

Henry,

I have been as it's called, "lurking" at your website and reading the stories and I decided it was time for me to share. I thank you for starting the website as it really has a lot of information. What makes my story so unique is that the priest I am involved with is a childhood friend and we are also the same age---56 years old. We pretty much grew up together and maintained our friendship over the years. I am now a widow and have been one for the past 10 years. Before he became a Catholic priest, he was an Anglican priest and was married; he has 2 grown children from that marriage. I knew his late wife; they knew my late husband, and we were all close friends. When his wife died, he was devastated as I was when my husband died. I was there for him when she died and he was there for me when my husband died. Anyway, after she died, he decided to become a Catholic priest. This was 14 years ago.

Anyway, Fr. Paul and I kept up our friendship even when I moved away from where we grew up together. He wound up being assigned to the diocese in the town where we grew up after his ordination, too. He has always there for me and my late husband and has seen us through some tough times, too. We did the same for him because that's what friends do. When my husband died, he came up to support me and my kids at my husband's funeral..

Then, Fr. Paul told me that he was being assigned to the diocese where I am currently living. This was about a year ago. I was so happy when he told me because he's my oldest friend. We have spent many an evening just talking about old memories, enjoying good conversation and just being with each other. Our respective children have gotten the biggest kick out of hearing us talk about what it was like for us growing up together as kids as well as what it was like for us growing up as young adults in the 70's.

Then it happened. We both realized that we were in love with each other. Neither one of us realized it at first but our respective children did and they told us so. They think that we should be together and get married; however, that's impossible because he's a Catholic priest. Needless to say, it's been very hard on both of us and we both want to be together as husband and wife. So far, we haven't done anything that would be considered as "scandalous behavior" but we both know that day will eventually come if we don't make some decisions soon. This is especially hard on him as he loves being a priest, yet he loves me and wants to be with me as my husband.

He is thinking about the laicization process but I told him that I just want him to be happy and if that means he remains a Catholic priest, so be it. That's how much I love him. We both wish that celibacy was optional and that Catholic priests could marry but we both realize that this probably won't be changed anytime soon; at least probably not in our lifetime. Therefore, he will probably go through with the laicization process as he knows that's the only way, as far as we know, that we can be together and get married in the Catholic church.

Well, that's it. That's our story. I am hoping it will help others who may be going through what we are going through. This way, they will know they are not alone.

Please keep us in your prayers. Maybe one day the Catholic Church will allow optional celibacy and Catholic priests to marry.

Take care and God bless you.

Deborah