

**PRIEST SHORTAGE:** Parishioners deemed this a crisis that could cripple the Church. Our Church will not truly “journey together” until we address this issue. And, if we don’t do it soon, there may not be enough Catholics (or priests) to matter.

### Priest Shortage

Priests should be allowed to marry.

Deacons should be ordained to the priesthood.

Women who are called to the priesthood should be welcome; to dismiss someone who the Holy Spirit has invited to enter a priestly life just because she is female gives short shrift to the expanse of God’s reach.

Celibate female priests make more sense than married priests because their focus would be their faith, the Church, and parishioners.

Many non-Catholics consider us too pious. I, myself, have fought with this idea. We would benefit from opening our closed system with women having too little influence in the church. If priests were able to have wives, there very well may be more views from women in our church.

We have gone too far in instituting man’s laws and not God’s laws. We are losing people from the pews and the priesthood. One thing we can do is allow priests to marry. Nowhere in the Bible does it say men cannot be married and be priests – apostles were married, Eastern Orthodox priests are married, and some Catholic priests are married with kids because they converted after being married.

The problem with married priests is that they would have split focus.

Another issue to consider with married priests is that parishes often don’t have the money to pay salaries and benefits to a priest that would support a family.

Waiting my whole life for the church to allow married priests and women priests. Women who are called can be excellent priests and help sustain our Church as the number of men priests dwindles.

I ask that the Pontiff please pray on the idea of allowing Catholic priests the ability to marry and have an immediate family. This may bring our numbers back in the church as well as continue to reflect on the family model.