

WAS PETER MARRIED? IS PRIESTLY CELIBACY BIBLICAL?

*A Biblical Study of The Catechism of the Catholic Church:
Bible Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions about Catholic Beliefs and Practices*
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Passages of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to Consider:

- “All the ordained ministers of the Latin Church, with the exception of permanent deacons are normally **chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and who intend to remain celibate ‘for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.’**” (CCC 1579)
- “In the Eastern Churches a different discipline has been in force for many centuries...married men can be ordained as deacons and priests. This practice has long been considered legitimate” (CCC 1580)
- “**Celibacy is a sign of this new life of the service of which the Church’s minister is consecrated**; accepted with a joyous heart celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.” (CCC 1579)

Scriptures to Consider:

- Matthew 19:12 “For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.” (ESV)
- Matt 8:14 “when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever.”
- Mark 1:30 “Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, & immediately they told him about her.” (ESV)
- Luke 4:38 “And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. (ESV)
- **1 Corinthians 9:5 “Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?” (ESV)**
- 1 Timothy 3:2 “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach” (ESV)
- Titus 1:6 “if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.” (ESV)
- 1 Timothy 4:3 “**who forbid marriage** and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.” (ESV)

Questions to Consider:

- Does Matthew 19:12 sound like a voluntary choice among believers or a mandate for all priests?
- Is celibacy a “sign of this new life of service”, then why wasn’t Peter single?
- Why does the encouragement of 1 Corinthians 9:5 encourage marriage in the example of Peter and Jesus’ brothers?
- In the Biblical descriptions of qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) for overseers, bishops, elder, or pastors, are there ever any encouragements or mandates for singleness? Why do these passages both reference the church leaders as being married?
- If the Catholic Church is reconsidering its position on this issue, was it wrong in the past? What other issues may they have not spoken from the unchanging revelation of God?
- Does the warning of 1 Timothy 4:3 apply to the Catholic Church? For priestly celibacy? For lenten fasting?