

The Influence of Celibacy on Enhancing the Spiritual Life of Pastors: A Case Study in Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare

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ABSTRAK

Selibat adalah komitmen utama para imam Katolik untuk mengabdikan diri sepenuhnya kepada Tuhan dan umat. Meskipun memiliki nilai spiritual yang tinggi, selibat menghadapi tantangan psikologis, sosial, dan emosional yang dapat mempengaruhi kehidupan spiritual para imam. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh selibat terhadap spiritualitas para imam di Gereja Katolik Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare, serta mengidentifikasi tantangan dan strategi yang digunakan dalam menjalankan komitmen tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan bentuk penelitian lapangan (field research) untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang mendalam tentang pengalaman para imam dalam menjalani hidup selibat dan dengan pendekatan deskriptif analitis. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi langsung, dan studi dokumentasi tentang praktik hidup selibat. Analisis dilakukan untuk memahami bagaimana selibat mempengaruhi kehidupan spiritual para imam dari sudut pandang teologi dan psikologi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa selibat meningkatkan kedekatan dengan Tuhan, disiplin rohani, dan dedikasi terhadap pelayanan. Namun, para imam juga menghadapi tantangan seperti kesepian, kebosanan, dan stigma sosial. Untuk mengatasi tantangan-tantangan ini, mereka menggunakan strategi seperti refleksi spiritual, keterlibatan dalam komunitas, dan kegiatan-kegiatan produktif seperti membaca, menulis, dan berolahraga. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa selibat bukan hanya kewajiban gerejawi, tetapi juga merupakan sarana untuk meningkatkan spiritualitas dan pelayanan. Keberhasilan dalam mempraktikkannya bergantung pada dukungan gereja, keseimbangan psikologis, dan pembinaan rohani yang berkelanjutan agar imam tetap teguh dalam penggilannya.

INTRODUCTION

Celibacy is singleness or celibacy, and not marrying.¹ In a sense, it is an offering of self based on complete love that is specifically related to the shepherding of souls in order to unite with the purity of God. Celibacy is a form of sacrifice and obedience to the religious vows that are at the heart of the vocation to the Catholic priesthood. Celibacy also plays a very important role in enhancing the spiritual life and in the spiritual journey.

Celibacy is one of the fundamental commitments in the life of a Catholic priest who aims to devote himself fully to God and the people. This commitment has been an integral part of the Catholic Church for centuries, but in the modern context, the practice faces various challenges. Social and cultural changes that are increasingly open to individual freedom, as

¹ Yohanes Hario Kristo Wibowo, "Penghayatan Selibat Imam sebagai Kesaksian Hidup di Zaman Sekarang," *Jurnal Teologi* 6, no. 2, 2017: 126, <https://doi.org/10.24071/jt.v6i2.997>.

well as the psychological demands faced by priests, make celibacy a vocation that requires spiritual and mental fortitude.² Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of celibacy on improving the spirituality of priests in the Catholic Church of Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare, and identify the strategies they use in overcoming these challenges.

In the development of the teachings of the Catholic Church, celibacy is not only considered an obligation to receive the sacrament of the priesthood, but also as a special gift from God. For those who practice celibacy, it is also a surrender to the Church.³ Thus, the Catholic Church that will be the source of this research is the Catholic Church of Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare, which is the only and largest Roman Catholic Church in Pare. The priests in the church make celibacy a means to get closer to God based on sincere service and love.

Celibacy not only focuses on theological aspects, but also integrates psychological and sociological perspectives.⁴ With this approach, it can provide a broader understanding of how celibacy can increase closeness to God, while presenting emotional challenges that must be managed by pastors. In addition, this study also highlights how church community and social support can play a role in helping pastors live out their celibate commitment more stably.

