates were preferred for the episcopacy. Requiring the celibacy of a bishop would avoid confusing the bishop's personal holdings and those of the church and avoided problems in leaving a legacy to children. However, until the 12th century there were examples of Eastern bishops who were married.

The Trullan Synod (692 A.D.), also known as the Quinisext, determined that bishops should not be married, but marriage was permitted for deacons and priests before ordination. No marriage was allowed after ordination. A priest or a deacon could not renounce his wife on the pretense of piety, but sexual relations were prohibited prior to celebrating the liturgy, which usually meant the Sunday observance.

Celibacy became a canonical obligation for the clergy in the West by the actions of popes and regional councils. About the year 300, a local council held at Elvira in southern Spain

made continence a requirement for all its clergy. Despite Ossius' lack of success at Nicaea, as noted above, obligatory celibacy was extended to the Western Church in the second half of the 4th century. Arguments urging celibacy were enumerated in the first letter of Damasus I, pope from 366-384: only a celibate cleric could properly advise widows and virgins, certain scriptural texts require celibacy (cf. Rom 8.9, 1Cor 7.29; Rom 13.14; I Cor 7.7), marital acts were repugnant to the sacred offices, and Saint Paul even counseled abstinence for married couples (I Cor 7.5) It was, however, not until the 12th century that the discipline of celibacy would be imposed definitively and universally in the Western Church when the First and Second Lateran Councils of 1123 and 1139 respectively declared clerical marriages not only illicit, but invalid. The imposition of mandatory celibacy in the Western Church would eventually several centuries later have an important effect on the Eastern Catholic Churches in North America when faithful from those churches began arriving in the United States in the last decades of the 19th century.

After the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches in 1054, the Orthodox discipline on marriage and celibacy continued as it had been observed in the undivided Church. Fr. Nicon D. Patrinos succinctly describes the Orthodox position: "celibacy is not compulsory in the Orthodox Church, but bishops are elected only from celibates. Marriage is allowed for deacons and priests but only before ordination. The sacrament of marriage cannot follow the sacrament of priesthood. But from the dogmatic viewpoint there is no evidence either in the thought or in the practice of the Orthodox Church that ordination is a superior sacrament to that of matrimony. " (6)

Toward the end of the 16th century and during the first half of the 17th century, two Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe united themselves with Rome with the unions of Brest-Litovsk and of Uzhhorod. The Union of Brest took place in 1596 among the Orthodox inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which included the palatinate of Rus' (Galicia) and the Lemko Region west of the San River. Almost a century later the Union was finally accepted by the Orthodox Eparchy of Przemyśl/Peremyshl (1692), under whose jurisdiction lay Byzantine-rite churches in the Lemko Region. (7) Before and after these unions with Rome took place both the Church in Ukraine and that in Subcarpathian Rus followed Orthodox practice regarding a married clergy.

The Union of Brest, according to Michael Lacko, S.J., indirectly became the occasion and the model for the second union, that of Uzhhorod. (8) In Uzhhorod on April 26, 1646 Orthodox Bishop Parfenii Petrovych and several priests signed a document that came to be known as the Union of Uzhhorod whose terms stipulated that the Uniate Church in Hungary would retain its Byzantine rite and liturgical traditions, its bishops would be elected by a council composed of Basilian monks and eparchial clergy and the election would be confirmed by the Pope in Rome. The Uniate priests would enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to Roman Catholic clergy (9) In actuality, the Text is a copy of a letter dated 1552 and appended to a Report that the Bishop of Eger, Charles Esterhazy, sent to Pope Clement XIII on March 31, 1767. (10) Three conditions for union with the Roman See were set forth in the 1552 letter. The conditions do not specifically mention

the right of having a married clergy unless that idea is included in the first condition which states: "That it be permitted to us to retain the rite of the Greek Church". Lacko, however, in his analysis of the 1552 letter, believes the first condition concerns the Liturgy. (11).

