

- I. Regarding “cases of priests under the age of 40 with children” it is proposed “they obtain the dispensation from clerical state without waiting for the age of 40, as provided for in the norms. Such a decision [...] has, as it’s principle objective, the safeguarding of the good of the child.” (Stella, 2019)
- II. “Priority focus [refers to] [...] not only economic support [but also] the affection of the parents, an adequate education [...] all that pertains to an effective and responsible exercise of paternity.” (Stella, 2019)
- III. “The presence of children [...] was treated, de facto, as practically ‘automatic’ reason [...] [for] dispensation. [...] The loss of the clerical state is imposed because paternal responsibility creates permanent obligations that in the legislation of the Latin church does not provide for the exercise of priestly ministry.¹ [However regarding ‘exceptions’ to the de facto position, Cardinal Stella confirmed that] each case is examined on its merits and its own particular circumstances. [...] [adding, in] the case of a new-born, the child of a priest, who in a particular situation enters into a family already consolidated, in which another parent assumes the role of the father.” The Holy See further added with regard to this aforementioned exception, “with regard to [the] query about informing a child of a parent’s identity, the timing and the manner of conveying such information rests with the interested adults (biological parents/guardians), who must also take into consideration any current and relevant civil legislation within their jurisdiction.”² Cardinal Stella also confirmed the situation where a priest who has “children already grown up, 20-30 years old [as an allowable exception.]” (Stella, 2019)
- IV. Cardinal Stella confirmed, “in these situations the dicastery does not oblige the Bishop to invite the priests to request the dispensation [from priesthood owing to paternity.] [The dicastery] counsels a more flexible discernment within the rigorous practise and guidelines of the Congregation.” (Stella, 2019)

¹ Coping addressed a question to Cardinal Bechara Boutros al-Rahi, head of the maronite church, who allow married priests: **Coping International (01/18):** “In your authority as Patriarch of the Maronites, may I ask you to briefly describe the differences (if any) between a Latin Rite Priest and a Maronite Priest on terms of his daily activity and priestly life? What does he do (or not as the case may be) that a Latin Rite Priest does (or not as the case may be) which allows a Maronite Priest to be married and the Latin Rite to not marry?”

Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai (01/18): “As you said in your letter some of our priests are married and some are celibate. Both married and celibate priests do the same pastoral work. The Latin Rite priests who are celibate do the same work as our celibate priests, and as our celibate and married priests have the same pastoral tasks, then the logical conclusion is that *both Latin priests who are celibate do the same pastoral work as the Maronite married priests*. The difference is that the married priest carries the double responsibility of a parish and a family and has to divide his time between the two of them.”

- “The legislation [surrounding paternity] of the Latin church does not provide for the exercise of priestly ministry” cannot thus be based on an assumed and alleged impracticality between Latin rite priesthood and exercise of paternity, since ‘*both Latin priests who are celibate do the same pastoral work*’ according to Cardinal al-Rahi. Whilst the Maronite is married, separated parents can be good parents, “they can do it”, as per Pope Francis [Wednesday, 20 May 2015]. Thus, the legislation is not practically based but finds its genesis elsewhere.

² C.f.: Email from Mons. Ripa, August 25th 2019.