disuse, to require the candidate for the diaconate to take a pledge of abstinence from liquor for a period of five years after ordination. Aside from spiritual motives, this was probably thought of as a preventive, or as a means of fostering sobriety. Whether or not this pledge is made, the young priest is faced with the unique fact that the sacramental use of wine is in his daily celebration of the Eucharist. In 1970 Russell Smith pointed out that “this single factor makes the alcoholic priests’ recovery a special and more difficult achievement than that of any other group.”

USE GRAPE JUICE AT MASS?

Sacramental wines vary in alcoholic content, as Father Pfau discovered when he was tempted to a “slip” from abstinence. During the height of the campaign for prohibition, one priest is said to have petitioned the Pope to permit the use of unfermented wine at Mass. He was considered an “extremist” in his views, but in 1974 an authorization came from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith permitting alcoholic priests to use unfermented grape juice in the Mass. With this change of regulations, priests with a drinking problem are no longer faced with the temptation of altar wine. It should be noted, however, that the use of wine is a regular element of Jewish religious services, but that there is no known incidence of alcoholism among Jewish rabbis.

WHAT INFLUENCE IS CELIBACY?

Celibacy too is a characteristic that distinguishes the Catholic priests from other clergy and from other professions. Previous surveys of drinking patterns show “the single and the divorced or separated had a higher proportion of heavy drinkers on the average than the married or widowed, both among men and women.” Marital status is interpreted as a factor of life adjustment, and one may expect that those whose marriage has ended in divorce or separation find themselves maladjusted.

We are talking here, however, of men whose sacerdotal commitment requires them to be unmarried. We may surmise that celibacy itself is a “factor of life adjustment” for which the priest has had more preparatory training than other people ever get in anticipation of marriage. The so-called “problem” of celibacy has been widely discussed as one of the reasons why a certain proportion of men have resigned from the priesthood. In a survey of diocesan priests in 1960 we asked the

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29 Prodigal Shepherd, pp. 219–221. It was this experience that convinced him that alcoholism is an illness.
30 Bland, Hibernian Crusade, p. 250, cites this as an example that Father George Zurcher, who was a strong advocate of enforced legal prohibition, “seems to have grown more extreme in his views.”
31 Cahalan et al., American Drinking Patterns, pp. 31f.