Everyday Familialism in the Emmanuel Community

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Abstract *Familialism is generally understood as a conceptual framework aimed at organizing political life, manifesting through mobilizations in the public sphere. Recent Catholic mobilizations in Europe, focusing on issues related to sexuality and gender, have brought attention to the importance of familialist networks that intersect with religious, associative, and political spheres. Within the French context, several researchers have underscored the pivotal role played by the Emmanuel Community, the largest Catholic Charismatic community in Europe. This paper aims to direct attention to the development of familialism within the Emmanuel Community, from a sporadic form of activism to the scaffolding serving for the construction of social forms within the Emmanuel Community. Referred to as everyday familialism, this phenomenon can be identified through the dissemination of religious resources that specifically target families, as well as through organizational dynamics and the promotion of a distinct clerical gender regime. This article builds upon broader doctoral research that examined the institutionalization of the Emmanuel Community. The materials used here consist primarily of semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the organization, as well as archival sources from the movement and its publications. All interviews were conducted in French; quotes were translated into English by the author.*[1]

Keywords *Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Catholicism, Community, familialism, New Ecclesial Movements, Sociology of Religion*

1 Many thanks to Petre Maican for reviewing and refining my English. I also thank Maren Freudenberg and Astrid Reuter for their suggestions.

1. Introduction

The Emmanuel Community originated as a Catholic Charismatic prayer group that was established in Paris in 1972 by two lay individuals: Pierre Goursat (1914–1994) and Martine Laffitte-Catta (1942). Currently, the Emmanuel Community is present in approximately 60 countries and boasts a membership of around 12.000 individuals.[2] It is regarded as one of the most vibrant New Ecclesial Movements[3] in Europe (Landron 2004). Of the 12.000 members of the Community, most of whom are from upper social classes, approximately half reside in France. Out of the total membership, 275 individuals are priests, while 225 are "consecrated in celibacy".[4] Notwithstanding, the Community's activities extend beyond these numbers, encompassing various associations and affiliated companies. The influence of the Emmanuel Community can also be noticed in the ways of expression of mainstream Catholicism. For instance, Emmanuel hymns are sung on a weekly basis in numerous French-speaking European parishes.

In the 2010s, during the period of heightened politicization of gender and sexuality issues, in which religious groups, especially Catholics, actively engaged, the organization gained public prominence in France (Béraud 2020: 241). During the Catholic mobilizations against same-sex marriage (2012–2013), several researchers highlighted the significant political role played by the Emmanuel Community, particularly through its yearly gatherings in Paray-le-Monial, Bourgogne[5] (Brustier 2014; Béraud and Portier 2015; Dolbeau 2021). Through a range of rhetorical strategies and repertoires of action (Stambolis-Ruhstorfer and Tricou 2018), these Catholics sought to

2 Source: https://emmanuel.info/qui-sommes-nous/ (accessed on September 5, 2023).

3 Broadly speaking, this term refers to communities that emerged in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Catholic Charismatic communities are integral components of these New Ecclesial Movements.

4 In the 1970s, the concept of 'consecrated celibacy' gained significant traction among New Ecclesial Movements, encompassing a diverse array of commitments that variously approximate a religious lifestyle. Individuals committed to this path undertake to live by the evangelical counsels of poverty, obedience, and chastity – expressed through continence – via vows whose canonical status can differ markedly from one movement to another. Often, these individuals wear distinctive attire and generally live in communal settings. Beyond this basic definition, the lifestyle is marked by a notable degree of heterogeneity. For further reading on the subject, cf. van Lier 2022.

5 Organized since 1975.

defend a concept of 'family' (nuclear, heteronormative, and often large), that can be aligned with the category of familialism.

In a 1999 article, French sociologist Rémi Lenoir provided the following definition of familialism: "[familialism is] the totality of political movements and actions primarily carried out through the mobilization of local and national elites (lobbying, orchestrated press campaigns by private associations, occasionally recognized as having public utility), with the objective of 'defending the family'" (Lenoir 1999: 77). Lenoir distinguishes two sources of this familialism within the French context: one stemming from the state, which the Third Republic relied upon starting from the late 19th century (the family as a means of "preserving political order through morality" in response to the issue of "depopulation"[6]), and the other originating from the Catholic Church, which, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerged "in the form of various philanthropic movements associated with social Catholicism" aiming to "reinstate a Catholic moral order" by promoting "large families" (ibid.: 77).

The objective of my contribution is to slightly shift the focus of familialism from a form of Catholic activism in the public sphere on issues related to marriage, sexuality, and gender, towards a form of everyday activism. Following Sylvie Ollitrault's work on environmental activists (Ollitrault 2008), I propose to study everyday familialism as a central driver of the construction of social forms within the Emmanuel Community. Although everyday familialism is not a social form in itself, it operates as an interpretive model of pre-existing social forms (cf. Introduction to this volume). Indeed, everyday familialism operates both at the local level, where the dominant social form is that of the group, and within the overarching governance of the Emmanuel Community, where the dominant social form is that of the organization. Furthermore, across the various tiers of the Emmanuel Community, the pronounced centrality of the married couple underscores the significance of the dyad.

