



# Lasallian Reflections

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## The Gift of Celibate Chastity

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*“Chastity, rooted in the gospel and lived in celibacy, is an expression of love totally vowed to God. It is a gift of the Spirit. It frees the Brothers for the service of others and for the kingdom of God” (Rule, #27).*

*Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.*

**Opening Song**      *[choose an appropriate song]*

**Reading**              *from “Calling Forth a Healthy Chaste Life”  
by Donald Goergen, OP*

In our search for a healthy celibacy, a chaste sexuality, we must feel deeply that there is something important at stake, some value that gives our life meaning. We might each express that differently, but I will call this core value the gospel, about which I cannot say more here. I do not mean as such the four Gospels, but the gospel at the heart of the Gospel, the gospel of God that Jesus himself preached and which formed the centering value of his own life and mission. Like Paul, we live “for the sake of the gospel” (1 Cor 9:23).

Thus a primary, urgent, felt concern in my own life is the credibility of the gospel, which is nothing other than the credibility of the God whom I preach. I long, desire, yearn to make this gospel known, respected, credible. My witness helps to make it credible; it makes my life credible. This is the rationale for a healthy, culturally contextualized even if counter-cultural chastity. The gospel makes sense of my celibacy and my celibacy must help to make sense of that gospel in our world, my world, at this period of its history.

**Our Response**      *Colossians 1:24-29*

**Side One:**          Now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake,  
and in my flesh I complete  
what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions  
for the sake of his body, that is, the church,

**Side Two:** of which I became a minister  
according to the divine offer  
which was given to me for you,

**Side One:** to make the word of God fully known,  
the mystery hidden for ages and generations,  
but now made manifest to his saints.

**Side Two:** To them God chose to make known  
how great among the Gentiles  
are the riches of the glory of his majesty,  
which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**Side One:** Him we proclaim,  
warning every person  
and teaching every person in all wisdom,  
that we may present every person mature in Christ.

**Side Two:** For this I toil,  
striving with all the energy  
which he mightily inspires within me.

**Side One:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit

**Side Two:** as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and will be forever. Amen.

## Reading

*from Georgen continued*

Let me be clear. The gospel itself does not require celibacy. Nor does ordained ministry in and of itself necessitate celibacy. But religious life does see celibacy as essential to its way of being in the world. We do not have to be celibate for the sake of the gospel, but as religious we freely choose to be celibate as one dimension of our way of living the gospel. This freely chosen celibacy for the sake of the gospel then cannot be taken lightly. It is central to who I am as witness to the gospel, as witness of the risen Lord, of the presence and power of the risen Christ and his Spirit in my life. The risen Christ, the Holy Spirit, is the source of my celibacy, and I at least desire, even if my weakened humanity does not always permit me, to live what I believe.



## Pause for Quiet Reflection

*[about 5 minutes]*

**Our Response**      *from Matthew 19:23-29*

- Side One:** Jesus said to his disciples,  
“Truly I tell you,  
it will be hard for a rich person  
to enter the kingdom of heaven.  
Again, I tell you,  
it is easier for a camel  
to go through the eye of a needle  
than for someone who is rich  
to enter the kingdom of God.”
- Side Two:** When the disciples heard this,  
they were greatly astounded and said,  
“Then who can be saved?”  
But Jesus looked at them and said,  
“For mortals it is impossible,  
but for God all things are possible.”
- Side One:** Then Peter said in reply,  
“Look, we have left everything and followed you.  
What then will we have?”
- Side Two:** Jesus said to them,  
“Truly I tell you,  
at the renewal of all things,  
when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory,  
you who have followed me  
will also sit on twelve thrones,  
judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Side One:** “And everyone who has left houses  
or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields,  
will receive a hundredfold,  
and will inherit eternal life.”
- Side Two:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit
- Side One:** as it was in the beginning, is now,  
and will be forever. Amen.

**Reading**      *from Georgen continued*

My faith in the resurrection, in the risen Jesus, my own human experiences of the risen Jesus, Jesus’ self-presentation to me inviting me to follow after him and my response of trust and faith, all these reconstruct me, re-orient me, as a human being into being a witness to the grace which has been granted me. That grace is a sacred trust in which I trust God and God places trust in me. A witness is who I am. I do not wish to betray it, any more than I would wish to betray the most profound friendship given me in life. Thus we must work toward a celibacy that is grounded in these human experiences of God as present to us in this world.

**Pause for Quiet Reflection**      *[about 10 to 15 minutes]*

**Intercessions**      Response: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

*For whom or for what shall we pray?*

**Closing Prayer**

**All:**    Lord, you call us by name,  
          and you call us to holiness.

We ask you to fill us with your Spirit  
          so that we, too,  
          may reflect the life of your Son  
          in our words, thoughts, and actions.

Lead us to grow more aware  
          of your presence in our lives,

and empower us to bring  
          the good news of your love and salvation  
          to all those you have entrusted to us. Amen.

*St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us.*

*Live, Jesus, in our hearts!*

[Donald J. Goergen, OP, "*Calling Forth a Healthy Chaste Life*"  
(An Address to the USA Conference of Major Superiors of Men, 1997)]