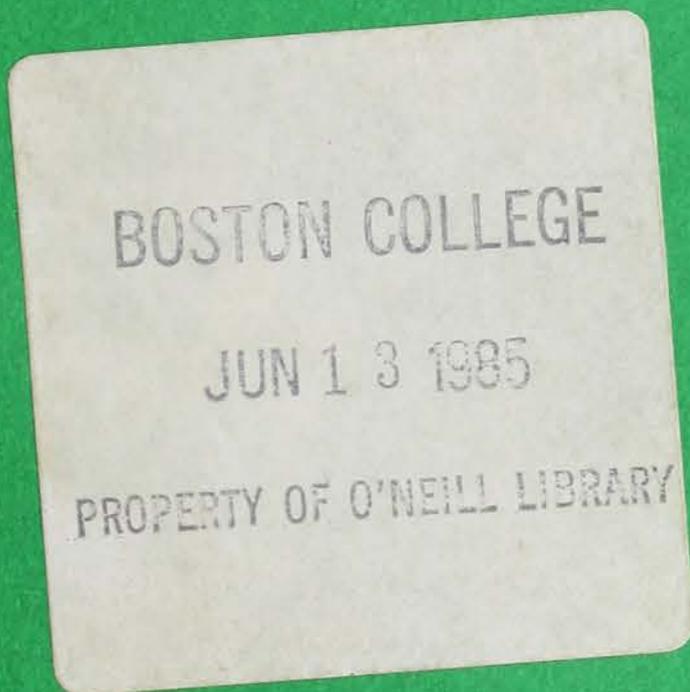


# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits

A Dialogue on  
the Sexual Maturing of Celibates  
by  
Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J.



Published by the American Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,  
especially for American Jesuits working out their *aggiornamento*  
in the spirit of Vatican Council II

Vol. XVII

May, 1985

No. 3

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28x

## THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States.

The Purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits--in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

To achieve these purposes, especially amid today's pluralistic cultures, the Seminar must focus its direct attention sharply, frankly, and specifically on the problems, interests, and opportunities of the Jesuits of the United States. However, many of these interests are common also to Jesuits of other regions, or to other priests, religious men or women, or to lay men or women. Hence the Studies of the Seminar, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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# A DIALOGUE ON THE SEXUAL MATURING OF CELIBATES

by

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## Writer's Preface

If you think of this as a cassette recording of a conversation among some Jesuits in a small community, you won't be far off. The speakers, of course, are not real, but any similarity between them and people you know is fully intended. Their stories and "cases," however, are real. I was involved in them--or else Jesuits who were told me the stories. However, I have told the stories in such a way that even the people involved would not recognize themselves for sure.

About one matter, I have to be sexually explicit. I am writing about males. I know enough about female sexuality to anticipate differences (!viva!), but not enough to know whether the maturing I talk about here is common to the sexes. I do, of course, have a suspicion, but I am just wily enough not to pass up this opportunity to keep my mouth shut.

So you have to imagine five Jesuits at one of their "community discussions"--which they have agreed to have once a month and which they go at with some little system. The oldest is Thomas Simeon, 59, a good listener and independent voter, once the principal-president of a high school, for a long time the head of a spirituality center, and now on the provincial staff. Next is Peter Pelegrino, 53, gently pedantic theologian who studied with Karl Rahner, who teaches theology at the local Jesuit university, gives time to Pax Christi, and publishes regularly.

Third is Francis Xavier Frank, over one hill at 41, a successful product of the old lock-step formation, who was briefly a Marine and is permanently a Republican, who has been an inner-city hospital chaplain since he was ordained. He is living in the community while doing a sabbatical. Fourth, Sean William Wilfort, 35, scion of a prominent family, M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business. He is working toward tenure at the university and around

tertianship. Fifth and last, Paul Youngblud, 31, champion athlete in high school, formed completely in the new formation program. Just ordained, he is doing his fourth year of theology and looking forward enthusiastically to next year's assignment: to teach faith and justice in his own high school.

Occasionally, the speakers refer to an article or a book. Each of these is listed in the brief "Bibliographical Notes" below on page 32.

There are a lot of opinions expressed here. That's all they are. The truth pasted down in print looks very different from the truth jiggling around in the flesh. And you can trust that nothing in these pages would embarrass that great, strong woman who never was the fragile girl of painting and poetry, and who wiped the body of the Savior from the time he was in diapers until the time she cleaned him for the tomb. She, too, matured under the pressure of atypical circumstance. Lady, you show us the way.

August 15, 1984

## A DIALOGUE ON THE SEXUAL MATURING OF CELIBATES

- WILL Sean William Wilfort, 35, facilitator, Wharton M.B.A., scion of prominent family, headed for tertianship.
- PETER Peter Pelegrino, 53, theologian, writer, originator of the question.
- FRANK Francis Xavier Frank, 41, ex-Marine, experienced hospital chaplain, on sabbatical.
- SIM Thomas Simeon, 59, high school principal-president, spirituality center director, now on provincial staff.
- PAUL Paul Youngblud, 31, newly ordained, going to teach faith and justice in his alma mater high school.

## The Transcript

WILFORT. . . . recorder going? O.K. I'm facilitator this time. We go for an hour and then do Mass. I'll try to keep us somewhat focused. O.K.? Well, let's start. Peter, Spohn's *Studies* article on apostolic celibacy gave you the idea of discussing our growth in celibacy and sexuality. You want to focus that some?

PELEGRINO. Yes. I tried to find a way to do it . . . don't know how successfully. Here's a sheet with ten topics, which might help us a bit.

YOUNGBLUD. Peter--while we're passing these around--there have been some articles in *Human Development* on sexual maturity. One last year even gave stages and phases, like Kohlberg.

PELEGRINO. Cavanagh?

YOUNGBLUD. Yeah, I think so. He showed how we have sexuality even as infants and how we have to get through adolescence to adulthood. Some men get stuck at certain stages. He talks about the kind of man who thinks about sex all the time . . . completely, fascinated by it . . . sees it everywhere. He might be thirty-five years old, but sexually he's just an adolescent. Everyone has to grow out of that kind of stuff.

FRANK. Paul, there's got to be more to sexual maturity than not being fixated or something. There's got to be.

YOUNGBLUD. Well, sure, there is. But his point is that we all

go through the same stages. I don't know whether I agree with that.

PELEGRINO. I can believe that our psychosexual development is fairly uniform. Why have a problem with sexuality? I am already convinced that all of us go through the same developmental stages in moral cognition, faith commitment, and even--I think Gelpi's correct about this--in the way we intellectualize. So I postulate some kind of common sexual development, even among celibates. My question is, How? Cavanagh does not distinguish the stages and experiences that the celibate goes through from the ones a married man goes through. He leaves no room at all for what is manifestly different sexual experience. What sense does that make?

FRANK. You're getting close to the jugular.

WILFORT. Are you saying that we have a sexual development different from married men's?

PELEGRINO. Are you saying we have the same development? I don't see how you can. Look at what a man who marries goes through: First, he decides to marry. He knowingly woos a woman, or maybe several women. He chooses her and is chosen by her, and they make that a public reality. He makes love to her over and over, and if he's any kind of man at all, he is learning tenderness and the joyful rigors of intimacy. He then relates with all other women differently. [FRANK: Or else!] [Laughter.] Now, a celibate does none of those things, as a celibate. And yet a lot of celibates are sexually mature. How do they get there, you see? What do we *do*? That's what I'm interested in.

WILFORT. Peter, isn't it by understanding and doing the stuff that Spohn talked about?