In order to study these different levels, I first will demonstrate how everyday familialism manifests in the religious offers targeted at families (e.g.

6 "The concept [of familialism] was indeed part of a movement aimed at promoting natality. Following the defeat against Germany in 1870, depopulation was construed as both the cause of this calamity and a calamity in its own right. Terms such as 'declining birth rates' and 'depopulation' were reflective of a prevailing sentiment among certain sectors of the French elite at the time, who viewed France as a nation in decline" (ibid.: 76).

printed materials, specific events), as well as from an organizational perspective. To do so, I will focus on the parish level. I will illustrate how the practical organization of parishes and the process of couples' commitment, shaped by everyday familialism, influence local group dynamics. In the second section, focusing on a more meso-social level, I will delve into the internal governance of the Emmanuel Community. I will illustrate how the governance model of this organization, predicated on the dyad of the married couple, leads to a distinct division of religious work. Lastly, I will demonstrate how everyday familialism is also manifested in the priestly masculinity promoted among the clergy members, which aligns quite closely with the 'spousal' model described by sociologist Josselin Tricou (Tricou 2021: 349).[7]

2. "You don't feel like creeps who bring in their bawling kids": The parish and the family

The first aspect, which is arguably the most immediately apparent, is the emphasis placed on the nuclear family and marital relationships in the discourse promoted by the Emmanuel Community, both internally and externally, at the group level (e.g. parish, prayer group) or the organization level (the Community as a whole). This emphasis is manifested through the regular publication of prescriptive materials on marital relationships and the upbringing of children and teenagers. It is important to note that this promotional effort should be understood within the broader context of the Catholic Church's increasing emphasis on family and marital relationships since the 1980s.[8] However, following Anthony Favier's observations (Favier 2021: 57–58), it is worth mentioning the Catholic Church's historical influence on family and couples counseling prior to the 1980s, particularly through the development of the profession of marriage counselor.[9] The involvement of Catholics, particularly women

7 In his doctoral thesis, Josselin Tricou examines the four main regimes of "clerical gender" at play in contemporary Catholicism. The spousal regime is one of these regimes.

8 Especially following the 1980 Synod on the Family, from which the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* was derived.

9 Anthony Favier draws upon the work of Geneviève Valla-Chevalley in this context. In her book on the history of marital and family counseling, she elaborates: "Even though it has been institutionally developed in France since the 1970s, marital and family counseling gradually emerged in France, as well as in other American and European countries, in the first half of the 20th century. It has been constructed from several

working in the healthcare sector, in promoting "integral education for couples" (ibid.: 58), represents a significant aspect of the forms of activism observed in my field. This promotion extends beyond printed material. For instance, the family sessions organized annually since 1983 are consistently the most popular weeks during the summer gatherings in Paray-le-Monial. These religious offers, which are open to a broad Catholic audience, are also accessible in local parishes through a series of courses affiliated with an Emmanuel association called "Amour et Vérité" ('Love and Truth'[10]).

The second point worth mentioning pertains to the organization of parishes entrusted to community priests. These priests place a primary focus on the families within the parishes (whether members of the Emmanuel Community or not), offering specific activities for parents (e.g. dinners, courses), teenagers and young adults (e.g. prayer groups, weekends), and children (e.g. dedicated liturgy of the Word during Mass, nurseries). This family-oriented religious approach, reminiscent of the tailored group approach observed in Evangelical Protestantism[11], is not exclusive to the Emmanuel Community. Similar tendencies can be found in other New Ecclesial Movements as well as numerous ordinary urban parishes (Aubourg 2016). However, in the case of the Emmanuel Community, the emphasis on the family dimension emerges as a significant factor influencing the choices of the interviewed parishioners, whether they are members of the Community or not. Sophie, a woman in her

more or less ancient roots, both Anglo-Saxon and French, among which are two main 'parents', quite different in nature, one being Catholic religious and the other secular feminist. […] One of these 'parents' has been the Catholic lineage of marriage preparation, which offered – and later mandated for the religious celebration of marriage – a period of reflection with clergy members and other couples. This movement reflected as early as the 1920s a growing awareness of the importance of marital life, particularly through the Association of Christian Marriage (founded by Abbé Jean Violet in 1918)" (Valla-Chevalley 2009: 13–14).

10 Founded in 1981, this association is dedicated to the pastoral care of couples and family. Source: https://emmanuel.info/france/amour-et-verite/ (accessed on September 5, 2023).