The situation regarding a married clergy in the European homelands from which Byzantine Catholics (at that time known in the United States as Greek Catholics) emigrated to North America shows that the majority were married and held positions in the parishes while celibate secular priests and widowed priests were destined to be bishops, occupied benefices of cathedral canons and taught in schools of higher learning. (12)

The immigration of Greek Catholics to North America began in the 1880's. The priests arriving from Europe to attend to the spiritual needs of their people were mostly married. Their reception by Latin Rite bishops and clergy ranged from toleration to outright rejection. The prime example of such treatment is the case of Father Alexis Toth, a widowed priest from the Eparchy of Presov who was sent as a missionary priest to the United States in 1889. (13) Archbishop John Ireland of Minneapolis refused Father Toth permission to function as a pastor to his people at St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church in Minneapolis, so Father Toth sought to come under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox bishop of San Francisco. The newly accepted Orthodox priest then undertook a zealous mission "to bring back to Orthodoxy" the many Greek Catholic faithful living in the United States. He was so successful that, it is believed, at one time eighty to ninety percent of the members of the Orthodox Church in America were former Greek Catholics or their descendants.

Rules governing the transfer of married priests to territories where their own rite is not native (for example, the Byzantine Rite was not native to North America in the 19th century) were set forth in the letter of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith of May 2, 1890 to the Archbishop of Paris (*Acta Sanctae Sedis*, vol. 1891/92, p.390). These rules were applied to the United States by a decree of the same Vatican Congregation on May 1, 1897 (*Collectanea*, n. 1966). It was stipulated that only celibates or widowed priests, if they came without their children, could come to the United States. Chapter II, Article 12 of the decree *Cum data fuerit* of March 1, 1929 stated: "In the meantime, as has already several times been provided, priests of the Greek-Ruthenian rite, who wish to go to the United States of North America and stay there, must be celibates. (14)

Bishop Basil Takach was appointed bishop of the Ruthenians in the United States in 1925. At first he would request special permission from the Holy See to ordain a few married candidates who were already preparing for the priesthood. Eventually, Bishop Takach refused to ordain married candidates and justified his position by affirming that this had always been the law of the Catholic Church on the North American continent. Although this was rejected by his adversaries, he was apparently right, from a purely legal standpoint." (15)

In 1930 Bishop Basil Takach submitted the question of ordaining married men to Rome for a solution. The reply from the Roman Curia in 1934, four years after Bishop Takach's original request and when the Johnstown schism was well underway. The response from the Sacred Oriental Congregation was in a letter from Cardinal Sincero to the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, the Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, on July 23, 1934 and then forwarded to Bishop Takach. (16) The letter recognized the "grave agitations and deplorable rebellions" in the Greek Catholic Church in the United States "motivated by the pretext that this Sacred Congregation had threatened the rights and privileges of the Ruthenian Church." Rome's consent to a married clergy is reiterated: "By it, nothing has been modified or changed in that particular Ruthenian ecclesiastical discipline, to which, in so far as it concerns the privilege of a married clergy, the Holy See has consented, and still does consent." Furthermore, the letter also explains the reason for the prohibition of married priests in the United States: "The regulation arose not new, but anew, from the peculiar conditions of the Ruthenian population in the United States of America. There it represents an immigrant element and a minority, and it could not, therefore, pretend to maintain there its own customs and traditions which are in contrast with those which are the legitimate customs and traditions of Catholicism in the United States, and much less to have there a clergy which could be a source of painful perplexity or scandal to the majority of American Catholics." Cardinal Sincero goes on to say that Rome recognized and guaranteed the ritual traditions of the Ruthenians but that Rome cannot affirm the application of the Ruthenians' particular canonical discipline "at all times and places."

