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Ten Things to Remember About Married Catholic Priests

 MARCH 10, 2017 BY FR. DWIGHT LONGENECKER
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Pope Francis has said that he may consider the ordination of some married men.

There is lots of room for confusion here. So here are ten things to remember about this matter:

1. **Celibacy for priests is a discipline not a doctrine** – The Pope can't change doctrine. He can change discipline. A discipline is something like which liturgy you use, rules for fasting and abstinence and celibacy for priests. It is obviously something that can be changed because the Eastern Rite churches have married priests and because people like me (former

Anglican priests who are married) can receive a dispensation from the vow of celibacy to be ordained.

2. **St Peter was married** – Jesus healed Peter’s mother in law, (Mt. 8:14-15) so if you have a mother in law you must be married. Some people argue that Peter must have been widowed, but it would seem that his wife was still living and that she travelled with Peter on his missionary journeys. (1 Cor.9:5)
3. **Priests May Not Marry** – The Pope is not talking about Father McGee suddenly being able to date. Priests who have taken a vow of celibacy will not be able to marry if the rules change
4. **Married Men May be Ordained** – This is the discipline in the Eastern Orthodox churches: Priests may not marry, but married men may be ordained. The Pope is suggesting that in some circumstances men who are married could be put forward for ordination to the priesthood.
5. **Viri Probati are candidates** – This is Latin for older, tested men. The idea is that some married men who have solid and stable marriages and who are probably financially independent and whose children are grown up might be ordained as priests.
6. **The Local Church would decide** – If such a change is permitted it is most likely that the Pope would delegate the decision to the local bishops’ conferences. Where there is a severe shortage of priests they may decide to ordain tested, older married men.
7. **If widowed they would not be allowed to re-marry** – This is already the rule not only for men, like myself, who are married, but also for the married deacons.
8. **Celibacy would still be the norm** – Celibacy would still be the norm. One downside of this change, however, is that we would probably see a decrease in young vocations to the priesthood. Young men would probably decide to marry with the hope that one day later in life they could be priests.

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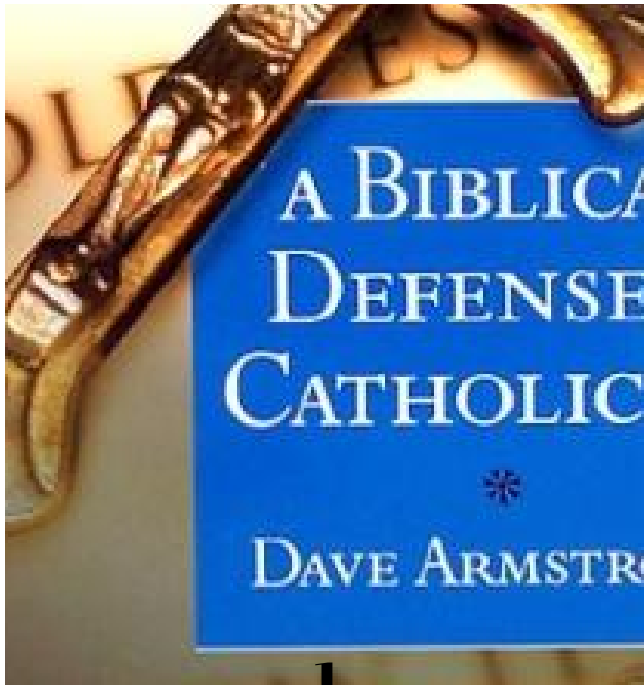
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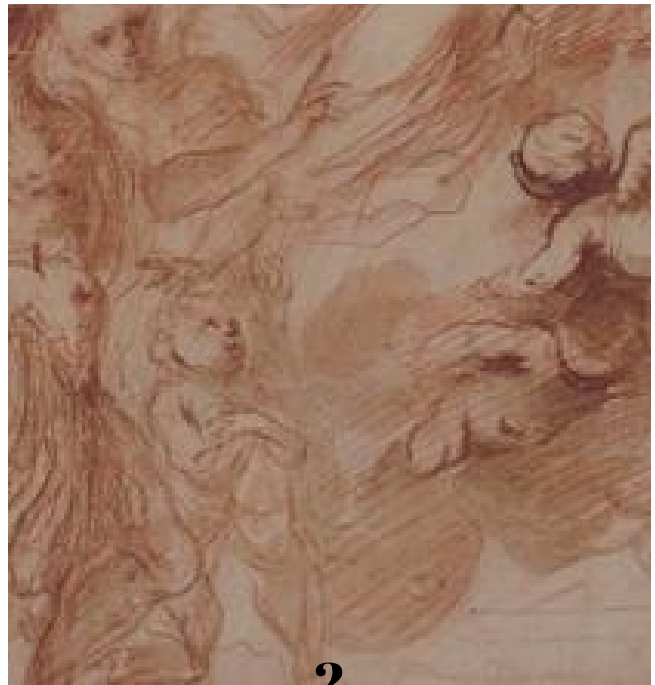




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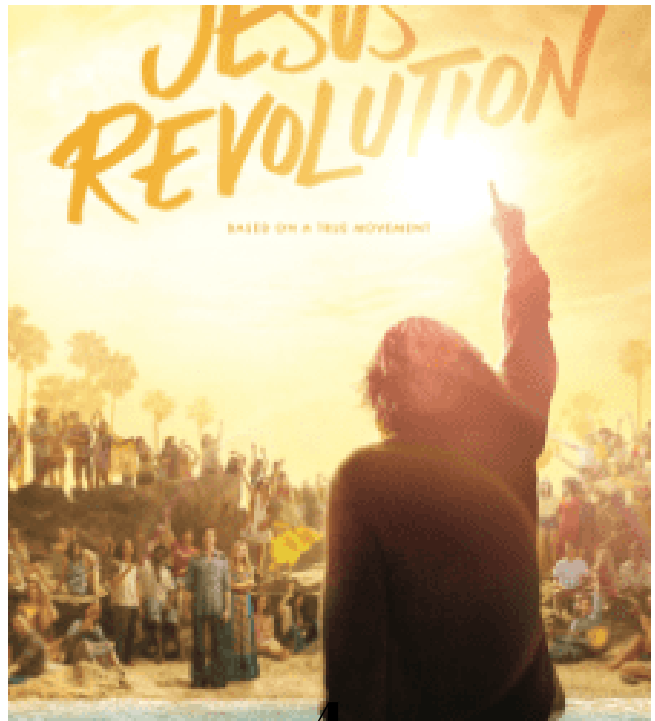
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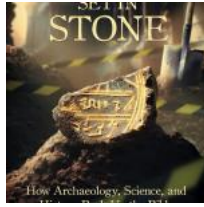


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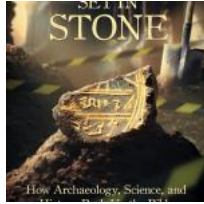
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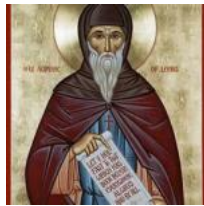
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