11 "From this array of activities emerges the impression of mass sociability, yet tailored to meet a multitude of individual needs. […] One must be cautious of appearances: the megachurch is not a train station or a supermarket where individuals can get lost in the crowd without ever being called to account for their motivations. Megachurches uniformly emphasize the identification of newcomers and underscore the importance of directing them towards groups and activities that are likely to suit their needs." (Fath 2008: 39)

forties from an aristocratic background, describes how she transitioned from a parish led by another New Ecclesial Movement to joining a parish under the guidance of the Emmanuel Community:

> *Sophie:* That was also one of the very strong reasons for me, because when I found this parish [run by Emmanuel], I arrived six and a half months pregnant, so I quickly had a little girl, then we had a second one after that, and the way the children are looked after is brilliant. So that already allows… already there are lots of other parents with children, so you don't feel like creeps who bring in their bawling kids. And that's it. There were structures. […] It wasn't a pretentious thing at all, people came, there were lots of families with lots of children, there was a little explanation of the Gospel for the children during mass. There was even a nursery, and at first, I used to take them to the nursery. So that helped me to live my faith more serenely on Sundays and to be a bit cooler during mass. […] The priests have a way of talking… and I think it's linked to the Emmanuel approach, which is that it's very grounded in reality. In other words, they don't give you moralistic speeches about the fact that you're really sinners, that "you've got to get a move on", well if "you've got to get a move on" they tell you differently.
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> *I:* And that was a difference from what you'd experienced [in your former parish]?
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> *Sophie:* Well completely… so [the New Ecclesial Movement in charge of this parish], I don't believe I stayed there long enough to… I thought it was not bad musically, but it was still very elitist as… I think I had to go to this parish for two years and never speak to anyone. No one ever spoke to me.
>
> *I:* Elitist, in what sense do you mean that?
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> *Sophie:* Well, like… I wasn't married, I was a student, I was too old for youth groups, and so maybe I didn't do enough, but I really met… unlike what I have here […] where there's a community beyond the community people I mean, we have a parish community.[12]

In Sophie's remarks, it is evident that the emphasis on families goes beyond the tangible structures mentioned earlier, such as the liturgy of the Word for

12 Interview with Sophie, layperson, January 29, 2020.

children. This focus creates a pervasive sense of familiarity nurtured by an inherent *entre-soi* dynamic that already exists within the Community (reinforced by the recruitment of members from high social classes). This familiarity is also fostered through a close relationship with the priestly team, which is then contrasted with the group experiences from the previous parish settings, where there may have been a perceived distance between clergy and laity, or disapproving looks directed towards parents with noisy young children during Mass.

This sense of familiarity within the group is accompanied by a rapid process of entrusting couples with responsibilities by the parish team. New parishioners, as a couple, are quickly given the task of managing the courses they themselves have previously taken, such as baptism preparation or marriage preparation. This circular model, at times resulting in an accumulation of commitments, reflects the internal functioning of the Emmanuel Community. The process is primarily based on an affinity between marital/family commitment and religious commitment, as expressed more or less explicitly in the interviews with my respondents. Several devoted women parishioners establish a connection between the expectations associated with the different roles they undertake in the parish and their role as mothers. They emphasize the nurturing and caring aspects inherent in their tasks, often describing them as acts of "motherly care". Devotion, solicitude, and compassion for others are all regarded as "feminine attributes" (Béraud 2007: 306) and are consistently required in these different contexts. Françoise, a woman in her fifties from an aristocratic background, is actively involved in a parish run by the Emmanuel Community in Belgium, despite not being a member herself:

> I've always been very touched by children, it's always been… my field has always been children more than anything else. What touched me was to see this [parish] team that was completely dedicated to children, with tools that I didn't know, songs with gestures, very gentle words, very touching in fact, and very oriented towards their daily lives. […] And so I said to myself "I would have liked to have had this when I was a child too. And so, I want this for my children". Because there's a dimension in the Gospel, Jesus often talks about children. And then, little by little, that led me to meet people who were involved in [an activity aimed at mothers]. So there too, I said to myself "this is fantastic, I can be myself, I can have my time […] with these people".[13]

13 Interview with Françoise, layperson, January 30, 2020.

It is important to note that this affinity between marital/family commitment and religious commitment should be understood in parallel with the "processes of reinvesting professional skills in activist activities" (Rétif 2013: 418), which is particularly notable among the men. However, it is noteworthy that the "social function of mothers" (ibid.: 421) continues to be of paramount importance for my respondents in the perception and self-perception of the qualities they bring to the religious sphere. The frequent use of a dual vocational framework, encompassing both motherhood and Christian vocation, serves to reinforce this phenomenon.

In summary, at the group level, the Emmanuel Community promotes a religious offer specifically tailored to families, which is evident both through direct means such as publications and events, as well as in more subtle ways, including the practical organization of parishes and the process of couples' commitment. These commitments, typically following a circular model, are shaped by gender dynamics that emphasize a correspondence between family and religious commitment, particularly for women. However, to gain a deeper understanding of how everyday familialism shapes social forms within the Emmanuel Community, further explorations of the internal dynamics of the Community are necessary, particularly the central role of conjugality in its governance.