In addition, this study presents new insights into the strategies used by pastors in dealing with the challenges of celibacy. Some of the strategies found in this study include spiritual reflection, active involvement in the church community, as well as the development of positive personal activities such as reading, writing, and exercise. As such, this study not only provides theoretical insights, but also offers practical solutions that pastors can apply to better live out their commitment.⁵

The main contribution of this research is the development of concrete strategies for the Church to support priests in their celibate life. This research provides the basis for a more systematic pastoral approach in accompanying priests, including in terms of spiritual formation and emotional well-being. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for the Church in designing more effective programs to maintain the spiritual and mental balance of priests, so that they can carry out their ministry more optimally and meaningfully.⁶

Therefore, this study seeks to examine about the meaning of celibacy itself, as well as explore further how celibacy can affect the improvement of the spiritual life of priests in the Catholic Church of Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare. In addition, the author wants to know the challenges and ways to overcome the problems faced by priests in carrying out the celibate life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative field research design with a descriptive-analytical approach. The qualitative method was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of priests'

² Dedi Hantono dan Diananta Pramitasari, "ASPEK PERILAKU MANUSIA SEBAGAI MAKHLUK INDIVIDU DAN SOSIAL PADA RUANG TERBUKA PUBLIK," *Nature: National Academic Journal of Architecture* 5, no. 2, 2018: 86.

³ Thomas Bedjo Oetomo dan Ivan Kurniawan Waruwu, "Konsep Selibat Pada Masa Intertestamental Dan Tinjauan Teologis Terhadap Selibat Gereja Katolik," *Jurnal Missio Cristo* 5, no. 1, 2022: 25, <https://doi.org/10.58456/jmc.v5i1.22>.

⁴ Imanuel Boimau, "TINJAUAN TERHADAP DASAR-DASAR TEOLOGIS PRAKTIK HIDUP SELIBAT," *Jurnal Amanat Agung* 16, no. 2, 2021: 327.

⁵ Yosua Sibarani, "Hidup Selibat Sebagai Karunia Tuhan: Studi Eksposisi 1 Korintus 7:7," *CARAKA: Jurnal Teologi Biblika dan Praktika* 3, no. 2, 2022: 194, <https://doi.org/10.46348/car.v3i2.120>.

⁶ Hardawirjana dan Siswoyo, "DIREKTORIUM TENTANG PELAYANAN DAN HIDUP PARA IMAM,"

lived experiences in practicing celibacy and its influence on their spiritual life. The research was conducted at St. Mateus Catholic Parish, Pare. The research subjects were Catholic priests serving at the parish, selected purposively to provide relevant and reliable data.

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) in-depth interviews to explore priests' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to celibate life; (2) direct observation of pastoral and daily activities; and (3) documentation study of church-related records and materials. Data analysis was carried out descriptively and analytically by interpreting the findings through theological and psychological perspectives, particularly in relation to spiritual growth, emotional well-being, and pastoral commitment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main value of a religious vocation lies in spiritual maturity. He left the worldly life and devoted himself to God, called to live a life filled with Christ. For the majesty of the religious vocation to be maintained, it requires consistent efforts from the individual who is called, accompanied by the grace of God, to be faithful and diligent in following His call. Cooperation between God and the called individual is essential so that they can continue to develop their spiritual life. The true call is a spirit movement that must be understood and answered personally. In answering the call, one needs to receive adequate guidance to be able to grow and appreciate the gospel values and demands contained in God's call.⁷

The first law of celibacy was established around 300 at the council of Elvira (Spain). This teaching is affirmed in canon 33 of the council, which reads, "We declare that all bishops, pastors, and deacons of all clergy (officials) engaged in ministry are strictly forbidden to live together with their wives and bear children. Anyone who violates will be disfellowshipped from the priesthood."⁸ Previously, living a life of celibacy was not an obligation or a necessity, but rather a choice freely taken by most clerics, both in the Eastern and Western hemispheres. This is revealed and proven through the testimony of several Church Fathers and other holy writers.

The Influence of Celibacy on The Role of Spiritual Direction

1. Closeness to God and The Role of Spiritual Direction

The relationship between man and God is referred to as the reality of the theme. This call shows not only the power of the Divine but also the answer from man. Every individual who receives God's call is obligated and responsible for developing human maturity in his calling. The term nickname is derived from the Latin word "vocare", which means to call, gather, invite, or give a name. From the perspective of Christianity, the core meaning of the term can be found in Scripture.⁹ In the Old Testament, the term used to describe a call was *gara*, and it means "to shout aloud." This term is used by everyone when they are asking for something, celebrating, proclaiming, gathering, inviting, and holding meetings.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in the New Testament, the term that is often used for a vocation is *kaleo* and

⁷ R. Hardawirjana, SJ, "VITA CONSECRATA Hidup Bakti," (Jakarta: Departemen Dokumentasi dan Penerangan Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia (KWI), 2021, 16.