Bishop Takach passed Cardinal Sincero's letter on to his clergy ordering them not to reveal its contents to the faithful. In a letter to his priests the Bishop stated that celibacy "is no longer a debatable question." "Cum data fuerit" was renewed in 1939 for ten years; however, by 1949, Pope Pius XII already had in place a commission for the revision of the Latin Code and a commission to produce the code for the Eastern Churches. "Cum data fuerit" was never renewed after 1949. The celibacy controversy of the 1930's resulted in the establishment of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of America by some 100, 000 former Byzantine Catholics under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. A widowed Byzantine Catholic priest, Father Orestes Chornock, was consecrated the first bishop and later made a metropolitan. (17)

During the same period of the celibacy struggle, the ordinary of the Ukrainian jurisdiction, Bishop Constantine Bohachevsky never ordained married candidates. Several priests left the Ukrainian jurisdiction, married, and were founders of the two Ukrainian Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States, one under the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the other attached to the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church under Metropolitan John Theodorovich. Similar events took place in Canada. (18)

Now after some 70 odd years have passed since the celibacy struggle we arrive at the question what is the situation of married priests in today's Catholic Church, both Eastern and Western branches. The Roman Catholic Church's current position on marriage and celibacy of the clergy is succinctly stated in this paragraph from the New Catholic Encyclopedia : "The common opinion today may be summed up as follows: clerical

celibacy is considered most proper to the sacerdotal ministry; it is in no sense a depreciation of marriage, but is the condition for greater freedom in the service of God. The law of celibacy is of ecclesiastical origin and may therefore be abrogated by the Church. In the early Church and in the East the marriage of bishops, priests, and deacons was permitted for good reason. Recent popes have found similarly good reason to dispense from celibacy in the case of married Protestant pastors who converted and desired ordination. Vatican Council II, at the request of the bishops from many countries, permitted a married diaconate, admitting married men of mature years." (19)

The Second Vatican Council welcomed the Eastern tradition of married priests when it stated in the Decree Concerning the Ministry and Life of the Priest that "Celibacy is not required by the priesthood itself, as is evident in the practices of the early Church, and in the tradition of the Eastern Churches" (No. 16 of the Decree Concerning the Ministry and Life of the Priest). Giant steps forward in the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward recognizing and honoring the practice of a married clergy in the Eastern Churches occurred in the decade of the 90's. Two documents, in particular, are significant for the Byzantine Catholic Metropolia in the United States, namely the promulgation of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches by John Paul II on Oct. 18, 1990 and the promulgation of the Particular Law for the Metropolia of Pittsburgh in 1999. (20)

The crucial statement in the Eastern Code regarding a married clergy is Canon 373, which declares: "the state of married clerics, sanctioned in the practice of the primitive Church and in the Eastern Churches through the ages, is to be held in honor." (21) This positive attitude is buttressed by the existence of various canons pertaining to married clerics. Before a man can be ordained, he must present to his bishop written consent from his wife (Canon 769, Article 1.2). Some canons govern the conduct of married clerics, for example Canon 375 "Married clerics are to offer an outstanding example to other Christian faithful in conducting family life and in educating children." For a presbyter to be named a pastor, Canon 285, Article 2 stipulates "If the presbyter is married, good morals are required in his wife and children who live with him." Material support for the married priest and his family is stressed in two articles of Canon 390. Article 1 reads: "Clerics have the right to suitable support and to receive a just remuneration for carrying out the office or function committed to them; in the case of married clerics, remuneration must be adequate for the support of their families, unless this has been otherwise sufficiently provided." Article 2 of the same canon goes into specifics: "They also have the right that there be provided for themselves as well as their families, if they are married, suitable pension funds, social security as well as health benefits. In order for this right to be put into practice effectively, clerics are obliged on their part to contribute to the fund mentioned in can. 1021, art. 2 in accord with the norm of the particular law."