3. Governing through the couple: A dyad-based organization

Apart from the general moderator[14] and those responsible for specific branches (i.e. for priests and consecrated celibates), most decision-making bodies

14 While the position of moderator is canonically defined and cannot be shared by two individuals, it is worth noting the ambiguous status of the moderator's wife, which can be loosely compared to the role of the "first lady" within the Emmanuel Community. In the context of Ghanaian Charismatic movements, British anthropologist Jane E. Soothill has studied the phenomenon known as the "first lady syndrome" (drawing on the works of political scientist Lisa Aubrey), which pertains to the wives of pastors (Soothill 2007: 154–163). The concept of the "first lady syndrome", originally conceptualized by Amina Mama, is thus defined by Lisa Aubrey: "There are those in the state and in alternative civil society that are able to reconcile greater democratic space for *men only* in public life, while women ingratiate themselves to men and the state through organizational arrangements that promote various forms of state feminism, such as 'femocracy' or the first lady syndrome […], both of which are systems in which female autocracies parallel and serve male dictatorships while advancing conserva-

within the Emmanuel Community – regardless of the level of governance: weekly household, sector, province, summer session at Paray-le-Monial – are led predominantly by married couples, with occasional temporary exceptions.[15] While a mix of individuals in different 'states of life' is also common in these bodies (i.e. priests, consecrated individuals, and laypeople), the couple constitutes the fundamental unit of governance within Emmanuel. This organizational characteristic is not entirely unique within the landscape of New Ecclesial Movements. However, the extent to which the Community implements this approach is noteworthy. By way of comparison, the second largest Charismatic community in France, Chemin Neuf[16], follows a somewhat similar structure by entrusting responsibility to couples at local and regional levels. Nevertheless, at the international level, clerics and consecrated celibates tend to occupy the majority of positions of high responsibility. Beyond French Charismatic Renewal, the Focolare Movement[17] adopts a governance model based on dyads, typically consisting of a single consecrated woman and a man (either a cleric or a consecrated man). Here, the woman holds the preeminent position of president, with the man acting as co-president. These various configurations aim to promote, to varying extents, "a certain equality between men and women, while respecting complementarity" (Tricou 2021: 349). Although this emphasis on equality and complementarity is also evident within the Emmanuel Community, the dyadic governance model employed does lead to a certain gendered division of religious work.

To gain insight into this division, let us delve into the narrative of Nicole, a woman in her fifties. Nicole comes from a middle-class background, is married, primarily a homemaker, and has been a member of the Emmanuel Community for approximately twenty years. Alongside her husband, she has held several positions of responsibility within the organization. In an interview conducted separately from her husband (who participated in an initial interview), Nicole reflects upon her involvement in the Emmanuel Community and the division of religious work within her own relationship. I provide a

tive gender ideologies to the detriment of democracy and gender equality" (Aubrey 2001: 105, original emphasis).

15 There are in certain countries where the Emmanuel Community has a relatively small presence, only one individual serving as a manager or coordinator. This is the case in countries such as Cuba, Haiti, Chile, and Ireland.

16 Founded in 1973 in Lyon by the Jesuit Laurent Fabre (1940).

17 Founded in Trento by Chiara Lubich (1920–2008).

substantial excerpt from the interview below, as it sheds light on a recurring pattern within the Community.

> *Nicole:* In our relationship, clearly, I have a [master's level] education, but I chose never to work because it didn't work out that way, because he [her husband] had his career, and given the direction his career was taking [...] it was incompatible with my job. And in the early years, with young children, I couldn't do much. But I didn't have any problems with it. And then we met the Community and got involved. The problem for a lot of women is that they don't feel useful if they don't work. I didn't feel that way because we devoted ourselves fully. And I had the impression that it was for something useful, even if it wasn't necessarily socially recognized, but it was useful. So, I was satisfied with that. That solved a problem of identity, let's say. Secondly, we're very complementary. He [her husband] is very self-confident, likes to take responsibility, and when he makes a decision, he sticks to it. That's not my style at all, I'm not used to that. As a result, I'm reassured to be able to take steps, knowing that he's not going to collapse before I do. So, I'm pretty conscientious, I'm not afraid of working, but I need to be second rather than first, so all in all I've found my place in this shared service. [...] So I see that with experience, this year in particular, I'm the one writing the teachings, I'm the one drawing up the plans, and he fits in, and it's worked really well like that. And it's really me who's taken over the teachings. [...] I travel a lot with him [her husband], not all the time because I can't, but quite a lot because our job is to liaise with local leaders who are also couples. And if they only talk to him [her husband], he is the salaried employee [...] and I'm a volunteer [...]. But I think it's important to be there. I can't keep track of all the files here [...]. But when I'm there, I can see that it's very important for me to go. And when I'm not there, the wives say, "but Nicole isn't here". So, it's a lot about the fraternal bond, because this communion between us for the mission has to be embodied at every level of the chain of responsibility. Otherwise, people say "well, that's not true".
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> *I:* Was there some sort of division of labor between you?
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> *Nicole:* Yeah, we're not really like that by nature. I think that's because I find it a bit difficult to really take responsibility. Because I doubt myself a lot (laughs). And especially because I'm actually quite involved in the family and household responsibilities, and we have seven children. I had to do a lot of work when they were little, but I still have to pay a bit of attention to them. He [her husband] is asking me to take on more of the support issues

