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subjects had to perform to create a just society.] Yet most scholars are convinced that he thought of man as being naturally good. Their belief is based on the claims of Mencius, a 4th Century B.C. Chinese philosopher, and on debatable interpretations of Confucius's own ambiguous sayings, asserts Hwang, a professor of philosophy at Duksung Women's College in South Korea.

For thousands of years, Chinese philosophers took Mencius at his word when he proclaimed himself a true successor of the revered Confucius. But the two could scarcely have been more different. Confucius disdained worldly ambition and frequently incorporated the criticisms of others into his writings in the interests of discovering truth. Mencius, on the other hand, sought the limelight and stubbornly defended his ideas against all challenges. Mencius wrote voluminously about man's goodness. Confucius hardly mentioned human nature; the phrase appears only twice in the *Analects*, the most authentic available account of his life and sayings. One key passage, commonly translated as "Man is born with uprightness," may also be read as "Man is born *for* uprightness"—in Chinese, the preposition can have both meanings.

Though he maintained that his views conformed to Confucius's teachings, the ambitious Mencius was more concerned with luring disciples from his philosophical rivals. Playing to the Chinese people's deep respect for antiquity, Mencius wrapped himself in the master's mantle, pledging allegiance to Confucius as part of his campaign to become the pre-eminent philosopher of the day.

Mencius's focus on human nature may have been an "advance over Confucius" and a logical extension of his predecessor's teachings, observes Hwang. But the rhetorical homage that Mencius paid Confucius should not obscure his break with the master's thought.

Celibacy Retraced

"Clerical Continence in the Fourth Century: Three Papal Decretals" by Daniel Callam, C.S.B., in *Theological Studies* (March 1980), P.O. Box 64002, Baltimore, Md. 21264.

Celibacy for all priests is a relatively new development in Catholic history. The early Church regularly ordained married men, although bachelors and widowers were not allowed to marry once they entered the priesthood. Not until the 4th century did Pope Siricius (384-99) require that married, as well as unmarried, clerics lead lives of sexual abstinence (continence).

Theologians have long claimed that Siricius's decision flowed from a practical observation: Since priests were required to celebrate mass daily, and since custom forbade anyone who had sexual intercourse to participate in religious ceremonies the following day, sex was effectively off-limits, anyway.

But such arguments are faulty, contends Callam, a theologian at the

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University of Saskatchewan. First, daily mass was not a universal Church custom during the 4th century. Further, Church historians have underestimated Siricius's personal zeal for pure living. Siricius was deeply persuaded that while the Old Testament clearly illuminated the virtues of marriage, the New Testament preached virginity. He drew his scriptural support from the Epistles of St. Paul, who taught that the Christian mind should be focused on the Spirit rather than the flesh (Romans 8:8-9), that virgins should remain unmarried in order to remain fully committed to pleasing God (I Corinthians 7:32), and that married laity should periodically abstain from sex in order to devote themselves to prayer (I Corinthians 7:5).

Anticipating the eventual arrival of the Kingdom of God, when marriage would be no more, Siricius held that it was a priestly duty to prepare the laity on Earth by encouraging abstention from sex. Priests would have to "practice what they preached." Siricius only decreed continence. But Callam contends that his ruling paved the way for the requirement of universal clerical celibacy in the 12th century.



Chronologia Summorum Pontificum.

Pope Siricius's 4th-century ban on sex for the clergy paved the way for priestly celibacy.

Life or Death?

"Brain Death and Personal Identity" by Michael B. Green and Daniel Wikler, in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (Winter 1980), Princeton University Press, P.O. Box 231, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

When does a human being truly die? The question deeply divides legal and medical authorities today. Traditionally, death has meant the cessation of heart and lung functions, but irreversible loss of brain function now competes as a new criterion.

Green, a University of Texas philosopher, and Wikler, professor of medical ethics at the University of Wisconsin, favor the brain-death definition—but not for the biological and moral reasons that are commonly advanced.

Total brain function depends upon both the "upper" brain for mental capacities such as memory and thought and the "lower" brain for regulating breathing and other life processes. Biological arguments for brain death center around the lower brain: When the brain can no longer regulate basic body processes, biological death inevitably re-