In addition to upholding the practice of a married clergy the Eastern Code of Canon Law respects the traditional eastern discipline that bishops are not to be married. Among the requirements listed in Canon 180 for a person to be considered suitable for elevation to the episcopacy, the third requirement stipulates that he must "not be bound by a marriage bond." Furthermore, this rule is reinforced in Canon 227, Article 2: "To be elected or

appointed validly to the office of administrator of the eparchy, one should be a bishop or a presbyter who is not bound by the bond of matrimony."

We now turn our attention to the implementation of the Eastern Code's laws regarding the clergy and marriage today in various metropolia of the Eastern Churches. One of Metropolitan Judson Procyk's cherished goals was restoring ancient Eastern traditions in the United States, where Byzantine Churches had undergone Westernization. He produced the Particular Law for his own Church. Initially, the Vatican balked at approving the code because one of its 50 laws allowed for the ordination of married deacons to the priesthood. (22) In October of 1999, the Particular Law for the Byzantine Catholic Church in the United States was promulgated by the Council of Hierarchs of the Pittsburgh Metropolia with Rome's approval. One of its norms provides for the ordination of married men with a dispensation to be obtained from Rome on a case by case basis. The Pittsburgh Metropolia's Particular Law reads: "Concerning the admission of married men to the order of the presbyterate, the special norms issued by the Apostolic See are to be observed, unless dispensations are granted by the same See in individual cases."

There has been only one ordination of a married man to the priesthood in the Pittsburgh Metropolia since the promulgation of the Particular Law. On February 12, 2006 Bishop John Kudrick, Eparch of Parma, OH, Metropolia of Pittsburgh, PA ordained married deacon, Joseph Marquis, to the priesthood at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. See <http://www.parma.org/stories.htm>

There indeed have been ordinations by the Ukrainians, Melkites and Romanians in the United States over the last two to three years, but they have been accomplished with little fanfare to avoid attention. Among the Ukrainians in the 1980's and 1990's some American married men were sent to Ukraine to be ordained, then, after a short period of time, they would return to the United States. (23) Among the Ukrainians in Canada, Bishop Yakymyshyn recently ordained a married candidate for service in the Eparchy of New Westminster. There have been a number of such other ordinations in the Archeparchy of Winnipeg by Bishop Bzdel." (24)

The Melkite Church in the United States declared in the early 1970's its desire to put into practice in the United States the traditional Melkite discipline regarding the ordination of married men. This is the resolution approved at the 13th Annual Melkite Convention in Boston on July 3, 1972:

Paragraph V "In reference to the discipline of the clergy, we declare that our tradition allows the ordination of both celibate and married men to the priesthood and is the same in the United States as it is throughout the Melkite Church. We affirm the declaration of our Patriarchal Synod that the charisma of celibacy and the celibate priesthood continue to be held in the highest esteem. We look forward, in the near future, to the uninhibited practice of our proper discipline in this country in accordance with Vatican II's Decree on the Eastern Churches, which states that the Eastern Catholic Churches are 'to take pains to return to their ancestral ways, if they have improperly fallen away from them because

of time or personage.'  
(Par. 6)." (25)

In the previous year, 1971, the Holy Synod of the Greek-Melkite Catholic Church at its annual meeting in Ain-Traz, Lebanon, attempted to clarify the relationship between the priesthood and celibacy and marriage. The Synod stated in point 9 of its "Official Teaching": "As regards the question concerning the connection between celibacy and the priesthood, the experience of our Church confirms, as we have already stated, that there is no intrinsic connection between celibacy and the priesthood; the two are distinct charisms. Celibacy, together with the priesthood, is a special way of bearing witness in the Church." (26) The Synod took great pains in its "Official Teaching" to show the advantages of both married and celibate priests and the need for both in today's Melkite Church.