> [in their community mission]. But I can see that in fact I still find it hard to do it seriously, to make the contacts I need to… So, all the administrative stuff as well, that's not really my temperament, I'm not very methodical by nature, and I easily put a lot of myself into human relationships. I'm prepared to give a lot of my time. But I don't necessarily have to put it in writing, it's difficult for me to make files and all that. But I'm only representative of myself here. I know that there are couples where things are much more organized. She does this, he does that. Sometimes it's more the women who are going to be in contact, in community pastoral service responsibilities, so provincial or sector responsibilities. That requires a lot of contact with people. So, it's often telephone contact or personal contact. And it's often the women who generally have a bit more time, but it really depends on the temperament of the couple.[18]

One notable aspect to highlight is Nicole's perception of her involvement in the Emmanuel Community as a source of personal fulfillment. For her, being part of the Community compensates for the sense of social uselessness that she believes housewives can sometimes experience ("I didn't feel that way because we devoted ourselves fully. […] So I was satisfied like that. That solved a problem of identity, let's say"). As previously mentioned in the case of the parish volunteer, this sense of fulfillment does not stem from the reinvestment of professional skills, acquired through higher education, within the Emmanuel Community. Instead, it revolves around "essentially domestic skills" (Rétif 2013: 421), primarily relational in nature, tied to her social role as a mother and wife.

The asymmetry in gender relations (with men associated with technical or political skills oriented outward, and women associated with relational skills oriented inward) reinforces the affirmation of sexual difference, thus justifying the emphasis on a certain division of labor within the Community ("[her husband] is very self-confident, likes to take responsibility, and when he makes a decision, he sticks to it. That's not my style at all, I'm not used to that"). The difference is even more pronounced given that Nicole's work, as mentioned in the interview, is voluntary, whereas her husband's work is paid.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the configuration of the Emmanuel Community heavily relies on the "privatization of sociability" (Bozouls 2021: 110) which is fostered through the regular and discreet maintenance of relational capital. Within this context, Nicole's role and agency are far from

18 Interview with Nicole, layperson, member of the Emmanuel Community, November 18, 2019.

incidental. In fact, she epitomizes this phenomenon towards the end of the quotation when she discusses her presence in the "field" alongside her husband. Beyond the Catholic context, the significance of this relational work, particularly in fostering a sense of camaraderie, is akin to the role played by the wives of soldiers or diplomats (Loriol 2009).

However, it is important not to reduce this gendered division of religious work to a static configuration where women in these couples are forever confined to exclusively relational tasks. On the contrary, it seems that the agency developed by these women through their commitments in the Emmanuel Community encourages certain forms of "transgression of gendered assignments" (Rétif 2013: 434). In this regard, while Nicole emphasized in the interview her perceived lack of organizational and decision-making skills (considered masculine), she acknowledges that in practice she has the lead in many decisions ("I'm the one writing the teachings, I'm the one drawing up the plans, and he fits in, and it's worked really well like that. And it's really me who's taken over the teachings").

This type of discrepancy between the gender representations associated with a particular form of gendered division of religious work and the actual day-to-day management of commitments appeared regularly in my fieldwork. While reproducing a 'traditional' asymmetry in gender relations, the women in these relationships acquire an agency which in practice goes beyond most of the conventional avenues for commitment offered by the Catholic Church (e.g. involvement in associations, parishes, or service to the diocese). My research corpus shows that in those cases where couples decide to join the Emmanuel Community, the initiative mostly stems from the women. This sexual dimorphism, to some extent reflecting a classic phenomenon within Catholicism (Langlois 1995), is also evident in the interviews conducted with their husbands. Women often take the lead, even interrupting their husbands.

The everyday familialism manifested within the Emmanuel Community is reflected in its governance. While the organization promotes a certain level of equality between women and men, the governance structure centered around the dyad of the couple is influenced by gender representations that result in a gendered division of religious work. Men, who tend to reinvest their professional skills, are assigned more frequently to management tasks, while women, utilizing their relational skills, are primarily responsible for the discreet maintenance of relational capital. However, the agency acquired by women within the Emmanuel Community tends to complicate this traditional pattern. In addition to governance, which I have chosen to focus on, everyday

familialism also influences various aspects of marital life, including sexuality, through the promotion of "natural methods" of birth control within the Community (Dolbeau 2021).