PELEGRINO. Oh, I don't think so, not at all.

SIMEON. Right, that's different. Spohn is talking about religious maturity, how the celibate integrates prayer, apostolic work, and friendships into a human and holy life. Peter's interested in sexual maturity, not spiritual maturity. Right? Peter?

PELEGRINO. Yes. Here's how I see the question. Before the 60s, celibates were presumed to have no sexuality. Any priest who showed signs of sexuality was considered at least strange. Perhaps he had a psychological problem. A man who had persistent sexual fantasies could very easily think there was something wrong with him. We were considered a-sexual, and we thought of ourselves as a-sexual.

FRANK. Hey! I want to tell you what a relief that was, coming out of the Marines. [VOICE: Give us a break!] [Laughter] You have to admit the novitiate seemed pretty unreal.

PELEGRINO. Then, with Vatican II, everything was suddenly about sex. Suddenly it was a public fact that celibates have sexuality. People were shocked by things like Goergen's *The Sexual Celibate*. It was established that celibates are sexual beings and have to mature in sexuality. But "maturing" meant working through psychosexual problems. This was all in place by the 32nd General Congregation, which decided that the question of sexuality was not sufficiently developed to handle.

SIMEON. Some American Jesuits thought it was ripe. Remember that *Studies* about three Jesuits in crises over sex? Around 1978, Janssens turned over in his grave.

YOUNGBLUD. They were real Jesuits? I don't think I read it.

SIMEON. [Laughing] No, but real crises. You would enjoy reading it. Good stuff. What about that, Peter. Any hints about sexual maturing there?

PELEGRINO. Perhaps there are some. They certainly talk about sexual maturity. But they were concerned with men in crisis, and I think that we mature sexually in friendships and intimacies all our lives. I am not interested right now in aberrations and madneses. I am interested in the strong growth that I see has happened, right along, in my own life and in my friends'. Can we find a way of talking about that? That's my question.

FRANK. I remember that *Studies*. I thought the stuff right at the end about living out of your deepest desires was great.

PELEGRINO. It is. Very fine. But that illustrates my problem. The celibate Connolly portrays is long past juvenile self-absorption and adolescent preoccupation with sex. He has a fully developed sense of mutuality. He even has a sense of the possibility of communion--chaste communion--with people he loves. I consider that kind of celibate already sexually matured. How did he get there?

#### ONE: FOUR QUESTIONS, FOUR STAGES

SIMEON. See if this is a way to get at it. Someone says that a man faces four questions as he goes through his life: As a teenager, Who am I?

In his 20s, What am I to do? Then, in his 40s, Whom am I with? And finally when he's about 60, What does it all mean? It may be a wild idea, but could you show how a man faces those successive questions about sexuality?

PELEGRINO. You would have to work it out. The foundational experience--the Who am I--is the choice to hold ourselves as celibate. We had to decide when we were very young that our emerging sexuality was not going to mean physical union with anyone. I suppose that does answer the first question about Who I am.

FRANK. If it does, we don't answer it just when we're young. I think I had to make that choice--of being sexually attracted to someone, but not doing anything physical about it--more than one time, not just when I was young.

PELEGRINO. Perhaps you were acting out a fundamental commitment already made. But it might be better not to try to establish when the choice has to be made. And in any case, we may be answering all four questions all the time, at always deeper levels of affectivity. But still, that choice of who I am sexually has to be made by every one of us. I believe that men who find out late in their lives that they cannot live as celibates--or can, but at too great a cost--had never faced the first question about their sexuality: Who are you? So they couldn't mature sexually any further.

SIMEON. That's saying a lot, Peter, but I think we got somewhere here. Let me tell you this . . . the scholastics come back to college after two years away in the novitiate, and they have to learn all over again how to interact with the girls.

FRANK. That was one problem you didn't have in the old formation.

YOUNGBLUD. Maybe you should have.

SIMEON. Well, I personally think we had some of it during regency, and I tell you what, a Jesuit who didn't have any real hangups went through another maturing in regency. He was working with other people's children, we all were, and once we settled down and realized that we had made a permanent choice of celibacy, we started asking ourselves, What am I doing? That's that second question. I think we go through a time when we see our celibacy as mainly functional.

YOUNGBLUD. You mean that the apostolate needs us to be celibate. I don't know if I agree with that. At least I think it's shallow.

SIMEON. Wait a minute, now. I'm not giving a theological rationale for celibacy. I'm just saying that a man goes through a period when he sees his sexuality as integral to what he is doing. A young married man experiences intercourse as instrumental--it achieves something. That's how a young celibate thinks of his celibacy. If that's shallow, maybe that's the best a regent can do, at his age as a celibate.

YOUNGBLUD. But aren't you talking about celibates maturing in the apostolate?

FRANK. I think you're right, Paul. I think once we're in the apostolate, the growing we do is integrating into our celibacy--prayer and work and friendships.

PELEGRINO. But Frank, "friendship" changes. An adolescent seminarian does not relate with women the way you do. [YOUNGBLUD: He better not.] Celibates clearly grow in being with women, and knowing how to deal with them, or just to enjoy them.

SIMEON. There's your third question: Whom am I with?

YOUNGBLUD. Aw, Sim, that's stretching it.

SIMEON. [Laughing] This whole thing is stretching it. But not really. Novices and collegians have to learn how to interact with intimate friends and with women--as celibates.

PELEGRINO. Of course, there's been a tremendous cultural change from the time when most Jesuits were with women only to preach at them. That fact is, a lot of oldtime Jesuits had good friendships with women. But there's a different quality in our friendships with women now. It's not just that we're not afraid of being friends with women. It's more that we take delight in the friendships.

FRANK. That's sociological development. You think that's sexual maturity?

SIMEON. Well, what else? You want to call it Celibate Lib?

[VOICE: Not bad.] [Laughter]

WILFORT. Wait a minute, O.K.? Let's say what we've said so far. [FRANK: All right]. I think we are distinguishing religious maturity, apostolic maturity, and psychological maturity, so that's a start. Peter . . . um . . . some writers are now talking about sexual maturity for celibates, O.K.? So there must be some experiences to mark the way, and maybe some stages. Sim suggested taking those four questions. The first stage is when

a man answers the question, Who am I?, that he is a celibate. Then, he begins to think of his celibacy as functional, and Sim thinks that's a second stage of maturing, What am I to do? Then Peter pointed out that we grow in being with women.

PELEGRINO. There's more to it than that.

WILFORT. O.K., but anyhow . . . that was the third question, Whom am I with? We didn't get to the fourth question . . .

SIMEON. What's it all mean?

FRANK. We ought to be able to handle that in a couple minutes.

PELEGRINO. I don't think this took us very far.

## TWO: VOILLAUME'S THREE STAGES

YOUNGBLUD. Something in Spohn's *Studies* might help. He quotes René Voillaume's three stages of maturing in sexuality. First we miss genital communion, then we miss having a woman who is our best friend, and then we miss having children of our own. That's what it's all about.

FRANK. Well, then it's all about negatives. We *miss* something-- sex, wife, children. Celibacy is basically a denial.

PELEGRINO. Wait, now. If you miss something, you must want something. The man who misses sex with another has grown to desire another. The man who misses having his own wife has grown even further, to want intimacy with another. He yearns for communion. The man who misses his children has grown into generativity, the autonomous desire to recreate the life that's in him. Those are tremendous advances over the struggle against self-absorption and autoeroticism.

YOUNGBLUD. Wouldn't anyone coming into the Society already have gone through that?

