

Dear Padre,

Why do our bishops not marry? Scripture plainly says that they must be the husband of one wife and have faithful children.

This is an excellent question and brings us face to face with an important truth: for Catholics, the sacred Scripture is not the singular source of our practice and discipline. We also look, with equal authority, to the living Tradition of the Church. The magisterium is entrusted with the authentic interpretation of both Scripture and Tradition.

With this theological and historical context as a necessary background to your question, the answer to your query is this: the lived Tradition of the Church does not support a married clergy, including bishops. Although the Scripture allows for it, and provides some general guidelines, the lived Tradition of the Church does not. The Roman Catholic Church has a celibate clergy and will continue to have a celibate clergy unless and until the magisterium, in union with the pope, determines otherwise. There have been some discussions about changing this discipline, but now there is not much momentum that would suggest any imminent change.

In the wider Orthodox Catholic Church, in union with Rome, there is a provision for a married clergy, but, even in these traditions, there is no exception made for married bishops. Bishops are and will continue to be celibate regardless of what Scripture may allow. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| January 12 | January 13 | January 14 | January 15 | January 16 | January 17 | January 18 |
| Weekday | Weekday | Weekday | Weekday | Weekday | St. Anthony, Abbot | Second Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| 1 Sm 1:1–8 | 1 Sm 1:9–20 | 1 Sm 3:1–10, 19–20 | 1 Sm 4:1–11 | 1 Sm 8:4–7, 10–22a | 1 Sm 9:1–4, 17–19; 10:1a | Is 49:3, 5–6 |
| Mk 1:14–20 | Mk 1:21–28 | Mk 1:29–39 | Mk 1:40–45 | Mk 2:1–12 | Mk 2:13–17 | 1 Cor 1:1–3 |
| | | | | | | Jn 1:29–34 |

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to [DearPadre.org](#) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

In the family, faith is handed on together with life, generation after generation. It is shared like food at the family table and like the love in our hearts. In this way, families become privileged places in which to encounter Jesus, who loves us and desires our good, always.

HOMILY, ROME, JUNE 1, 2025



Jesus, Servant Leader

MIGUEL DULICK

John, miracle son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, cousin of Jesus and known as “the Baptist,” offers a “baptism of repentance.” Then Jesus shows up. The eternal Son of God a penitent? John is shocked and resists, saying it is Jesus who should baptize him. But Jesus insists, “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).

At the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus is humbling himself, much as he did toward the end, when he washed the feet of his disciples. Then it was Peter who would resist what seemed inappropriate by the standards of this world. Jesus is giving us an example, the way of the servant leader, as described in today’s beautiful passage from Isaiah. Jesus is the servant leader, the Father’s Son, over whom the Holy Spirit danced like a dove, and the Father, with his booming voice from the heavens, said of him, “This is my beloved Son!” (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus allowing himself to be baptized may seem like a contradiction, but given all that follows, we know he is offering his followers a consistent model of what he expects from those who choose to be his disciples. As St.

Paul would later write to the Church in Philippi, “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped” (Philippians 2:5–6). ●



Reflect

This week, I’ll think about my baptism, when I was called to serve as Jesus served.



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