Nonetheless, as noted by British sociologist Jon Bernardes, "'family ideology' comprises, among others, the ideologies of masculinity, femininity, motherhood, fatherhood, and many more" (Bernardes 1985: 278). Within the Emmanuel Community, everyday familialism extends beyond models of masculinity and femininity for married couples. The case of the priests serving in the Community, who are themselves affected by these dynamics, deserves particular attention.

4. Community priests shaped by everyday familialism

The following excerpt from an interview with a former high official of the Emmanuel Community (now in his fifties and a member for about thirty years), carries significant implications and will serve as a guiding principle for my analysis.

> I see priests who live all alone in presbyteries [...]. They have a lifestyle of old bachelors; they go to bed at such and such an hour. So of course, you have to pay attention to the lifestyle, but it's almost a kind of imprisonment on their lives, and in fact, who is attracted to this priestly way of life? [...] I met a young priest, well a young priest... in his forties, who said to me "you know, I haven't given any vocations, I don't have any children" he said, in the professional sense of course, and it was so sad... And in fact, of course, I didn't dare tell him because it was too violent, but when I saw his way of life, I said to myself: "but what young person, normally constituted, is going to want to go through that?" In any case, I wouldn't want my children to go through that. So, he said to me, "But I've put on a cassock" and so on (*laughs*). "Do you think the cassock will attract young people? That's not what's going to attract, lad". I didn't tell him like that, obviously. [...] So I'm not saying that Community life is a bulwark against all faults because I can tell you that [since the start of his involvement] I've seen a lot. But I think it's a more solid bulwark, stronger, with dikes that are stronger against rising waters. [...] In fact, we have quite a strong life. And I see in particular the priests, the seminarians [...] I see they have something different, they have a life of closeness, very, very strong, and then they are brought together by lay people, the lay people say things to them, encour-

> age them, say "well have you seen how you're dressed there?" or "you smell of sweat" or I don't know things like that. "Are you getting enough sleep?" and stuff like that. You can say that to a guy, or a girl for that matter if you know that you love him. Otherwise, you're a dull old bore.[19]

Firstly, this excerpt clearly illustrates how the figure of the Emmanuel Community priest is constructed in constant relation to the concept of the "communion of states of life". This concept, which is disseminated within several Charismatic communities, emphasizes a certain equality (in complementarity) between clergy and laypeople. Members of the Emmanuel Community are considered "brothers" and "sisters" of the Community before their clerical or lay status is mentioned. This "communion of states of life" is evident at the group level of the Emmanuel Community, through the promotion of family life, with a particular emphasis on the figure of the father. This emphasis on fatherhood draws inspiration from the ideal of priestly masculinity that is promoted within the Emmanuel Community. In addition to the weekly household, which serves as the primary setting for the dissemination of this "gender project"[20] within the group, the influence of the family can be observed at various levels of Community life, particularly in the training of seminarians. Frédéric, a cleric of the Community, discusses the importance of the figure of the father as a reference point for seminarians, positioning them to mature from "retarded teenagers" into future "fathers" after their ordination:

> It's also a danger for seminarians to have their own little armchair, their own little timetable, their own little life balance, to put their feet under the table, the dishes are brought to them, and then they wipe the dishes. It's a real danger. These are young people aged 27/28... Our friends at the same age are engaged in life. So, we have to avoid turning seminarians into retarded teenagers, through a suitable system. It's a vision to have. [...] Well, here we have a generation that comes from divorced families for the most part, and I remember at one point in my seminary there were a good number of young people whose parents were divorced. So how do we deal with this kind of issue? It's not easy. But I think we still need to improve on the quality of support, but support that is appropriate for today's young

19 Interview with Philippe, layperson, member of the Emmanuel Community, November 7, 2019.

20 This concept, originally coined by Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell (Connell 1995), is employed by Josselin Tricou in his research (Tricou 2021: 47).

> people. So, I've just mentioned the question of seminarians whose parents are divorced. So how do we help them to become 'fathers' themselves?[21]

This observation aligns with the findings of Josselin Tricou's doctoral research, where he identifies various clerical gender regimes operating within contemporary Catholicism. Specifically, Tricou refers to a "spousal" model promoted by several Charismatic communities, including the Emmanuel Community:

> In Charismatic communities that bring together individuals from various states of life […], the heterosexual married couple often assumes a central role and is presented as a sacramental model of the Church, symbolizing the bride of Christ. This gender regime, which I will refer to as "spousal", […] draws on nuptial symbolism and gained theological prominence with the influence of John Paul II. Within the context of the Church's increasing emphasis on "heterosexual culture" […], the term "spousal" is used to signify God's plan, drawing an analogy between divine love and conjugal love. […] These communities, through their practices, prioritize the image of the traditional couple (faithful and procreative) while incorporating modern elements such as expressive culture and a negotiated balance between investment within and outside the family. They also strive for a certain equality between women and men while respecting the concept of complementarity, with Christ remaining the head and the Church his body. (Tricou 2021: 349)

As evident from the statements made by the first interviewee of this section, the spousal model serves as a safeguard against the unappealing image of the "old bachelor" priest that is seemingly favored within the traditional diocesan circuit. François, a cleric in his fifties, discusses how he manages his celibacy, employing the figure of the "old bachelor" priest (and, conversely, the "family man") in his reflection.

