

Pope Defrocks Maryland Priest

A story late last month reported that the Vatican had defrocked Maurice Blackwell, a Catholic priest from Baltimore, Maryland. He will go on trial for four counts of sexual abuse of a young boy. This was merely one incident in the huge national scandal involving Catholic priests and sexual abuse.

These stories disgust every person who tries to do their best to live morally. While everyone will be accountable for their own sins (Ezekiel 18:4, 20), including Mr. Blackwell, one has to wonder what effect the Catholic Church's position on celibacy for priests and nuns has had in this scandal.

Marriage is honorable among all men (Hebrews 13:4). One of the marks of apostasy in the early church was the forbidding of marriage (1 Timothy 4:3). Among many other points of error, the Catholic Church is wrong when it demands celibacy from priests and nuns. Sadly, this has encouraged men to fulfill their sexual desires in wicked and unlawful ways.

Please do not misunderstand. I am not saying that the Catholic Church condoned this sin. But their unlawful forbidding of marriage has opened this avenue of unrighteousness for the priests who serve in it. Paul wrote, *"Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband"* (1 Corinthians 7:2). God designed marriage to fulfill the desires that men and women have, and thereby removing the temptation to commit fornication.

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