⁸ Nur Fitriyana, "Selibat dalam Paham Keagamaan Gereja Katolik" 20, no. 2 (2014): 307.

⁹ Agustinus L. Ngame, OFM, *Kecerdasan Emosional Dalam Hidup Kaum Selibat*, ke 1 (Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius, 2021), 71.

¹⁰ "Yesaya 43:1 (Versi Paralel) - Tampilan Ayat - Alkitab SABDA," diakses 31 Desember 2024, <https://alkitab.sabda.org/verse.php?book=Yes&chapter=43&verse=1>.

usually refers to God's actions in the process of sanctification. In this term, God is described as the one who takes the initiative to call us, either directly or indirectly.¹¹

The vocation is a thematic reality, it describes "the encounter and meeting between the work of God and the efforts of man". From these two dimensions forms the true meaning of the calling. Through the commitment they have shown, pastors now function as living heralds of divine grace, which they have received at the time of ordination, and which today continues to give new strength to their ministry.¹²

*"So, the focus of life in celibacy is indeed to God, to direct the heart, and the totality of life to God. And there the concrete form is when we, when we want to focus our lives on serving God. It also means that the focus of life is on joint services, on paid pilgrims. So that is what supports it. So in addition to love for God, its form must also be manifested in love for someone."*¹³

2. Dedication to Service: A Pastoral Commitment

In spirituality, ministry refers to two dimensions spirituality and service. Service spirituality must be based on pure motivation and high sincerity. In this case, pastoral ministry is not merely for personal gain, but rather to improve the conditions of the wider world. The spirituality of service teaches that a healthy and balanced servant will be more effective in providing a good and meaningful service. Thus, service to the church and the people is very important, this shows that truly meaningful service must pay attention to the balance of the two dimensions, namely the physical-material dimension and the spiritual dimension.¹⁴

This is not only from the side of pastors or ministers, but the role of the people in the church is very important. People who are involved in ecclesiastical activities will of course, cultivate the spirit of Jesus Christ. Some of the religious life activities carried out are ecclesiastical, and community activities, which are expected to strengthen the good brotherhood of fellow religious people. That way, the role of the people greatly affects the implementation and development of the activity itself, so the church expects the people to be involved. The activities that can be done by the people at the station, such as weekly worship, community service at the Church, Rosary prayers, Mass, or Pastor's visit.¹⁵

*"So, if you live celibately, it means you don't have children, you don't have a wife. So, they can maximize their lives to indeed serve the people. So not focus on yourself or a smaller scope, but on a larger scope."*¹⁶

The statement explains the rationale behind the practice of celibacy, especially in a religious context, whereby not marrying and having no children, pastor or pastor can maximize their lives for the service of the faithful and carry out the duties of the Church,

¹¹ Ngame, OFM, *Kecerdasan Emosional Dalam Hidup Kaum Selibat*, 71.

¹² R Hardawirjana dan FX Sumantara Siswoyo, "DIREKTORIUM TENTANG PELAYANAN DAN HIDUP PARA IMAM" (DEPARTEMEN DOKUMENTASI DAN PENERANGAN KONFERENSI WALIGEREJA INDONESIA, 1996), 83.

¹³ Adrianus Fatra, Wawancara Pastor Gereja Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare, oktober 2024.

¹⁴ Fabianus Selatang, Tomas Lastari Hatmoko, dan Gregorius Kukul Nugroho, "Spiritualitas Pelayanan dalam Model Kepemimpinan Pastoral Romo Janssen, CM," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama Katolik*, t.t., 79.

¹⁵ Marselus Kristian Prinando dkk., "KESADARAN DAN KETERLIBATAN UMAT DALAM HIDUP MENGGEREJA DI STASI ST. THERESIA KM.26 PATAS I," *Sepakat : Jurnal Pastoral Kateketik* 7, no. 2 (25 September 2021): 63, <https://doi.org/10.58374/sepakat.v7i2.59>.