> For us in the Community, the people in charge have always been couples. That hasn't been a problem for us, and I can see the human balance that it brings. I mean as a seminarian, as a young priest, this contact with families… For celibacy, it's super important. I think it gives you a real balance. It prevents us from becoming old bachelors (*laughs*), clearly. And above all, it also avoids, well I mean living with families, we realize that it's not any

21 Interview with Frédéric, cleric, member of the Emmanuel Community, February 21, 2020.

> easier to be married […], that married life, family life, is not easy. So, we're there to help each other. When I see a father who gets up very early every morning to take his time in worship before going to work. And I find it hard to get up? There you go. There's an emulation, a mutual support.[22]

The invocation of the figure of the "old bachelor" priest reflects a dual criticism: first, it critiques a perceived flawed priestly masculinity characterized by challenges in managing celibacy, emotional isolation, and immature behavior, among others. Secondly, it critiques pastoral and ecclesiological choices considered outdated, such as the priest as the sole manager of the parish and tendencies towards "clericalism". Furthermore, my respondents' embrace of the spousal model helps distance themselves from competing local gender regimes.

In the initial excerpt from the interview, the seemingly innocuous remark made by my respondent about the priest's cassock illustrates this phenomenon ("Do you think the cassock will attract young people? That's not what's going to attract, lad."). This criticism of the cassock, often expressed in a humorous manner, alludes to the imagery associated with a gender regime described by Josselin Tricou as "neo-sacerdotal":

> The restitutionist communities, on the other hand, have largely embraced the idealized image of the "good priest" from the nineteenth century. This image repositions the priest not as an equal, but as a superior to lay women and men. In this sense, I would categorize them as a neo-sacerdotal gender regime. Within these communities, the reaffirmation of the distinction between clergy and laity (based on the clerical monopoly over the management of salvation) is practically achieved through the resacerdotalization of the cleric. This involves the revival of priestly attributes such as the cassock and the sense of separation from the laity. As for the laymen and women who gravitate towards these communities and draw inspiration from them, they are expected to embody a traditional family and conjugal ideal. (ibid.: 285–286)

In France, the Saint-Martin Community[23] is perhaps the most prominent example of this regime. Jean-Joseph and Solène, who have been committed for

22 Interview with François, cleric, member of the Emmanuel Community, September 3, 2020.

23 Founded by Jean-François Guérin (1929–2005) in 1976, in Genoa.

over thirty years in the Emmanuel Community and are in their seventies, spent several years in a parish run by priests from the Saint-Martin Community. In an interview, they discuss the differences they perceive between the Saint-Martin Community and the Emmanuel Community.

> *Solène:* In the Emmanuel Community, a priest is a priest, of course, but he's also a brother, and that's a strong concept that's not known in many places. And in the Saint-Martin Community, they are fathers. There's no notion of brothers… I mean of being close as brothers. The priests of the Emmanuel Community are also fathers, but they are first and foremost brothers. […] In the Emmanuel Community, you're in a household with priests, for example, so they share something profound. If they share the Word of God, what does it do in their lives? The priests of the Saint-Martin Community, well if you're in contact with a priest maybe, but it's not the same thing.
>
> *Jean-Joseph:* Their community time is very important, and certainly brings a lot to priests in general. It's a way of life that we envy in our community. They set an example for us in that respect, and then we set an example for them in other ways. […]
>
> *I:* Any other differences?
>
> *Jean-Joseph:* Oh well, they have Latin for example. They like to have one Gregorian mass a week. Well, I went to a monastery when I was a kid and I'm delighted. But from a pastoral point of view, I wonder, do people understand? Do they like it? So, statistically, they have a lot of vocations to the priesthood, so there's something about Latin, about the sacred, about I don't know what. There's something there. But for me, for us I think, Latin was rejected. We found that all the texts we could read in French, the luck we had, didn't exist. So, we discovered that. […]
>
> *Solène:* If only to experience mass. We used to experience it differently. Now that it's in French, we understand what's going on better. Well, we never understand much. We experience it better. And when we have to go back to Latin, it's a bit hard. In a monastery […] it's fine, I don't know how to put it, but in the middle of the city, it seems more difficult. But that's the way they do things. […]
>
> *Jean-Joseph:* And their all-black look (laughs).

Solène: No, it doesn't matter.

Jean-Joseph: Oh it does...[24]

It is important to highlight the interconnection between pastoral and ecclesiological choices and the clerical gender system for Jean-Joseph: the relationship between clergy and laity, the use of Latin, the distinctive "all-black look". This deliberate departure from a neo-sacerdotal gender regime carries particular significance, especially considering the relatively competitive context between New Ecclesial Movements (ibid.: 360–365). Indeed, several of these groups, including the Saint-Martin Community, share a similar socio-religious background with the Emmanuel Community.

