

4. Eight skills needed for celibate living (summary points)

From Martin Pable OFM Cap. Article "Skills Needed for Celibacy". *Review for Religious*, May-June 1998.

A) Three Intrapersonal Skills:

1. Self knowledge: (apply this to understanding our own sexuality)

- **Self awareness:** Be aware of inner feelings and tendencies. St Teresa of Avila says "Almost all problems in the spiritual life stem from lack of self-knowledge". Without self-knowledge, conversion, change, coping are not possible.

2. Enjoyment of one's own company:

- A capacity for solitude, the ability to be alone. For times when nobody is around: to be able to accept solitude or loneliness and deal with it creatively.
- Being grounded in the love of God. Skill required is to make oneself available for the experience through regular personal **prayer**.

3. Prizing one's sexuality:

- Appreciating one's sexuality as positive life energy.
- Sexual energy is a positive gift of God that needs to be channeled toward nongenital forms of love and creativity.
- Coming to a peaceful sense of ownership of one's sexual orientation.

B) Five interpersonal Skills

1. Caring presence:

Celibacy is meant to free our power to love all God's people, to be creative & life-giving in spiritual ways.

- o Ability to listen, to be there even when we cannot solve the problem.

2. Appropriate confiding:

- o Self-disclosure: to be willing and able to reveal one's inner world to others.

3. Developing good friendships:

- o "A circle of friends is essential to the personal development, and consequently the ministry, of the priest. ... Conscious of the integral relationship between friendship, personal growth, and ministry, it is vital to create an environment in which priests feel free to form friendships with many persons, clerical and lay". (US Bishops on Priestly Life & Ministry).

4. Setting boundaries:

- o Not the same as avoiding intimacy of every kind, or denying sexual feelings.
- o Choosing to act on prior commitments (as do all people who have commitments).
- o Includes limits on time and energy invested in relationships.

5. Generativity:

- o **Life-giving chastity.** Giving life. Concern for the next generation.
- o What keeps us going, apart from faith? Conviction that we are making a difference in people's lives. We are giving life.