In Europe today, the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia has been ordaining married men to the priesthood as has been its custom since its origins. This discipline was never voided, even though there was at times a strong tendency to latinization in that region when some Latin hierarchs or strongly latinized Byzantines wanted to impose celibacy in the Greek Catholic Church. (27)

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church on the territory of Ukraine ordains to the priesthood candidates who are married, and has never stopped, even during the underground period from 1946 to 1989. (28) There had been an attempt to change the traditional discipline for a short period after World War I in Galicia (Western Ukraine). The three bishops there-Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky of Lviv, Bishop Josaphat Kotsylovski of Peremyshl and Bishop Gregory Khomyshyn of Stanislaviv-decided to admit to seminaries only candidates who were willing to accept ordination as celibates. However, due to a shortage of suitable candidates, Metropolitan Andrew soon reversed his decision and began to accept candidates who would marry before ordination. The eparchies of Peremyshl and Stanislaviv also could not attract a sufficient number of celibate seminarians. Later, Metropolitan Andrew's successor, Metropolitan Joseph Slipy preferred ordaining celibate candidates. Towards the end of World War II some of the older, married Galician priests fled with their families from the Communists and went to Western Europe and eventually to North America. (29)

Below we offer graphics of a different sort of imagery - not icons in the Byzantine style, but images in human form, people created in the image and likeness of God whose lives find no inherent incompatibility between marriage/family and the priesthood. The first five photographs are of the Szekely family of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Presov in Slovakia where the ordination of married men has never been called into question. The Szekely family represents three generations of priests whose ministries span several decades of war, communism and liberation. In addition we offer our readers a sixth photograph from an album of the Matejovsky family of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Kosice.



The photographs of the Szekely family are courtesy of Patrik Szekely. The photograph of the Matejovsky family is courtesy of Andrej Skoviera. All photographs are published with knowledge and permission of the subject families.



Photograph 1 - Gabriel Szekely, his bride, Eva, his mother, Alzbeta (l), his father, Fr. Metod (m), and his mother-in-law, Helena (r) at his wedding on April 20, 1974.



Photograph 2 - Gabriel Szekely (second from left) at his ordination to the priesthood on June 9, 1974 by Bishop Basil Hopko of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Presov in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.



Photograph 3 - Laying-on of the hands by Bishop Basil Hopko - ordination of Gabriel Szekely.



Photograph 4 - Fr. Gabriel Szekely, his wife Eva and their three children, Gabriela (l), Pavol (m), and Patrik (r) in 1980.



Photograph 5 - Fr. Gabriel Szekely (r), his father, Fr. Metod Szekely (m), and his grandfather, Fr. Michal Szekely (l) taken in 1974 - three generations of priests.



Photograph 6 - Baptism of Anna Maria, daughter of Fr. Jozef Matejovsky (r) & his wife, Anna, by Bishop Milan Chatur of

## DISCLAIMER

This page, with the exception of the APPENDIX, was researched and written by Dr. James Murray, Professor Emeritus, Georgia State University. The APPENDIX was researched and written by R. L. Schwind. The authors are solely responsible for its contents and for all opinions, inferences or conclusions contained therein.