SIMEON. Not necessarily. We don't all mature in the same way at the same time. And that's not just celibates. Some men who marry are still autoerotic. I remember one of the first confessions I heard after I was ordained, a man told me that he enjoyed masturbating more than having intercourse with his wife. I found that hard to believe.

FRANK. I find it impossible.

SIMEON. He might have been a little crazy, but just because a man

marries a girl and takes her to bed doesn't necessarily mean he is no longer stuck on himself. Every man has to learn that sex is communicating and a communion, every single man. So, I am convinced that an early stage of growth has to be out of self-centered sexuality and into a kind of sexual drive to reach out to others.

WILFORT. Let me say this . . . you're talking about communicating . . . but some men think their sexuality is completely inside themselves, a kind of deep personal secret.

YOUNGBLUD. Cavanagh says children think their sex is a secret.

PELEGRINO. They are not the only ones. Some Jesuits recognize sexuality only in their own internal psychological mindset or their private habits. That is very immature. They would be amazed to really find out that they come across to some others as very sexy. They wouldn't know how to handle that. They do not notice what is going on when someone else communicates a sexual message to them, either.

WILFORT. Maybe that's why some Jesuits are lonely. But I had this married friend in graduate school and he asked me if I got lonely, because he did. [Laughing] How can you be lonesome when you have someone to sleep with every night?

SIMEON. Not lonesome, Will. Lonesome means not being with someone you love. You're always lonesome for someone. He wasn't lonesome. He said he was lonely.

FRANK. Well, that doesn't help a lot, Sim. How can a married man be *lonely*?

PELEGRINO. My suspicion would be that even though he's married, he doesn't really belong to another. He probably has never given himself, or accepted the free gift of self from his wife.

YOUNGBLUD. Yeah, but he's married.

WILFORT. I can see it, partially. My friend that I'm talking about, he just wanted to buddy around. He didn't really understand friendship at all . . . By that I mean, we never got beneath the surface. I wasn't all that clear then, but now I would say that he was afraid of intimacy.

FRANK. Man, this is heavy stuff. You guys amaze me. Seems to me celibacy is lonely of itself, because we don't have a wife.

PELEGRINO. There's something very subtle here. I would prefer to think of missing a wife as aloneness, as being alone. That is neither

positive nor negative. And it is different from being lonesome and from being lonely. Both of those are negative. This is complicated.

FRANK. You're right about that.

PELEGRINO. But it's the core. You have to start with the fact that there is no object of loneliness, only the subject, alone and not wanting to be alone. Loneliness is intransitive. Any celibate who does not acknowledge sexual attractions in himself is going to suffer from that loneliness, because he perceives his whole self as intransitive, as not passing over to others in a crucial way. I think that's why Voillaume says that we mature to the point of missing the companionship of our own wife. We mature into yearning for others. I think that is a maturing in sexuality that we have to go through.

WILFORT. I would like us to hit that question of intimacy. I think a lot of older Jesuits are lonely because they are threatened by intimacy. They are just afraid of it. That is one of the biggest problems with community, actually. Men get beyond the self-absorption of formation, get involved together in apostolic work, and at the same time are supposed to be growing into a union of minds and hearts. But they aren't.

YOUNGBLUD. Older men suspect intimacy, because they think it is a weakness.

PELEGRINO. It's not just older Jesuits, and it's not just fear. I personally think some men don't form intimate friendships because they don't like themselves.

SIMEON. And I would say that some men don't form close friendships because we are afraid of our genitality. So we vehemently reject even the opening moves of intimacy. And in doing that, as I see it, we limit our creativity.

WILFORT. We might be getting a little . . . um . . . Let me say the points we made about Voillaume. First: a celibate misses genital communion. All right, he starts off with his sexuality more absorbed in himself, and he grows sexually so that his sexuality leads him to yearn for communion. That's a real growth, kind of other-directed. But at first it's a physical yearning, mostly about having sex. But then a man matures and yearns to know the whole person. Then he wants intimacy, which is when he misses having a wife. This is where we got off onto all that stuff about lonely and lonesome. Oh, and alone. And also about community life and how we're

threatened by intimacy. Finally, intimacy leads to generativity, and we miss having our children. I have to admit I wasn't too clear how that last point applies to celibates.

SIMEON. That's good, Will. You know, there's one thing that's really true in my life, and that's the first growth we talked about. I have to say I think I went through that change. When I was a regent, I was only 22, and I loved it when the little girls from St. Vincent's came to the football games. That was something else. I loved it! [Laughter] . . . gave me such a pleasant itch. Remember that? Boy, I do, I'll tell you. But now, it's altogether different. Now I value some friendships I have with women, and to tell the truth, I don't even notice what they look like. And I would say, about the last stage of missing your children, that I certainly do sometimes miss having my own children. I don't know exactly what that means, or how that's a positive growth, but I do miss having my own children, that's the truth.

FRANK. Every time I'm tempted to miss my children, I think of all my brother and sister-in-law have to go through . . . cure that little itch. [Laughter] No, wait a minute, I shouldn't say that because I really wanted to have children. I wanted it in high school, I wanted it in the Marines . . . and I don't think I feel any different about it now than I did before. It's the same itch, I say. Not much change there.

PELEGRINO. Wait, Frank, you're confusing genitality and sexuality.

### THREE: BOWLING GREEN--GENITAL AND SEXUAL GROWTH

YOUNGBLUD. Confusing them? [Laughing] Can you get them apart?

PELEGRINO. [Also laughing] Maybe I'm the one who's confused. But I do in fact think they have to be thought of as different . . . not completely separate . . . more like a continuum. Genital reaches toward the physical enactment of sex, like sensuous petting and coitus, or masturbation. Sexual reaches toward the enactment of concrete personal qualities and habits, like masculine aggressivity or feminine gracefulness and sensitivity to others' feelings. I think that distinction is important, because obviously the celibate does not mature genitally. We don't know any more about having intercourse when we're 60 than we did when we were 20.

YOUNGBLUD. Hey, I don't know about that.

PELEGRINO. We might have more theory about it. But intercourse is like any human activity--you learn it and become practiced at it. And it is transmuted by experience. For married men, genital relations become a mode of communication, and intercourse becomes a communion. Not for us. We know only what we may have read about it. So a celibate doesn't grow in genitality, but he does mature in sexuality.

FRANK. Well, maybe so. Let me tell you about one friend of mine who thought he matured in his sexuality. This was a priest I met while I was doing CPE at Bowling Green, so none of you knows him. He liked this nun who was also in the CPE program, and they would spend a lot of time together, you know. No big deal, at first. It was innocent enough. But they got to be very close. I mean, real close. In fact, everyone could see that there was something going on. It was more than, quote, love one another, unquote. They were obviously falling in love.

SIMEON. I like the distinction--loving someone and falling in love with them. Some Jesuits sound as if they think that loving is theological and falling in love is sexual. But we are sexual whether we are loving God or a perfect 10.

WILFORT. Yeah, but what's the difference if you love Sweet Charlotte or you're in love with her?

YOUNGBLUD. You're in trouble either way.

SIMEON. I think there's a tremendous difference. It's easy to see but hard to say. The difference is how you come to love her and the kinds of things that you do about it. Falling in love is a kind of chemistry, almost automatic. If you get truly smitten with someone, there's not a lot you can do about it. Plus, a lot of times it's very confusing and upsetting. It's a total upheaval, at least it can be. Whereas, loving someone is more deliberate. It's like a commitment you slowly grow into. And it's a lot more orderly. Anyhow, the two realities are very different--loving and falling in love--two different things.