¹⁶ Adrianus Fatra, Wawancara Pastor Gereja Paroki Santo Mateus, Pare.

such as supporting the spiritual needs of the community and guiding the faithful in a wider scope. The findings indicate that celibacy enables priests to broaden the scope of their pastoral ministry by allowing greater availability and focus on the spiritual needs of the faithful.

3. The Impact of Celibacy on Personal Well-Being and Spiritual Maturity

Human maturity is closely related to integrating various dimensions and aspects of human life. One of the aspects that is very important and inherent in humans to be processed and developed is emotions. Emotions are part of human nature and have a decisive role in an individual's calling journey. Without the management of human maturity, one cannot be able to be a good pastor and religious. Emotions are one of the fundamental elements that make up the structure of human nature. Therefore, to attain human maturity, emotional formation must be an integral part of the formation of pastoral and religious life.¹⁷

Agustinus L. Ngame, OFM quoted in R.J. McAllister's book entitled "Living the Vows The Emotional Conflicts of Celibate Religious" as follows:

*"Members of the living evidence who reject their emotional reactions will inevitably face emotional conflict because they are unable to practice good mental health. Good physical health helps prevent physical pain, and Good mental health helps people avoid psychological conflicts and emotional pain. Nevertheless, to get good physical health, individuals must have an awareness of how their bodies work and the things they can do to keep their bodies healthy. Likewise, to pursue good mental health, individuals must have an awareness of how their thoughts and emotions work and the things they can do to keep them emotionally healthy."*¹⁸

Emotional well-being is very important and cannot be underestimated in the context of vocational life. Attitudes and treatment of emotions greatly influence personal life and social relations. Many conflicts, mental disorders, and physical health problems that often occur in life are caused by failures in managing emotions. The more a person is aware of the emotional dynamics that exist in him, the more he can control it properly and appropriately.¹⁹

Emotional control is important in responding to situations calmly and wisely, especially when facing unpleasant treatment or situations. It involves the awareness that what has happened outside is often out of control, so the focus is directed to how the individual perceives and perceives it. In this case, the interview explained the approach by remaining silent first, understanding the situation, and then acting carefully, to avoid an implicit emotional response.²⁰

Challenges of Living a Celibate Life and Strategies to Overcome Them

1. Internal Challenges in Living a Celibate Life

Many things can be challenging in every individual's life journey, such as living celibate or Monastery with their three vows. As time passes and starts from much experience, your

¹⁷ Prof. Dr. H. Endin Nasrudin, Drs., M.S., "Psikologi Agama dan Spiritualitas Memahami Perilaku Beragama dalam Perspektif Psikologi" (Lagood's Publishing, September 2021).

¹⁸ Ngame, OFM, *Kecerdasan Emosional Dalam Hidup Kaum Selibat*, 74–75.

¹⁹ Debi Angelina Br Barus Demetriana Oeleu, "Pengaruh Kecerdasan Emosional Terhadap Peyesuaian Diri Para Calon Biarawati," 12 Januari 2024, <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.10494823>.

²⁰ Ngame, OFM, *Kecerdasan Emosional Dalam Hidup Kaum Selibat*, 79.

challenges can feel heavier and bigger to defeat them. Challenges that originate from within ourselves are heavier because challenges that arise within ourselves tend to be more challenging because of their unclear nature and difficulty in overcoming. Some individuals, in the face of challenges in themselves, often experience frustration and stress, and some even experience a crisis of calling.²¹ Some factors that are often challenges in oneself, such as:

a. Internal Temptation

The biggest challenge for humans is lust, which seeks self-satisfaction. Lust includes a variety of urges, such as appetite or drinking, while libido is more geared towards sexual drive. One of the biggest challenges for celibates is the sexual desire, which has been the initial commitment to maintain virginity vows.²² To overcome this urge, it is recommended to divert energy into positive activities that can drain physical and mental energy. For example, you can do hobbies such as mountain climbing, fishing, running, painting, or creating music. When the body feels tired after doing the activity, sexual urges and other temptations can naturally diminish, providing an opportunity for the individual to rest and forget about the urge. Thus, libido management can be done by channelling energy and creativity into more productive and useful activities.