Furthermore, within the Emmanuel Community itself, some young priests have started wearing the cassock. This change in attire, which extends beyond the Community's context, is often met with a slight sense of mistrust, usually accompanied by humor, from older Community priests who view it as a sign of "clericalization". It is worth noting that the criticism of the clericalization of younger generations of priests also extends to the laity, with older members accusing them of maintaining an excessive reverence for the clerics of the Community. In an interview, a former member in his sixties, who is a layman, expressed his observations: "I've noticed that laypeople today show more deference to priests than we did back in our days [with the Emmanuel Community]. A priest was first and foremost a brother. But I see the new generations referring to them as 'Father so-and-so'".[25] This apprehension of clericalization underscores, in negative, the centrality of everyday familialism in shaping the Emmanuel Community as a group. Finally, it should be acknowledged that the egalitarian representation associated with the "communion of states of life", similar to the gendered division of religious work mentioned earlier, needs some qualification due to the diverse situations experienced by my interviewees in the field. In practice, interviews occasionally reveal a certain competition for authority between the couples in leadership positions and the Community priests.

24 Interview with Solène and Jean-Joseph, laypeople, members of the Emmanuel Community, June 11, 2019.

25 Interview with Pierre-Henri, layperson, former member of the Emmanuel Community, February 12, 2019.

5. Conclusion

In summary, everyday familialism serves as a significant driving force for the construction of social forms within the Emmanuel Community. It is primarily based on the (re)production of a particular lifestyle prevalent among the upper classes, which constitutes the background of the majority of its members. This lifestyle fosters a sense of communal familiarity among Catholics from a similar background. Central to this lifestyle is the promotion of a "privatization of sociability" where the discreet maintenance of relational connections is primarily the responsibility of women within Community couples (Bozouls 2021). This form of couple-to-couple sociability is accompanied by a religious homogeneity that encourages a strong ethos of commitment. This everyday familialism permeates all aspects of Community life, ranging from the organization of Community parishes to the governance of the organization, and even influences the model of masculinity promoted among clerical members.

Outside the boundaries of the Emmanuel Community, everyday familialism sheds light on the transformations occurring in contemporary Catholic social dynamics. While there are partial overlaps with other typologies of Catholicism, such as "observant" (Raison du Cleuziou 2019) or "identity" Catholics (Dumons and Gugelot 2017), everyday familialism stands out through several specific characteristics. One of these features is the emphasis on catering to the nuclear family through the provision of services and the dissemination of discourses related to the nuclear family. This focus on the family unit is accompanied by a promotion of increased responsibility for laypeople, particularly married couples, supported by the idea of a certain equality with the clerics. Moreover, everyday familialism fosters a form of privatization of sociability, where social engagement is primarily channeled within the confines of the family. Furthermore, within the framework of familialism, specific sexual practices are often propagated, notably the adoption of "natural methods" of birth control. This reflects a broader interest in promoting a particular approach to sexuality and reproduction within the context of family life.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this everyday familialism within the Emmanuel Community is not free from internal contradictions. One noteworthy example is the complex and challenging question of the lifelong engagement with the Community and of the children raised in it. This issue has posed significant challenges and generated debates and discussions among Community members for an extended period. Starting from the second half of the 1990s, the first generation of members, who possessed strong

personal charisma, gradually stepped back from leadership positions within the organization. However, in addition to high-profile departures of long-standing members, the abandonment of religious practice among several children of these first-generation community members raises concerns within the organization. Faced with the relative failure of passing down the Catholic faith within several families, an unprecedented internal reflection took place regarding the status of children inside the Emmanuel Community. In this context, and as part of a broader sequence of relaxing the prerequisites for community engagement, several adjustments have been implemented since the 2000s. These include improvements in the "children's service" during Community weekends and sessions in Paray-le-Monial as well as a moderation of the internal discourse on the primacy of Community commitment. However, in practice, tensions between community life and family life are not entirely resolved and persist to this day. These tensions are particularly complex to address and grasp for the researcher. Indeed, the dissemination of rhetoric emphasizing the proper transmission of these Catholics, aligning with discourses on the proper reproduction of socioeconomic elites, contributes to establishing a form of community silence (or at least discomfort) regarding failures in transmission. Although examples of successful Community dynasties are regularly highlighted by my interviewees (and in the organization's literature), narratives of the failures in transmission, are less frequently and indirectly publicized. This observation aligns with the findings articulated by historian Claude-Isabelle Brelot regarding the lack of research on the phenomenon of social downward mobility among the elite. According to Brelot, "visibility of notoriety imposes itself [on historians], while social memory requires concrete evidence, and the downwardly mobile become invisible" (Brelot 2000).

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