FRANK. Well, they sure were in Bowling Green. I mean, you could see them falling in love--always together, the way they looked at each other, everything. One week they were just friends and the next week, well, it was rather different. I was really amazed, because he was maybe 38 or 40. I mean, he was no boy, and she wasn't all that young, either. Boy, I wouldn't tell her that! One day I said how close he had gotten to her. I didn't mean

anything by it, I was just making a remark. He sort of leveled with me and said that she was never off his mind any more. He told me that she said the same thing, he was never off her mind. But he said they realized what they were doing. Both of them wanted to stay faithful to the vows. All of a sudden I realized what he was saying in a veiled sort of way--but very clearly--they were doing things engaged couples do. Don't get me wrong, I don't mean they went to bed together. [Laughing] Whoa! You have to say that today! But you could tell he was a little strained about what they were doing, and I don't think he would strain over platonic friendship. So I sort of warned him, that I was afraid they might get in over their heads. But he felt what they were doing was good, for a lot of reasons. He understood himself better than ever. He thought the experience was making him a deeper man, more aware of his own feelings, more affectionate. He understood his own sexuality like never before. And that's what I'm driving at, that he saw this as a maturing in sexuality. See what I mean?

YOUNGBLUD. Sure, I see what you mean. You mean that he was maturing sexually because he was experiencing sex. That's what I was trying to say before. I don't know whether this is the right time to bring up something personal but something happened to me when I was a collegian. It's exactly about this. I got very friendly with this girl in sociology. She was just real easy to be with. We never did anything, I mean, like your friend. But I really liked to be with her, and she really liked to be with me. I had never felt exactly that way before. I dated girls in high school, especially this one girl, but this was different. The guys in my class could see something was going on. They talked to me. At first, I was a little put out. I mean, I didn't see anything to get excited about. But they were right in the long run . . . I had to admit. I think I just had to grow up sexually and realize that . . . well, I don't know what I had to realize. But what I'm saying is that I matured sexually when I had that experience of showing my feelings to that girl. So it seems to me that if a man is going to mature, he's going to have to have experience. Isn't that right?

SIMEON. Depends on what experience you mean. This is exactly where the big difference comes in between genital and sexual experience. I guess maybe most men go through the two of them together, but in my experience you don't have to. I think that your friend at Bowling Green learned how to make physical approaches to his friend, when to touch her and how to wake

her up genitally, and at the same time, he was maturing sexually, awakening to the desire of real human communion with another person as a whole person. That's why he didn't think of what he was doing as anything wrong. Paul's experience was different--not genital--and he still matured, is that right, Paul? [YOUNGBLUD: Well . . .]

FRANK. That's what I'm saying. I'm saying that he knew what he was doing. As far as I'm concerned he, I mean Bowling Green, just didn't want to live the, quote, proleptic life of the kingdom at that particular moment. He didn't want the purity of the angels. He had something else in mind. I personally think that the old-fashioned language is right on--he "fell into temptation." It's that ends-justify-the means stuff.

PELEGRINO. It seems to me that we've moved on to the question of moral integrity, Frank. I think we ought to leave that aside. Anyhow, you're being a little tough on him.

SIMEON. We shouldn't lose what Paul told us. But let me say about romantic entanglements that some men . . . it seems anyhow . . . more or less have to get into things like that. I don't have any idea why. But it seems that they aren't going to mature sexually unless they go through all that emotional turbulence--involved with this or that girl. And even physical stuff. Sometimes, I have to admit, I think to myself that this or that Jesuit--it would do him a world of good to meet some woman who turned him on. You know? Anyhow, I don't worry as much as I used to. I just hope nobody gets hurt or does anything wrong. But I don't feel like blaming them.

FRANK. Yeah. I didn't mean to blame him. But I couldn't do what he did. I couldn't do it. I don't think it's right.

PELEGRINO. I understand that--neither do I.

FRANK. I meant to stress what he said about getting to know himself better. He told me, I mean I understood, that they were doing things he hadn't done in high school or college. And he felt that he was maturing because of it, and I say, all right, I can understand that. But I think that has to mean--he was experiencing genitally in order to grow sexually, as you would put it.

SIMEON. Somehow, that seems to me too stark. He might have been one of those men who seem to have to go through all that commotion or else they can't admit that they have real sexual impulses. Does that make sense?

YOUNGBLUD. I wonder if that's what happened to me.

SIMEON. I wouldn't think so, Paul. Bowling Green was much older. To my mind, you were just going through what every man has to go through. It's no surprise when a younger celibate misreads a situation and doesn't realize the sexual overtones of his actions. Others could see it, but you couldn't.

PELEGRINO. There is the clearest sexual immaturity--an inability or unwillingness to admit sexual feelings as sexual, or to acknowledge the interpersonal reality that she may be feeling sexual attraction, too.

SIMEON. But I would not have gotten uptight about it. You were just beginning your celibate life. You weren't supposed to be matured in celibacy. If you started acting like that now, I would be very surprised.

YOUNGBLUD. Well, you might be letting me off the hook a little bit, because in a way I was irresponsible. I mean, I certainly didn't think of her feelings much, or what I was implying by the way I acted with her.

PELEGRINO. Well, Paul, you were just beginning a celibate life and had to learn how to interact with women as a celibate. We are not born with that as a functional instinct. We have to learn it.

WILFORT. I'm a little bit lost. Did we finish with Bowling Green? I was wondering . . . was he maybe sexually mature but he did unacceptable things because he fell in love?

SIMEON. If that is what happened . . .

WILFORT. Well, yes. Well, a mature man can fall in love, can't he?

#### FOUR: SIMEON--AUTONOMY AND REPRESSION

SIMEON. [Laughing] Let me tell you I would certainly not preclude that possibility. At least up to age 59! But I don't think that falling in love means the same kind of upheaval in an older man as it does in a younger man.

YOUNGBLUD. Why is it different?

SIMEON. Well, I don't know. Teenagers go through tremendous turmoil, like a soap opera. Younger men usually don't know what hit them. But I think maturer men usually do, even if they feel helpless about it. Anyhow, it can happen to anybody.

PELEGRINO. Well, if Rosemary Haughton is correct, celibacy does not make it impossible for a celibate to fall in love. It just makes him unmarriageable! [Laughter]

YOUNGBLUD. Unmarriageable! [Laughing] Wait a minute. What does she mean?

PELEGRINO. Not what you think. You don't lose the ability. She just means that a mature celibate has an established way of relating sexually that excludes genital union. De facto he is not going to get married or even do anything irresponsible.

SIMEON. Maybe, but we don't start off that way. I don't want to bore you, but I'll tell you something that happened to me a long time back. I don't remember a lot about it. I should--it was important in my life. Anyhow, when I got into regency, which was in my home town, I ran into this girl I had known before and frankly I fell in love with her. I had known her, but somehow--well, now I really fell for her. Ton of bricks. First thing I knew, I was very angry about committing myself to chastity before I knew what it was like to really fall in love. Seems strange to me now, but that's how I felt. I was mad at everybody. I know it's a fad right now, but I think it's true that I was even mad at God.

YOUNGBLUD. Did you think about leaving?

SIMEON. You bet your life. That was the only other thing I could think about. [Laughing] I didn't know about this maturing-in-sexuality business. Never gave it a thought. But you know what happened? I finally came to realize that if I wanted that girl, I also wanted to be a Jesuit. I wanted both. So who was I mad at? After all, I was the one who wanted to be a Jesuit.

FRANK. Sim, what are you trying to say?

SIMEON. I don't know. I just thought it was a good story.

