



# Priestly Celibacy: Theological Foundations

By Gary B Selin

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## Priestly Celibacy: Theological Foundations By Gary B Selin

Pope Francis has called mandatory priestly celibacy a "gift for the Church," but added "since it is not a dogma, the door is always open" to change. As this Church discipline continues to be debated, it is important for Catholics to delve into the theological and not merely pragmatic reasons behind its continuation. *Priestly Celibacy: Theological Foundations*, therefore, fills a critical gap in the current theological literature on this important topic of ecclesial ministry and life, and also helps to contribute to the advancement of the rather underdeveloped theology of priestly celibacy.

A review of contemporary literature shows that works abound on the history, sociology, psychology and spirituality of priestly celibacy. However, little has been offered in the way of a theology per se. This book will catch readers up on the theological reflection that has been done, while proposing a Eucharist-based theology of celibacy distinguishing priestly celibacy from general theologies of celibacy or virginity.

Fr. Gary Selin presents a systematic theology of priestly celibacy, with a special focus given to the development of the threefold scheme of priestly celibacy, i.e. its christological, ecclesiological, and eschatological dimensions. The volume begins with a summary of the biblical foundations of clerical continence and celibacy, and then reviews the development of the discipline in the Latin Church from the patristic era to the twentieth century, while also tracing the emerging theology that underlies the practice. The focus then switches to the teaching of Vatican II, Paul VI and subsequent magisterial texts, as elaborated through the threefold dimension of celibacy. The final two chapters consists of Selin's original contribution to the discussion, particularly in the form of various proposals for a systematic theology of priestly celibacy, each of which is organized around the Eucharist as the interpretative key. These proposals should stimulate further debate and development in this timely theological area.

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#### About the Author

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