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Forming new Catholic Christian communities

Pat Perriello | Feb. 5, 2013 NCR Today

I recently met with a validly ordained married Catholic priest in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C., area. He shared information about an organization [1] that I think should be better known within the Catholic community: CITI Ministries Inc.

At a time when there continues to be a significant shortage of celibate priests throughout the country, it would seem that the rent-a-priest resource should be more widely utilized. Additionally, with many Catholics looking for a welcoming community in which they can practice their faith, this resource should be seriously explored.

The website [1] contains a directory of priests fully certified and belonging to CITI (Celibacy is the Issue) Ministries in all parts of the country, from California to Massachusetts. For the most part, these priests are conducting weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc., often for family members or friends. In some cases, they are leading small Catholic communities out of individual homes, which is in keeping with the tradition of the earliest Christians.

In general, the priests tend to be open and welcoming to all who wish to be a part of their community. Divorced Catholics, gay and lesbian Catholics and others estranged from their individual parishes would likely be welcomed. Those Catholics would have an opportunity to feel they belonged to a loving and worshipping community. They would once again be able to recognize that God does, in fact, love them.

I recommend this website for your consideration. There is considerable information as to the legitimacy of the functions they provide. There is a significant focus on canon law and the fact that all Catholics have a right to the sacraments. I think we have gone way beyond waiting for the US Catholic bishops to make some of the changes needed to meet the needs of the entire Catholic community. We have here an underutilized resource that could bring the consolation of the sacraments to an underserved population. I believe the group merits greater recognition and could become an important part of serving a Catholic population that often hungers for greater spiritual nourishment.

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Links:
[1] http://www.rentapriest.com/index.php