WILFORT. You were trying to say that . . . well, it is a good story, Sim. It is. Thank you for telling us.

PELEGRINO. You started on how younger men are more vulnerable to falling in love.

SIMEON. Well, I did feel vulnerable. I mean, all of a sudden, without my doing anything, I was completely over my head. I was telling this girl things about myself that I didn't know I knew! And I wasn't much interested in teaching, I'll tell you. [Laughs] The thing is, you weren't

supposed to have things like that happen to you. I felt as though I had done something wrong. But there wasn't anything I could do about it. Thank God for old Tom Hammer. [Laughing] He would laugh, and quote Shakespeare by the ream. I guess he knew better than to quote the Bible.

PELEGRINO. Why not the Bible?

SIMEON. Oh, I don't know. I wasn't prepared to hear the Bible. For one thing, I felt as though something had been done to me, or God was doing something to me, which I certainly didn't appreciate. Oh, yeah, now I remember why I told you all this stuff. I wanted to say that I came to a kind of autonomy, I mean a sexual autonomy. Before, I was a celibate because I wanted to be a Jesuit and Jesuits were celibates. Chastity meant not masturbating or at least not entertaining yourself with X-rated daydreams. Now, I had to decide for myself what my sexuality was going to be. I had to decide for myself that she and I would be friends, and nothing more than that. I was terrified, tell you the truth, because I didn't know if that was possible, or real. I felt like I was the only one who had ever had to make this decision. And it would last all my life. I had to choose, myself. I guess that's what I'm trying to say. I feel for a man who has to choose celibacy in the concrete, I mean, vis-à-vis a particular person. Anyhow, that's what I think.

#### FIVE: ONE RELIGIOUS IMPERATIVE, ONE SEXUAL IMPERATIVE

PELEGRINO. We're back on that point. If you mean that a celibate has to fall in love in order to mature, I really don't agree with you. I have never been in love, but I tend to think that I am fairly mature sexually. I ought to be at 53.

FRANK. A hell of a lot of men aren't.

SIMEON. I wouldn't argue the point. I'm not sure whether a celibate has to fall in love in order to mature sexually.

PELEGRINO. I don't think the need is to fall in love. The need is intimacy. I am impressed that our modeling on a triune God implies profound mutuality in our nature itself. Our intimacy is not a strategy for mental balance that we learn from the psychologists. It's not a fad. It's not mandated by Vatican II or something. On the contrary, it is a matter of accepting the consequences of the dynamic of our being. Any man who

refuses to take the risks that genuine intimacy involves is going to take a worse risk--of frustration.

FRANK. Man, I'm not sure, Peter. We definitely frustrate the instinct to marry.

WILFORT. Well, Frank, you're frustrated when you can't get something you really want, or when you can't have some pleasure that you promised yourself. But we don't promise ourselves to enjoy sex. On the contrary. So if we've gotten our act together, we're not frustrated. We're just living out another kind of desire that's more important to us than sex is. And you can't say you're deprived of sex, either, as if somebody were unjustly holding back from you something you have a right to.

YOUNGBLUD. What about all the priests who would get married right now if the Church would let them? They felt like celibacy was imposed on them. [FRANK: Maybe they're right.] Are you saying that they are sexually immature?

WILFORT. That's not what I meant.

PELEGRINO. I wouldn't call them sexually immature. They may be sexually very mature. If they have a problem, it may not be in their relationships with women. It may be in their relationship with God, or with the Church. They may need to grow in religious maturity. It would depend.

SIMEON. I would go along with that. I gave a retreat once to a priest who was having a hard time with masturbation. He had never done it until long after he'd been ordained and it really drove him batty. I think he was kind of scared that he suddenly had some sexual aberration. But it wasn't that at all. He realized that he had been angry for a long time, because he felt that his Catholic childhood had made it nearly impossible for him ever to get married. The grace of the retreat was to let go of that anger, and to accept himself as he was, and that included the fact that he had himself chosen to be celibate, actually many times. It wasn't imposed on him. That made it a lot easier for him to be genitally responsible.

FRANK. But you can't duck the hard truth. A lot of priests feel that they really didn't have a choice.

PELEGRINO. That's an extremely delicate point, Frank. I would observe two things. First a religious question: This "cannot do otherwise" is a religious experience that has driven men to various sexual behaviors, some celibate and some not. Jesus' "cannot do otherwise" meant voluntary

celibacy. Origen castrated himself. Gandhi vowed four times not to touch his wife. On the other hand, Thomas More knew he had to marry, and I know an Episcopalian priest whose people pressured him to marry. Frankly, I have given Cana conferences to couples who felt that they were doing God's will by marrying. I trust that impulse, myself.

FRANK. I understand More better than Gandhi. [Laughter]

YOUNGBLUD. You better stick with Jesus. [More laughter]

PELEGRINO. Let me try to say my second point. Spohn's essay led us to separate maturing in the Spirit as every apostle must, and maturing in sexuality, as any man ought to, whether he's an apostle or a truck driver. This is an important point: The religious imperative to be celibate does not wipe out the natural imperative every man feels to mature sexually. Every man instinctively knows how to grow from a boy terrified of and fascinated by his sex to the man friendly with his genitalia, easy with sexy feelings, familiar with his sexual impulses, graceful in his touching of others, aware of his sexual invitations.

WILFORT. That's a beautiful ideal, but sometimes it comes too late. Just before Christmas, one of the guys who was a regent when I was a kid at Jesuit Prep got in a lot of trouble for touching the boys, because some of them felt he was making sexual advances. The fact is, I can tell you they certainly seemed like sexual advances to high school boys, because he did the same thing when I was there. He was just--well, we used to laugh at him, because we liked him and it didn't seem to make any difference. But now there's this big explosion of child abuse. So the president called the provincial and there was a big dustup.

FRANK: How did you find all this out?

WILFORT. We're good friends . . . have been since he taught me as a regent. He was totally appalled at himself and said that he had never felt sexual--I think we would say genital--attraction before, for anybody. Now that is amazing. We were kids and we knew what he was doing. How could a man live about 45 years in this world and not feel genital commotion and all? I find that incredible. But I believe him. Repression is a reality.

YOUNGBLUD. Say more about repression.

WILFORT. Well, Freud says that we hold down in the unconscious mind memories or ideas or impulses that would be too terrible for the ego or the superego to handle. So this guy had unconsciously kept explicit sexual

desires from rising to consciousness. He had repressed them.

YOUNGBLUD. That's what we did in the novitiate. It's hard to believe now, but I would not let myself even think of sex, and any time I thought about it, I would immediately put it out of my mind.

PELEGRINO. That wasn't repression in the technical sense, though. The novice master always gave this business of handling a thought against purity as though it were a temptation against faith.

FRANK. I thought it was the other way around!

PELEGRINO. His task was to persuade us to be perfect in chastity. But the exhortation was too absolute. It made us feel as though we were somehow guilty to even have a sexual image or feeling. Still, the healthy recognized and acknowledged our sexual impulses and desires and then chose to do nothing about them. That's not RE-pression, which would mean that we didn't even recognize our sexual impulses and imaginings. That's SUP-pression.

SIX: WILFORT--CHOOSING WHAT TO DO

WILFORT. I think I had to learn the difference between repression and suppression. Maybe I could tell you something that happened to me, because it's how I learned. O.K.? I guess I had a pretty ordinary family life in the 1950s and all. And, O.K., you know I had the old formation, marching in the long black line. I guess I had the same problems as everybody, and, well, I guess just about everybody had a struggle with chastity. You said you had trouble in regency, Sim, but theology was my worst time. It was awful. I really didn't know if I was going to make it. I wasn't sure I could keep chastity and also keep a real human balance in my life. I actually got scared, sometimes.