Furthermore, some individuals are monks in their lives who cannot restrain and prevent their lusts. However, some monks or nuns always feel God is still called in their monastic life. Celibates train themselves through physical death, prayer, and self-control, even under the guidance of an ascetic (*zuhud*). To be able to control his sexual desire well and feel happiness in the Monastery.²³

b. Aloneness

Loneliness is the first challenge faced by those who choose to live celibacy, and it is often a great fear for many people. In the context of ministry, such as when leading the Eucharist, giving a sermon that is appreciated with applause, or greeting and asking for blessings by the faithful after mass, there is a sense of togetherness that provides support. However, after all these activities were completed and returned to the private space, the feeling of loneliness appeared strongly. In this situation, a pastor or Church ministry becomes only a single person, as a teacher who returns to silence, without the crowd or recognition that previously existed. This loneliness becomes a significant emotional challenge in living the call of celibacy.

In the face of loneliness, the pastor can strengthen his relationship with God through prayer and spiritual reflection and realize that the vocation of celibacy is total devotion to God. Additionally, involvement in the community, both through pastoral ministry and social activities, can provide important emotional and spiritual support. Pastors can also build relationships with fellow pastors to share experiences and gain support from those

²¹ Paul Suparno, S.J., *Tantangan Hidup Membiara di zaman Modern dan Bagaimana Menyikapinya* (Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius, 2016), 43–44.

²² Suparno, S.J., 47.

²³ Juan Gregorius Kawuwung, Meike E. Hartati, dan Rinna Y. Kasenda, “STUDI TENTANG DINAMIKA KEPERIBADIAN TEORI PERSONOLOGI PADA CALON IMAM BIARAWAN KATOLIK DALAM MENJALANI KEHIDUPAN SELIBAT,” *Jurnal Sains Riset* 13, no. 3 (18 November 2023): 719, <https://doi.org/10.47647/jsr.v13i2.1869>.

experiencing similar challenges. By reflecting on the meaning of the call to celibacy, pastors can find the strength to face loneliness as part of their spiritual journey.²⁴

c. Boredom

Boredom is an internal challenge that is often experienced by individuals who live in celibacy, especially those who have not been married all their lives. This feeling can be a personal burden, but should be offered as a sacrifice to Christ. Facing boredom with acceptance and courage, rather than avoidance, is part of the journey of celibacy. Celibacy is seen as a form of self-purity in loving God and others without expecting anything in return. Father Adrian defined celibacy as a holy way of following Jesus,²⁵ And despite these challenges, he still finds happiness and joy in serving the people and loving God.

d. Inner Conflict

Some people have experienced and felt that their relationship with God lacks depth or is superficial. This is because of the lifestyle that spirituality and prayer can no longer be pursued, cause they are too busy with world affairs. If the relationship with God is superficial and not deep, then they will become insensitive to God's will and insensitive to the temptations they are experiencing. As a result, they easily fall into temptation.

In the face of this, living celibacy requires deep reflection centered on the initial commitment. In difficult situations, a pastor is expected to recall and confirm his choice, to live his priesthood vocation with full awareness of the consequences and risks. By serving God and the people and reflecting on his initial commitment, a pastor can find the strength to remain faithful to the calling of life he has chosen.²⁶

2. External Challenges in Living a Celibate Life

In living a celibate life, pastors are often faced with challenges from their social environment and interaction with society. As public figures, they face high expectations from the people and various, but also various views, criticisms, and stigmas arising from choosing to live celibately. This pressure can come from various sources, such as negative comments, the temptation to want a seemingly ideal family life, or a lack of public understanding of living without marriage. Therefore, pastors are required to stick to their initial commitments, as well as try to maintain emotional and spiritual balance amid various pressures.²⁷

a. Social Pressure

It will not be separated from social life and social relationships. Living a life of celibacy is a challenge in itself, and there are many stigmas in society against celibacy. They are often considered strange or associated with opposing views, such as being considered unsellable or abnormal. To overcome this view, it is important to educate the public that life does not always focus on marriage, but also on the contribution and meaning that can be given in life. Open communication with people who are skeptical or lack a grasp of

²⁴ Ngame, OFM, *Kecerdasan Emosional Dalam Hidup Kaum Selibat*, 87.

²⁵ Yustus Leonard Buan dan Huwae Wiesye Elena, "Peran Gereja dalam Membangun Kesejahteraan Masyarakat: Respons terhadap Disrupsi Sosial Masyarakat Kristen" 1 (2023): 3.