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## FOOTNOTES

- 1) Paragraph 1580 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Available on Internet at [www.christusrex.org](http://www.christusrex.org).
- 2) Fr. David M. Petras, SEOD, "Celibacy Revisited," Eastern Catholic Life, May 26, 2002, p.3.
- 3) This section of the article on the history of celibacy and marriage of the clergy is based on P. Delhaye, "History of Clerical Celibacy." New Catholic Encyclopedia. 2nd ed. Vol. 3: pp. 322-328. Detroit: Gale, 2003.
- 4) Stephen Heid surveys the Paphnutios question on pp. 15-19 of his book, *Celibacy In The Early Church: The Beginnings Of A Discipline Of Obligatory Continence For Clerics In East And West*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000. Friedheim Winkelmann, a Byzantine specialist in the former East Sector of Berlin, is credited with "unmasking" the story about St. Paphnutios in 1968. His hypothesis was used by the Jesuit, Christian Cochini (1981) and the Ukrainian Catholic priest, Roman Cholij, (1989) in their books supporting the thesis that celibacy for unmarried clerics and continence for married clerics was purportedly obligatory in the Church from earliest days. C. Cochini, *Apostolic Origins of Priestly Celibacy*. San Francisco, 1990. R. Cholij, *Clerical Celibacy In East And West*. Herefordshire, 1989. See [footnote 1](#) in Appendix below.
- 6) Nicon D. Patrinos "Celibacy" in Nicon D. Patrinos, *Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*. Pleasantville, NY: Hellenic Heritage Publications, 1987, p. 76. The issue of marriage after ordination to the diaconate-in some cases, to the subdiaconate-is severely censured by the Orthodox, despite occasional attempts to circumvent the discipline. As a case in point, see Joseph J. Allen, *Vested in Grace: Priesthood and Marriage in the Christian East*. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001, which contains a collection of articles by Orthodox theologians who address the question of the priesthood and marriage in the Christian East, especially the remarriage of the clergy, from historical, canonical, and pastoral perspectives. We recommend this book to our readers.

- 7) Paul Robert Magocsi and Ivan Pop. "Unia/Church Union." *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture*. Eds. Paul Robert Magocsi and Ivan Pop. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002. pp. 480-482.
- 8) Michael Lacko, S.J. *The Union of Uzhorod*. Cleveland and Rome: Slovak Institute, 1966. p. 45
- 9) Lacko gives an English version of the text of the Union of Uzhhorod in his study on pp. 107-109.
- 10) Lacko, p. 106.
- 11) Lacko, p. 113. The section of the 1552 letter pertaining to the conditions of union with Rome: "We believe all and everything that our Holy Mother the Roman Church bids us believe. We acknowledge that the most holy Father Innocent X is the Universal Pastor of the Church of Christ and our Pastor, and we with our successors desire and wish to depend on him in everything; with, however, the addition of these conditions: First: That it be permitted to us to retain the rite of the Greek Church; Second: To have a bishop elected by ourselves and confirmed by the [Roman] Apostolic See; Third: To have the free enjoyment of ecclesiastical immunities." (Lacko, p. 108).
- 12) Victor J. Popishil, "Clerical Celibacy in the Eastern Rite Catholic Dioceses of the United States and Canada." *Diakonia* 2.2 (1967): p. 138.
- 13) See the article on Alexis Toth in Magocsi, *Encyclopedia*, p. 463.
- 14) An English version of the decree is found in Walter C. Warzeski, *Byzantine Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America*. Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1971, pp. 275-281.
- 15) This is Popishil's opinion expressed in his article "Clerical Celibacy", p. 142.
- 16) An English translation of Cardinal Sincero's letter is given in Popishil, "Clerical Celibacy", on pp. 143-147.
- 17) See Richard Renoff's article, "Community and Nationalism in the Carpatho-Russian Celibacy Schism: Some Sociological Hypotheses." *Diakonia* 6.1 (1971): p. 58-68, for an exploration of the influence of Russophilism, the rivalry between clergy trained at the seminary in Presov and those trained in Uzhhorod and other elements on being the catalysts along with the issue of celibacy for the split between Byzantine Catholics and Carpatho-Russian Orthodox faithful.  
For the history and background of the celibacy controversy from a Catholic point of view see Walter C. Warzeski, who discusses the celibacy controversy of the 1930's in chapters 12 and 13 of his book *Byzantine Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America*, Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1971, and *Opportunity Realized: The Greek Catholic Union's First One Hundred Years, 1892-1992*. Beaver, PA: 1994. For the

perspective on events from the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox side, see Lawrence Barriger's books *Good Victory: Metropolitan Orestes Chornock and the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese*. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1985.

18) Popishil, "Clerical Celibacy", p. 141.

19) Vol. 3, p. 328. Is not the ordination of formerly heretical Anglican and Lutheran married ministers to the priesthood while denying this sacrament to Roman Catholic married men a curious anomaly?

