



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: The Profession of Faith The Death of Jesus



The Nonfiction

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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of study as lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Discussion:

As we discussed last week, Jesus came to us as the Word incarnate. The purpose of His life was to reveal to us our Heavenly Father, to teach us the blessings of His Word so we may comprehend what God asks of us as the children of His creation and so we may enter into a relationship with Him as our Lord and Savior.

This week, we are going to shift our focus to the death of Jesus and the meaning of His sacrifice to our lives, not just our life here, but our eternal life as well. As we reflect upon the death of

Jesus and His sacrifice as ransom for our souls, it is fitting to begin with the Passover Supper where He alluded to the suffering He would endure and instructed His Apostles to eat of His body and drink of His blood.

(CCC: 571) The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.

52 The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?" 53 Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things he said while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. (John 6:52-59)

This teaching of Jesus was scandalous. It caused many to turn away from Him. As the crowds murmured among themselves, Jesus then turned to His disciples.

60 Then many of his disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" 61 Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? 62 What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. 65 And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father."

66 As a result of this, many [of] his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. 67 Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?" 71 He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve. (John 6:60-71)

(Question: As Jesus teaches that His body and His blood are the food of eternal life and that, whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life, and that He will raise them on the last day, many do not comprehend. As the crowd drifted away, Jesus turned to His disciples. How did Jesus soften His teaching for them and what does this mean to our **faith**?)

14 When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. 15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, 16 for, I tell you, I shall not

eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” 17 Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.” (Luke 22:14-20)

(Question: During the course of the last supper, we observe Jesus teaching His Apostles about what we experience today as the Eucharist. What is the significance of this moment to us?)

Later, we observe the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. In this moment, Jesus prayed to His Father knowing what was soon to come. He knew the rejection and suffering He would face before He laid down His life in love.

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” 39 He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” 40 When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? 41 Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 42 Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, “My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!” 43 Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. 44 He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. 45 Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. 46 Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.” (Matthew 26:36-46)

(Question: As Jesus prayed, He knew what was to come and the suffering He was called to endure? What was the significance of the prayer of Jesus to His Heavenly Father, “Not my will, but Your will be done?” What example does this provide for our **faith** and our behavior?)

(Question: After Jesus was betrayed and turned over in the garden, He was taken before various officials, such as the Sanhedrin, King Herod, and Pontius Pilate. What was the crime of Jesus that produced the sentence of scourging and crucifixion?)

(CCC: 591) Jesus asked the religious authorities of Jerusalem to believe in him because of the Father’s works which he accomplished. But such an act of faith must go through a mysterious death to self, for a new “birth from above” under the influence of divine grace. Such a demand for conversion in the face of so surprising a fulfillment of the promises allows one to understand the Sanhedrin’s tragic misunderstanding of Jesus: they judged that he deserved the death sentence as a blasphemer. The members of the Sanhedrin were thus acting at the same time out of “ignorance” and the “hardness” of their “unbelief.”

(Question: With the power of hindsight, it is often easy for us to judge the “**unbelief**” of others. If we put ourselves in the shoes of the people of the time, what might our reaction be?)

(CCC: 597) The historical complexity of Jesus' trial is apparent in the Gospel accounts. The personal sin of the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd and the global reproaches contained in the apostles' calls to conversion after Pentecost. Jesus himself, in forgiving them on the cross, and Peter in following suit, both accept "the ignorance" of the Jews of Jerusalem and even of their leaders. Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different times and places, based merely on the crowd's cry: "His blood be on us and on our children!" a formula for ratifying a judicial sentence. As the Church declared at the Second Vatican Council: . . . [N]either all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion. . . . [T]he Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.

(Question: In the events which followed, we see Jesus scourged, that He was mocked with a crown of thorns, that He was paraded through the streets, forced to carry His cross until He collapsed from exhaustion, then, was placed upon the cross. We can only imagine the pain which Jesus experienced through this ordeal. What do we believe was the greatest source of pain which He endured and who is the source of that pain?)