²⁶ Yosua Sibarani, "Hidup Selibat Sebagai Karunia Tuhan: Studi Eksposisi 1 Korintus 7:7," *CARAKA: Jurnal Teologi Biblika dan Praktika* 3, no. 2 (10 November 2022): 194, <https://doi.org/10.46348/car.v3i2.120>.

²⁷ Suparno, S.J., *Tantangan Hidup Membiara di zaman Modern dan Bagaimana Menyikapinya*, 79.

celibacy can help them realize that a person who chooses not to marry can still live a productive and meaningful life. This provides examples of successful and happy individuals, even though they are not married until old age, so that they can be judged based on the values of their life embraced and lived.²⁸

b. The Temptations of Family Life

This challenge shows the level of maturity of a pastor in dealing with the emotional self-related to the choice of celibacy. Not only are they fixated on the beautiful side of married life as often seen on social media or the surrounding environment, but they also understand that every life choice has its challenges. Through experience in ministering to congregations experiencing family conflicts, such as economic disputes, disputes between couples, or cases of infidelity, pastors realize that the idealization of married life often does not reflect reality. This reflection helps pastors to maintain their commitment to celibacy,²⁹ Not as an escape from problems, but as a conscious choice to prioritize the vocation of service and spiritual devotion. This confirms that celibacy has a deep meaning and purpose.³⁰

c. Criticism or Mockery

Sneering or ridicule from others is an external challenge often experienced by pastors, especially during the formation or coaching period. These challenges usually arise from the surrounding environment or friends who do not understand or appreciate the choice of celibacy. Ridicule sometimes comes from those who have taken a similar path but abandoned the call. This kind of situation can be a test of a pastor's determination to live his vocation.³¹

To overcome these challenges, the pastor prioritizes a calm attitude and self-control and does not let the atmosphere carry him away. The pastor chooses not to react and retaliate immediately, but first understands the situation, mindset, and reason behind the harsh or confrontational attitude of the person he is facing. Through reflection and a patient approach, the pastor seeks to reduce conflict and find ways to communicate wisely.³² This attitude also reflects emotional maturity built through Spiritual experience and reflection.

CONCLUSION

Celibacy has a significant influence on the spiritual improvement of priests at St. Matthew Parish Church. By practicing celibacy, priests can focus more on their ministry and deepen their spiritual relationship with God. This practice helps them improve their spiritual discipline through prayer, meditation and spiritual reflection. In addition, their undivided devotion to the people allows them to delve deeper into the teachings of the church and emulate the life of Jesus. Celibacy is also a form of sacrifice that strengthens spirituality and forms a

²⁸ Patricius Wisnu Widyantono dan Annastasia Ediati, "MEMAHAMI KEBAHAGIAAN MELALUI PERJALANAN HIDUP MEMBIARA PARA RAHIB TRAPIS DI PERTAPAAAN SANTA MARIA RAWASENENG" 7 (2018): 15.

²⁹ Suparno, S.J., *Tantangan Hidup Membiara di zaman Modern dan Bagaimana Menyikapinya*, 160.

³⁰ Wibowo, "SELIBAT (IMAM) SEBAGAI CARA MENCINTAI: Suatu Tawaran Reinterpretasi Makna Hidup Selibat Imam," 230.

³¹ Hardawirjana dan Siswoyo, "DIREKTORIUM TENTANG PELAYANAN DAN HIDUP PARA IMAM," 140.

³² Suparno, S.J., *Tantangan Hidup Membiara di zaman Modern dan Bagaimana Menyikapinya*, 156.

stronger character in facing life's challenges. In addition, without the distraction of family life, priests have more time to serve the people fully.

However, in practicing celibacy, priests face various challenges. Loneliness is often the biggest test, especially when they are in a private room after serving the congregation. Boredom and monotonous routines can also affect their spiritual and psychological vibrancy. In addition, the social stigma against celibacy creates pressure from people who do not understand the spiritual significance of this commitment. The inner struggle to control emotional and biological urges is a psychological challenge that priests must face. Hence, community support and ongoing spiritual formation are necessary for them to remain steadfast in their celibate vocation.

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