FRANK. I'll break in. We all were, Will, sometimes. [SIMEON: I think that's true.]

WILFORT. Well, in theology I was scared, I guess because I thought sex would be nothing but a complete struggle all my life. Anyhow, I got through that--with the help of friends, O.K., and especially this Jesuit from Columbia I've told you about, who was maybe the best friend I could ever have. The funny thing is that he was raised by his mother and aunts

and he didn't know anything about anything! But . . . I'm going on too long, so I should move faster.

FRANK. No you're not. [PELEGRINO: Take your time.]

WILFORT. Well, I want to get to what happened in my pastoral year at St. Ignatius. It was a tremendously active parish, women all over the place, about five secretaries and all. I would hang around the office--talk with the secretaries by the hour--do little funny things like half practical jokes, O.K.? I used to put a flower on their desks a lot of times. [VOICE: Office politics!] Well, I wasn't politicking, O.K., I was flirting. I was really surprised when I realized that. Then, this one secretary started inviting me to her home, and you know how you get with a family, almost become a part of it. Well, then something else developed, O.K., because I found myself touching her a lot and then she--well, her touches became a little different. I mean, I remember she would put her hand on the back of my neck. Well, I guess the truth is that we were really sort of petting, O.K., and that really amazed me. I really did not expect to find myself *doing* those things. I think I was more surprised than guilty, and anyhow, what we did was no big deal. Somewhat like you, Paul, only I got scared, because a couple of times I touched on her breasts, and I thought, Lord God, where is this going?

PELEGRINO. How did you resolve it?

WILFORT. I guess the first thing was--I realized I did not want to hurt her husband and children, and I could not keep up with her without doing that. But also, I had to say to myself, What are you *doing*? I was thinking of my whole life, not just about this. What was I *for*? And I think that's the question that changed things, over a long period of time. I just didn't see any sense in being intimate with her that way and at the same time trying to be normal toward everyone else. It didn't make sense.

FRANK. So you quit seeing her?

WILFORT. I had to, I thought. You know, I didn't want to, but I had to. And it's still a question in my mind. Did I repress something there? Or is that suppression?

PELEGRINO. You didn't repress anything as long as you admitted to yourself that you felt attracted to her.

WILFORT: I couldn't deny that.

SIMEON. Will, the experience really matured you, didn't it?

WILFORT. I sure hope so.

SIMEON. Well, I think it did. You faced that ultimate question, What does it all mean? You had matured far beyond questions about whether you are sexual or not. And you were beyond any questions about your orientation. Couldn't be much doubt about that. I also think you probably didn't have doubts whether you could successfully make love if you two chose to do it. I think when a man shapes his behavior because of what his sexuality *means* to him, I think that man has come to be sexually mature. And I think that's what you did.

WILFORT. I have to admit I never thought of it that way. I felt like I did some things wrong, and I still feel that way. But I guess what you say about maturity is true. But listen, that took a long time, and we've gone for almost an hour, O.K., and maybe we could start to wind up. We should go around . . .

SEVEN: WHOM AM I FOR? AND HOW?

YOUNGBLUD. I'll start, if you want. Let's go back to the top, because I'm not too sure . . . Look, if you don't repress your sexuality and don't express it physically, then what do you do about it?

SIMEON. You want my opinion? I believe that you live in a kind of Ignatian indifference about it.

FRANK. Sim, that is wacko. [Laughter]

SIMEON. [Laughing] You may be completely right. But that is an idea that helps me. I have sexual feelings, sexual desires. I know when someone turns me on, and when phantasms stir me. I know when all that is happening and personally, I think it's fine. I don't do anything about it. [Laughing] Sometimes, just clear out.

FRANK. I certainly understand running away.

SIMEON. Wait, now. I don't mean run away from sexuality or from the impulses I feel. And I also don't mean that I feel guilty or angry, even when someone seems to be trying to flirt with me, which some people do.

YOUNGBLUD. That's one thing I had to learn. I thought I was more or less the only one promoting my own sexiness--I mean when I wasn't thinking about it--but I'm not, am I? None of us is.

SIMEON. Of course not. Also, Frank, when I say I clear out from

some situation, I don't feel deprived or frustrated. I have to admit--I have sometimes been disappointed that I couldn't push a friendship along, develop it into intimacy, because I had a sense that it could lead me and her where I would prefer we not go. I have to admit that. That's been a disappointment one or other time.

FRANK. Well, yeah, but married men face that, too.

SIMEON. You're right about that. And it didn't use to be this way, but we face it in the concrete now. At least I have in my life. I'm one of those celibates who have had close relations with a woman. I won't bore you with the details, but one time I found myself in a situation where we could have gone to bed. It would have been easy. Fact is, it was easier than not to. We were right in the bedroom. But we didn't.

YOUNGBLUD. Can you tell . . . how'd you handle that?

SIMEON. Well, I don't know if it's interesting. Maybe another time. I mentioned it to make a point about indifference. I was being loved and love is a gift and I wanted that love. And I was being invited to express that love, I mean, in a very natural and beautiful way. That was a gift, too, and I tell you, I wanted to do that. I have often wondered that I didn't. And here's my point. The only explanation that makes sense to me is that I was in some sense profoundly indifferent. I wasn't afraid of anything. Or anybody. The whole thing was there to take and I didn't take it. How am I going to explain that?

PELEGRINO. Indifference is as good as anything.

FRANK. Maybe I see what you're driving at. One time I took the parable of the talents and applied it to sexuality. I figured the ten talents is a marriage with a perfect wife, a heap of great kids, and health and money and so forth and so forth. Then, five talents is an O.K. marriage, no fireworks, but doing all right. Or, I figured, maybe that five talents is homosexuality. [Laughs] One thing I felt sure of. Celibacy is the *one* talent! [Laughter]

YOUNGBLUD. Frank--my turn--wacko.

#### EIGHT: MATURING WITH HOMOSEXUAL ORIENTATION

WILFORT: [Laughing] It does raise the question . . . look, I'll take my turn, O.K.? Frank mentioned homosexuality. We can't leave it out.

Do we think that the homosexual matures in sexuality?

PELEGRINO. I've thought about that. I would say yes, paralleling the heterosexual. Every man becomes aware of his sexual feelings and then grows easy with them. Every man has to shake off the immaturity of seeing sex everywhere. Like any other man, the man with homosexual tendencies grows out of being aroused by every person he sees, and as he matures he would be attracted only by certain men, more and more as a whole person.

FRANK. I don't know, Peter. That's too pat.

WILFORT. Well, all this stuff sounds too pat when you categorize it. But a homosexual has to mature in his sexuality, Frank, unless you want to argue that homosexuality is actually immature sexuality. Some people think that.

PELEGRINO. I certainly don't think that. It seems to me that, like anybody else, a man who is homosexual learns how he signals sexual interest or disinterest. He learns how others do it, too. He learns the shared meaning of symbolic acts and words. All of that is maturing.

SIMEON. I'll tell you one thing, though--he can only go so far in sharing. The homosexual priest is up against it. He doesn't dare let others know about himself, because people are unforgiving about homosexuality in a priest. And that makes it very, very tough.

WILFORT. See if this is right. Society doesn't approve of homosexuality--which is what the gay lib movement is all about--to get that approval. But society doesn't approve. I think a man can interiorize that disapproval and disapprove of himself.

SIMEON. Now you're getting to a real problem. Because if a man doesn't approve of himself, he will never become regenerative. I just don't know about homosexuals growing into Erikson's stage of regenerativity. I guess they do.