(CCC: 598) In her Magisterial teaching of the faith and in the witness of her saints, the Church has never forgotten that "sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured." Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ himself, the Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus, a responsibility with which they have all too often burdened the Jews alone:

25 Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27)

(Question: From upon the cross, Jesus spoke to the Apostle John and His mother, Mary. What was the significance of this conversation to us?)

(CCC: 964) Mary's role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it. "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death"; it is made manifest above all at the hour of his Passion:

Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, joining herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim, born of her: to be given, by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross, as a mother to his disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold your son."

6 So Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two walked on together, 7 Isaac spoke to his father Abraham. "Father!" he said. "Here I am," he replied. Isaac continued, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" 8 "My son," Abraham answered, "God will provide the sheep for the burnt offering." Then the two walked on together. (Genesis 22:6-8)

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

(**Question:** To spare the life of Isaac, when God tested Abraham, the father of Isaac, God provided the lamb to be sacrificed instead of Isaac. What, then, is the meaning to us when John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world?")

10 If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. 12 This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. 16 It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. 17 This I command you: love one another. (John 15:10-17)

(**Question:** As we reflect upon the statement Jesus made that "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." For whom did Jesus lay down His life and how might one who has received such love respond?)

(CCC: 601) The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of "the righteous one, my Servant" as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin. Citing a confession of faith that he himself had "received," St. Paul professes that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures." In particular Jesus' redemptive death fulfills Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant. Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in the light of God's suffering Servant. After his Resurrection he gave this interpretation of the Scriptures to the disciples at Emmaus, and then to the apostles.

Quotes:

The cross is the school of love.

– St. Maximilian Kolbe

Mount Calvary is the mount of lovers. All love that does not take its origin from the Savior's passion is foolish and perilous. Unhappy is love without the Savior's death. Love and death are so mingled in the Savior's passion that we cannot have one in our hearts without the other.

Upon Calvary, we cannot have life without love, or love without the Redeemer's death.

– St. Francis de Sales

No one, however weak, is denied a share in the victory of the cross. No one is beyond the help of the prayer of Christ. His prayer brought benefit to the multitude that raged against him. How much more does it bring to those who turn to him in repentance.

– St. Leo the Great

He died, but he vanquished death; in himself he put an end to what we feared; he took it upon himself and he vanquished it, as a mighty hunter he captured and slew the lion.

– St. Augustine

As they were looking on, so we too gaze on his wounds as he hangs. We see his blood as he dies. We see the price offered by the redeemer, touch the scars of his resurrection. He bows his head, as if to kiss you. His heart is made bare open, as it were, in love to you. His arms are extended that he may embrace you. His whole body is displayed for your redemption. Ponder how great these things are. Let all this be rightly weighed in your mind: as he was once fixed to the cross in every part of his body for you, so he may now be fixed in every part of your soul.

– St. Augustine

Final Thoughts:

As we have discussed the death of Jesus, we might be tempted to look at the event as a distant time past. The characters were those who lived in a different time, far removed from the culture of our day. We might be tempted to **believe** that we could not possibly have acted as the leaders of the day or the “manipulated crowd.” (CCC: 597)

We have the power of hindsight, but in our reflection, do we must ask ourselves, do we understand our role? Do we understand how our sin contributed to the scourging, the crown of thorns, the mocking, the weight of the cross, the pounding of the nails, the torment on the cross, and the lance thrust into the side of Jesus? Do we understand what was accomplished when Jesus said, “It is finished.” (John 19:30)

When we reflect during the Stations of the Cross, or on good Friday, when we venerate the cross, I have noticed the sorrow in the faces of those present and many a tear shed as the faithful reflect upon the death of our Lord and Savior. There is reason for our sorrow when we acknowledge the role of our sin, but we must also reflect upon the love poured out for us from upon the cross.

As we reflect on such moments, let us remember to lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for the sacrifice made for us so we may be forgiven of our sins, so we may be cleansed of our iniquities, so we may wash our robes white in the blood of the Lamb, and so we may be allowed to enter into His kingdom where love is shared by all, where there is no pain or affliction, and where evil is not allowed to follow.

Wrap Up: As we come to the end of our time here today, we hope you will be able to join us next week as we discuss the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior and its meaning to our **faith**.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: **The Profession of Faith - The Resurrection of Jesus**