20) See the article "Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches" by J. Abbas in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 2nd ed. Vol. 3: 817-820. Detroit: Gale, 2003 for information on the origins and background, the scope, contents and relationship of the Eastern Code to the Latin *Corpus Iuris Canonici*.

21) All quotes from the Eastern canon law are from the edition *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches. New English Translation*. Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 2001.

22) Reported by Ann Rodgers-Melnick for *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 25; in *Eastern Churches Journal* 8.1 (2001): p. 328.

23) From April 8, 2003 e-mail to Robert L. Schwind from Matthew Matuszak, Director of Religious Information Service of Ukraine.

24) From e-mail sent to R. L. Schwind from Adrian Kopystynski, Finance Committee-Communications, Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster, Canada, 10-3-02. Under the heading "Vatican stops suspending married men ordained for Eastern churches" on the website [www.3saints.com](http://www.3saints.com) for May 27, 2003 we read the following: "http://www.catholicnews.com-VATICAN CITY, 23/05/2003-Despite a rule the Vatican insists is still in force, it has stopped suspending married men ordained to the priesthood for service in the Eastern Catholic churches of North America and Australia. In fact, the ordinations are occurring regularly, although they are not great in number and they are celebrated quietly. 'Rome will allow the ordinations, but it does not want a bishop to ordain married men, then splash pictures all over the place,' said a professor familiar with the ongoing debate. Father Kenneth Nowakowski, rector of Holy Spirit Seminary in Ottawa and spokesman for the Ukrainian bishops of Canada, said the Ukrainian bishop of Saskatoon 'is the only current ordinary who has not ordained a married man to the priesthood' for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada. When asked if the married priests had been suspended, as was often done through the 1990s, he replied, 'not that I am aware of.'" We are advised by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Canada that, as of March 2009, about 52% of the priests in the archeparchy are married men and that this percentage will increase.

25) The text of the resolution may be found in *Diakonia* 7.4 (1972): p. 398.

26) "Official Teaching of the Greek-Melkite Catholic Church Concerning the Priesthood, Celibacy and Marriage," August 23, 1971, signed by Maximos V Hakim, Patriarch of Antioch and of All the East, of Alexandria and Jerusalem. English text in *Diakonia* 6.4 (1971): pp. 382-384.

27) From July 23, 2002 e-mail to Robert L. Schwind from Andrej Skoviera, from Spravca, [www.grkat.nfo.sk](http://www.grkat.nfo.sk).

28) E-mail to Robert L. Schwind, April 8, 2003, from Matthew Matuszak, Director, Religious Information Service of Ukraine. Similar information was supplied by Rev. Rafail Turkoniak in a August 23, 2002 e-mail.

29) Victor J. Popishil, "Clerical Celibacy", p. 138.

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#### **For Further Reading**

In addition to exploring the works cited in the References, the interested reader may find the following books and articles to be of help.

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## APPENDIX

### ST. PAPHNUTIOS OF EGYPT, HIEROMARTYR PATRON SAINT OF MARRIED PRIESTS & DEACONS



ST. PAPHNUTIOS OF EGYPT, HIEROMARTYR (2)

St. Paphnutios of Egypt, sometimes called "the Great" to distinguish him from others of the same name, was born about the year 280 AD. In his early youth he became a monk and disciple of St. Anthony, abbot and father of the cenobites, monks who chose to live in monastic communities. He was consecrated bishop of Upper Thebaid in the Upper Nile River Valley, home to Egyptian monasticism and of many of the Desert Fathers. During the rule of Emperor Maximinus Daza (308 - 313), the persecution of Christians intensified. Paphnutios was tortured; his right eye was removed and the tendons of one

leg at the knee were severed, whereupon he was condemned to the mines. When Constantine assumed the imperial purple and made Christianity the religion of the Empire, Paphnutios was released. He turned his attention to the growing controversy occasioned by the heretic Arius who taught that the Son was less than (not co-equal with) the Father as held in the orthodox trinitarian formulation.