PELEGRINO. That problem seems to me too theoretical. I would say, the main thing is that a homosexual priest can expect to mature into true human intimacy and mutuality. I mean, an intimacy and mutuality not dominated by genitality, or even expressed genitally. I think I can say that I have known older men of homosexual orientation who had creative friendships.

SIMEON. I guess you're right. I have, too.

PELEGRINO. Here again, as I see it, intimacy is the crucial thing. Intimacy is particularly important for a homosexual, and I mean intimacy that

embraces steady self-revelation and a lot of shared affectivity.

YOUNGBLUD. It would have to be . . . I mean . . . they can't lose their self-respect. That's a dangerous thing you suggest there.

PELEGRINO. Yes, it is. All intimacy entails risk. But also we might have made too much of the risks involved in homosexual intimacy. I don't want to trivialize genital behavior between homosexuals, which I think is serious stuff, but I am not comfortable with rhetoric that makes it worse than murder or violence done to a woman. Seems to me a surprising percentage of the male population survive genital contacts and go on to creative lives.

FRANK. Man, that's dynamite.

YOUNGBLUD. What about men who aren't sure about their sexual orientation? Last June at ordinations someone said that your sexual orientation shouldn't make any difference. Celibates don't do anything anyway.

FRANK. Of course it makes a difference, Paul. Anybody who doesn't know that by ordination is not just immature, he's sick.

SIMEON. That might be a little bit strong, but it does lead to absurdities. There was a man in a community where I lived--he was middle-aged--and I think he hadn't accepted his homosexual orientation yet. Everybody knew it. He would light up when his young men friends would come around--which was all the time. He was a different person around them--yatter away, joking, full of life. He would take over the party. When he was just with Jesuits, he was pleasant enough--a good worker--a terrific worker--but quiet and sometimes kind of withdrawn. And anyhow, his only real friends in the Society were young men in studies. I mean, it was obvious what was going on.

YOUNGBLUD. Why did you think he didn't accept his homosexuality?

SIMEON. Well, I guess I say that because he didn't have any peer friends. I believe if he accepted himself, he would have been able to have good friends among his peers, which is much more satisfying than having young buddies. But I may have been all wrong about him.

FRANK. Are you talking about homosexual panic?

SIMEON. That may be, Frank. I have to say that I'm out of my depth here.

PELEGRINO. Could be a lot subtler problem involving androgyny. One of the formation directors thinks that Jesuits have a broader personality than the male population at large. We develop fairly early some traits that are considered feminine--we are interested in others as persons, quick to

form friendships, develop deep levels of affectivity, learn to talk about ourselves. He feels that an androgynous Jesuit who is also insecure in sexual orientation could easily confuse androgyny for homosexuality. But maybe we have gotten too far into psychology.

WILFORT. It's a good point, though. O.K.? Um . . . anybody? Who did we leave out? Frank?

FRANK. Well, this is a very different topic. But for my turn . . . This might be the place to hit something we skirted. I think when a man takes vows, he has to believe that he is going to gain a complete mastery over himself. He has to believe that, or he wouldn't swear to live chaste forever. You know, we all thought that we would get rid of our worst vices, or anyhow, God would root them out for us. That doesn't happen. We're the same all our lives. Saint Thomas said somewhere that we achieve only political control over our passions. Actually, his word was "diplomatic." He said we never get to be like a dictator, telling our passions when to boil up and when to simmer down. Instead, we're like a diplomat, balancing and arranging, as if our passions were a bunch of unruly Irishmen in a ward and we're the ward boss trying to keep the peace. That's what I would want to add. I think maturing as a sexual man means getting better at keeping the peace. Well, it means more than that . . . positive . . . but at least, keeping the peace. Diplomatically.

YOUNGBLUD. I like that, Frank. I was with this guy in studies--he left--who really got hot for this girl in his class. Every time he saw her, he would be zonked for days--depressed, hated studies, hated Jesuits, all that good stuff. He wanted to be a Jesuit, but boy, he was determined he could see that girl when he wanted to and not get zonked. Talk about beating your head against a wall.

WILFORT. You can't keep that up for long. There was another guy when I was in studies--he was a Jesuit--decided it wasn't worth it for him to swim nude. He didn't say anything about it, but he never had done it as a boy and I could tell that it just unsettled him. I think it was a sign of sexual maturity that he kept swimming but simply started wearing a suit. No big deal.

NINE: PELEGRINO--GREAT GIFT, GREAT CHARISM

PELEGRINO. Let me pick it up there. We don't want to get into the religious angle of it too far, but that does overlap with maturing. Celibacy is in fact not merely a discipline--deciding not to spend time with this woman, deciding to wear a suit--it is a profound renunciation. My experience of this is a thorough affirmation of life in the Spirit. But I know that this affirmation is founded in a renunciation, functions through a renunciation, and will never not involve a renunciation.

YOUNGBLUD. Pretty thorough.

FRANK. Like I said . . .

PELEGRINO. But wait, now. Renunciation is just the foundation. Contenance is a charism, not given to everyone. But it functions within a gift which is given to everyone. Sexuality. That is a gift given to everyone, even if not equally. It seems to me that Frank had something in his application of the parable of the talents.

FRANK. I wasn't real serious about it.

PELEGRINO. Well, all right. But perhaps homosexuality is the five talents. Perhaps celibacy is only one talent, when it comes to sexuality. That's all right. As long as you remember that each is a gift, and that the reward for doing well with your gift is the same to everyone. Just don't bury it.

FRANK. Hell, that's exactly what I did with my sexuality!

[Laughter]

PELEGRINO. [Laughing] You were wrong! That's all there is to it. We have buried the gift of sexuality. Under morals. We moralized it almost dead, as if the whole law were about sex and vice versa. It is not--it is about love. I expect every celibate to obey that law in its deep truth, with no sham, no counterfeit. If that means anything at all, it means close and enduring friendships among us. And also friendship wherever we are given it.

YOUNGBLUD. Sim, tell us what you're thinking or wipe that grin off your face.

SIMEON. [Laughing] I'm just remembering one Jesuit, he's around my time, who does adult ed for a diocese. He is wonderful to watch with his groups, which I've done a couple of times. He talks with one woman,

completely absorbed, then with another, completely absorbed. He knows how to listen to a woman. He knows what is being communicated. They love him. But he's also a man's man. Watches football games on Sundays, all that. The men want him around too. Everyone obviously knows that he is not out to get anything for himself. I'm laughing because his life and mine are so different from what we expected in the novitiate.

PELEGRINO. Oh, yes, isn't that the truth. I became a Jesuit because I had a vocation. I took a vow of chastity because I felt a peremptory summons from God. I did not know when I took it whether I could grow into a normal man in any sense. I just trusted. For a long time I was looking for my own growth. When I went to Europe, I went looking for my "perfection," including perfection in celibacy, in chastity.

FRANK. I'm right in there with you, so far.

WILFORT. I am, too.

PELEGRINO. You might drop out now. I cannot think that personally any more. I see celibacy as a form of life embedded in human society itself. My uncle was celibate in his way--he was a Jesuit, Paul, died a few years back--warm, but very formal and hedged in. He was not really allowed to have intimate friends. I have them, male and female. He embodied for the Church a life of orderly virtue. I have to embody for the Church loving community.

FRANK. I'm still with you. At least I think I am.

WILFORT. I am, too, but I think we might have gone off onto the religious angle of celibacy.

TEN: SIMEON: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

WILFORT. Um . . . Sim, we better move along. You're the only one left, O.K.?