As a representative of the Church of Alexandria Paphnutios participated in the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD). At the Council he was honored as a martyr by the Council Fathers and by Emperor Constantine. One of the items on the agenda of the Council was the proposal of certain representatives of the Church of Rome led by Hosius to impose on all ranks of the clergy - bishops, presbyters, and deacons - the requirement that they be celibate in line with canon 33 of the Spanish Council of Elvira. The proposal failed largely due to the efforts of Paphnutios who argued that celibacy is too heavy a burden to impose on the clergy, that marriage and conjugal relations are in and of themselves honorable (sacramental) and undefiled, and that the Universal Church ought not to be harmed by such an extreme discipline, for all could not live in absolute continence. The Council Fathers agreed with Paphnutios that it would be sufficient according to ancient tradition as illustrated in 1 Tim.3, 12; Titus1, 5-6; 1 Tim. 3,2-3 to prohibit a clergyman from taking a wife after but not before, ordination. In short, marriage was not to be a bar to subsequent ordination. With the exception of bishops who under later canons had to be celibate, the decision of Nicaea remains the rule in the Eastern Church, Catholic and Orthodox, with the exception that the Eastern Catholic Churches in North America were prohibited after 1929 from ordaining married men to the priesthood and bringing married priests in from abroad.

For his contribution and in recognition thereof, St. Paphnutios of Egypt, Hieromartyr, may rightly be called the patron saint of married priests and deacons in the Eastern Church. He is honored on April 19 in the Byzantine Synaxarion and on September 11 in the Roman Martyrology.

The information contained above was derived substantially from the following:

1. The Catholic Encyclopedia & The New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2nd ed
2. A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy by Fr. Nicon Patrinos
3. Coptic Egypt, The Christians Of The Nile by Christian Cannuyer; ISBN: 0810929791
4. The Story Of The Church Of Egypt by E. L. Butcher, London, 1897
5. The Coptic Encyclopedia edited by Aziz S. Atiya, ISBN: 002897025-X

## **TROPARION**

As a priest thou didst offer the Holy Sacrifice, and as a martyr thou was thyself a burnt offering. O Hieromartyr Paphnutios, God's steadfast athlete and treasury of grace, bestow grace on us

who praise thee.

## KONTAKION

Thou didst redden thy priestly vesture in the streams of thy blood and run joyfully to the heavenly tabernacle, O blessed Paphnutios, and cry out to the Savior. Thou art the Fountain of Life, pouring compassion on us all.



FATHERS OF THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

## DEDICATION

We dedicate this page as a continuing prayer for the spiritual welfare of all married priests and deacons and also of George of distant memory.

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### FOOTNOTES:

1) In our opinion the above page represents the view of the life and works of St. Paphnutios of Egypt as understood and supported by the traditions of the Eastern, Western and Coptic Churches. We are aware that there are a few who do not share this opinion, who assert that St. Paphnutios is a fabrication, i. e. never existed or never participated in the deliberations of the Council of Nicaea in the above described manner. With that viewpoint we disagree. Hagiography is not historiography. Its purpose is didactic, not biographical. Whether or not our above account of the life and mission of St. Paphnutios is historically accurate in all its details is irrelevant. What matters is that the account conforms to the Church's traditional knowledge of him. Even more important is the message that the story conveys. Our saint tells us down through the ages that celibacy should be voluntary and not imposed as a burden on the clergy. This is his message and the tradition of the Eastern Church from Apostolic times to the present and that is why we have designated St. Paphnutios as patron saint of married priests and deacons. See [footnote 4](#) above.

2) The icon of St. Paphnutios was written by Greek Orthodox iconographers, George & Diana Voyajolu, Pawtucket, RI.



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