SIMEON. Yeah. I've been thinking what to say. There are a couple of things we didn't cover and we should have. Masturbation, for one--we've joined the great conspiracy of silence about it. And we're talking about sexual maturity.

FRANK. Not a lot to say about it.

SIMEON. That's true, so it wouldn't have taken long to say it, right? Anyhow. Another one is sublimation--though that may be too purely

psychological. I don't believe in it anyhow.

PELEGRINO. Why don't you believe in it?

SIMEON. That might be too much to say. But I don't accept Freud's hypothesis that all human energy is radically sexual, and you just sublimate some of it to other things.

PELEGRINO. If that's what he said.

SIMEON. [Laughing] You're right. If that's what he said. Good thing we didn't cover it! Anyhow, I would like to pick up where you left off, Peter, to make a point about mature celibacy. I have already said very frankly that I really am content in my life, not frustrated, not disappointed.

YOUNGBLUD. Tell them what you answered the novices. Sim gave a talk to the novices, and one of them asked him, "How do you think about celibacy?" And you said--"regretfully." [Laughter]

SIMEON. [Laughing] Maybe I did, but that was 25 years ago. So, you see, I have at least matured in my commitment to celibacy. But there's more to it than that. I truly do not regret not having married, though I used to say I did. And a little later, I used to say that I regretted not having my own children. But I don't now. Not really.

YOUNGBLUD. Then Voillaume is wrong.

SIMEON. No. Why was he wrong? You mean, because I don't miss having my children any more? If you outgrow wanting physical union and if you outgrow yearning for the unique woman who is your deepest friend, why shouldn't you outgrow this urge to have your own offspring? But I tell you what, Voillaume--I mean those three stages we lifted from him--doesn't say anything about one very crucial development in my life. It amazes me now, but when I was young, I thought I would get along without friends. I learned better. Slowly, though, because later I thought I could get along without intimate friends. Some of my Jesuit brothers taught me different. Thank God. I'll be eternally grateful to them. And for a long time, it was my own need for friendship that drove me to reach out. Now, I reach out to others because of *our* need. Does that make sense?

WILFORT. It does to me. [PELEGRINO. Oh, yes.]

SIMEON. I don't want to go on too long, but I think it's important. Right now, I do not have enough time for the people whom I love. And I tell you, I have really come to understand that sexual maturity means living with the sense that sexual impulses and genital yearnings are not one person's

alone. They are always among us, like the meaning of words.

FRANK. I like that, Sim. Is that what you're driving at?

SIMEON. I'll wake you up, Frank. I need to tell you something that happened to me a couple of years ago. Won't take long. I was giving spiritual direction to a very fine nun. After a year or so, I saw that she was in love with me--she let me know that. Now to tell the truth, when I was 35 I would not have noticed that and when I was 45 I would probably have rejected it as egotistical. And in both cases I would have hurt her in some way or other--giving direction or being a friend. But when this happened I was fifty-whatever I learn slowly, but I learn. So, I accepted the situation for what it was, and then the question came to my mind whether I would be able to keep directing her. You know, would it be better to break off our relationship?

WILFORT. I don't see why you would have to do that.

SIMEON. With that kind of emotion involved, spiritual direction gets pretty cloudy. Anyhow, I wasn't sure I wanted to get into all that stuff just at that time. And I wasn't too sure about what I felt, either. I talked to Bill about it--he and I go back a long way--and he suggested something that surprised me. Why think of breaking off the relationship? Spiritual direction might get to be impossible, but why not become her spiritual friend?

YOUNGBLUD. Like Francis and Clare.

PELEGRINO. Or like Ignatius and Isabel Roser, for that matter.

SIMEON. Ronald Knox wrote to a married woman friend for decades and her letters were perfumed! Anyhow--Frank, are you listening?--this is my point, before we all fall asleep. I think we can mature in sexuality to the point that we recognize sexual attraction, even strong sexual attraction, and not have to walk away from the relationship. We get to know with our whole being that we don't need to possess the other or to be held by the other. I mean, we know that we do not need genital expression of our love. We can love well and truly without it.

YOUNGBLUD. You mean, even where it would be the natural thing to do, to go on and do.

SIMEON. Yes, Paul, that's what I'm saying. There are risks. I mean there are real risks. Maybe--I have to say this--maybe some men never have to struggle with the risks. I do, but I am not concerned. And there's one final thing. I am not afraid, when I get into a friendship, that my motives are self-centered and I'm just in this for the fun of it. I know

the signs of that. And anyhow, any loving friendship brings you enough pain and struggle to educate you out of selfishness. That's what it's all about, isn't it? So, that's what I think. Whether you wanted to know it or not.

YOUNGBLUD. We did. We wanted to know it. Yes. Thanks a lot.

SIMEON. But I think we're getting tired. We ought to quit.

WILFORT. Maybe so. I'll type up some notes, O.K.? It's all very interesting.

FRANK. I have to admit, I never talked about sexuality this way before.

PELEGRINO. We talk about a lot of things in ways that you wouldn't ordinarily find. That's one of the reasons why we do this.

WILFORT. Paul, flick off the recorder, please. Let's remember to talk at dinner whether to have another discussion on . . .

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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CELIBACY AND HISTORY. Early on, histories of celibacy in the Church tended to focus on the politics of the question. Henry C. Lea, with strong anti-Catholic tendencies, in his *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church* (Philadelphia, 1867) was an early writer to challenge the belief that the discipline of celibacy goes back to apostolic times. His study has shoddy references, but it has been reprinted several times up to 1932. More recently, scholars pay attention to the social realities affecting the discipline of celibacy and even the clergy themselves: John

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(Evanston: Seabury Press, 1975). He also toyed with the notion that the celibate is to mature in his sexuality. An earlier and headier approach was made by L. Vander Kerken, S.J., in *Loneliness and Love*, trans. J. Donceel, S.J. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967). Gradually, authors shook off the somewhat defensive stance adumbrated by Vander Kerken's title, learned to separate off fairly clearly the moral, psychological, and religious matters, and concentrated on maturing in sexuality itself. That has been difficult. See, for instance, Matungulu Otene, S.J., "Celibacy in Africa," *Review for Religious*, vol. 41, no. 1 (January/February, 1982), which ultimately turns to moralizing. But even when writing about a particular angle of sexuality, many authors writing today think about celibate sexuality in terms of growth, maturation, and even staging. One instance is William F. Kraft's article "Homosexuality and Religious Life," *Review for Religious*, vol. 40, no. 3 (May/June, 1981), which remarks that some apparent homosexuality is actually "immature sexuality." A very early broad-gauged exploration of maturing in sexuality is in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, X, 2 & 3 (March-May, 1978): Robert J. Fahey, Madeline Birmingham, r.c., Virginia Sullivan Finn, and Jesuits William J. Connolly, William A. Barry, and James J. Gill: "Affectivity and Sexuality: Their Relationship to the Spiritual and Apostolic Life of Jesuits: Comments on Three Experiences."

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THE AUTHOR

Father Carlos Valles is a writer of **best sellers** in India, both in English and Gujarati. Through this present book he is **now introduced** to us in America. Born in Spain, he entered the Society at Loyola in 1942 and was sent to India in 1949. He became so proficient in the Gujarati language that his books won unusual literary prizes in 1960 and 1968. In 1980 he won the prestigious "Ranjitram Gold Medal," the highest Gujarati literary award--never before bestowed on one whose mother tongue was not Gujarati. He has also steadily directed retreats for Jesuits, particularly the tertian fathers.

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