



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?**  
***Part VIII: Ministry to Others***



*Good Samaritan*  
*Public Domain*

## **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]

Sister Sara Draney is a Dominican Nun from the Monastery of the Infant Jesus in Lufkin, Texas. Helen is a lay-Dominican and has a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I should mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions, because, while we have great batters on our panel, we can't start the game without the pitch. So welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

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

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. Amen.

## **Discussion:**

As we concluded our last discussion, I mentioned that for the majority of our listeners, our discussion about celebrating Mass was mostly preaching to the choir. We probably did not share anything which regular Mass attendees do not already know. Still, there may be some out there who are curious about Catholicism, might just be learning about Catholicism, working to reconnect with their faith, or helping someone grow in the exercise of faith; so our periodic

reflection upon why we celebrate the Mass can help answer questions which others might have. No matter where we are at in our journey, the Mass is Christ's invitation to all of us so He may feed and nourish our souls.

Just as we have the tendency to take our loved ones for granted, Catholics may have the tendency of taking the Mass for granted. Let us consider the faithful of the early church as they were forced to celebrate underground in fear of persecution. Indeed, Catholics in certain countries, even in our modern day, face similar dangers. Despite the persecution which surrounds them, they still seek the opportunity, even at great peril, to receive the Body and Precious Blood of Christ. Let us consider what the persecuted must overcome before we consider the obstacles we allow.

When we understand that our attendance at Mass is not to fulfill a social obligation, but to be nourished by the One who gives us life and the opportunity for eternal life, as well as to give thanks for the sacrifice made for us, then, we will hopefully discover a desire within ourselves to avail ourselves of all which the Mass offers to us. Let us also consider that the Mass is an opportunity for us to give thanks for all the blessings God gives and the many wonderful ways He works within our lives. We must ask ourselves, if we do not come to God, if we are unwilling to spend time with Him, what are we telling Him?

If we perceive there are obstacles to our attending Mass, let us reflect upon them and ask, "Is it me or is it the evil one who places these obstacles before me?" In either case, let us ask God to help remove those obstacles so we may receive the fullness of the Lord. As we grow closer to Jesus, the question will change to, "Why would I let anyone or anything deprive me of the blessings of the Mass?"

The Mass provides an opportunity to fulfill God's Greatest of commandments, which are to love God with all our heart, our mind, and our soul; and Jesus told us the second is like the first, to love one another as we would love ourselves. (cf. Matthew 22:36-40) The Mass is mostly focused upon fulfilling the first, but it also provides us an opportunity to come together in community and share in the second.

Today, we are going to talk about a means to fulfill the greatest commandments, and that is sharing in ministry. Our friends Merriam-Webster define ministry as, "a person or thing through which something is accomplished." They also define the verb, "minister," as, "to give aid or service." While they go on to relate these terms to governmental and religious forms of service, ultimately, what we come to understand is that a call to ministry is a call to service of others.

The word reflects something which we consider noble and kind. It is a choice to help. With all the goodness associated with the word, we might ask ourselves, why are not more people engaged in ministry? Why do they withhold themselves from ministry? I know from my experience, that while I pitched in from time to time, I spent a lot of time dodging ministry.

**(Question 1: So, let us start our discussion here. What are some of the more common excuses we hear as to why someone withholds themselves from ministry?)**

- I don't have the time
- I don't have the skills
- I don't have anything worthwhile to offer
- As poor as I am, how can I minister to others?
- I'm too young
- I'm too old
- That's for someone holier than me (whatever that means)
- As sinful as I am, I would be a hypocrite
- The roof will cave in and lightning will strike if I get close to a church
- I don't know how I can help
- No one ever asked me

**(Question 2:** Let's put ourselves in the shoes of those who choose to sideline themselves. As we ponder why we do not engage in ministry, let us ask ourselves a fundamental question, who benefits from us being out of action? Who smiles the most when we withdraw from the opportunity of ministry?)

(1 Kings 17:7-16)

*7 After some time, however, the wadi ran dry, because no rain had fallen in the land. 8 So the word of the LORD came to him: 9 Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to feed you. 10 He arose and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." 11 She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a crust of bread." 12 She said, "As the LORD, your God, lives, I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a few sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Afterwards you can prepare something for yourself and your son. 14 For the LORD, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth." 15 She left and did as Elijah had said. She had enough to eat for a long time—he and she and her household. 16 The jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD spoken through Elijah.*

**(Question 3:** As we examine this scripture, we are presented with a region of drought and famine. We see the Lord send Elijah to receive ministry from a widow. What are the characteristics of this woman and what do we notice as she responds to the call to minister to Elijah?)

- Poor and destitute
- Without hope
- Preparing to die
- Did as Elijah asked
- God provided

---

(Isaiah 6:1-8)

*1 In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. 2 Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they hovered. 3 One cried out to the other:*

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!  
All the earth is filled with his glory!”*

*4 At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then I said, “Woe is me, I am doomed! For I am a man of unclean lips, living among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 He touched my mouth with it. “See,” he said, “now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.” 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” “Here I am,” I said; “send me!”*

**(Question 4:** So, as we talk about our shyness to step forth because we might fear scrutiny of our sin, let's consider the response of God to the man of unclean lips. What happened here? What lesson might this be to us?)

(Luke 3:7-11)

*7 He [John the Baptist] said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance; and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 9 Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

*10 And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” 11 He said to them in reply, “Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.”*

**(Question 5:** Here, the people know they must turn from their current ways, but are not sure what to do. What does John the Baptist tell them? What does this scripture tell us about the nature of ministry?)

(Luke 10:25-37)

*25 There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” 27 He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” 28 He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”*

29 But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. 32 Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. 33 But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. 34 He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ 36 Which of these, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” 37 He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

**(Question 6:** We often think of the parable of the Good Samaritan as simply an instruction to do good for others, but let's dig a little deeper. What is the root question of this exchange? What is the answer? What is the qualifying inquiry after the response? What are we to learn from the example which Jesus gives?)

(1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; 5 there are different forms of service but the same Lord; 6 there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. 7 To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; 10 to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

(CCC: 873) The very differences which the Lord has willed to put between the members of his body serve its unity and mission. For “in the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God.” Finally, “from both groups [hierarchy and laity] there exist Christian faithful who are consecrated to God in their own special manner and serve the salvific mission of the Church through the profession of the evangelical counsels.”

**(Question 7:** As we consider our personal call to ministry, we are tempted to believe we lack something through which the mission of ministry might be accomplished. What does this scripture as well as this paragraph from the Catechism of the Catholic Church reveal to us about what we might have to contribute?)

**(Question 8:** One series of excuses associated with avoiding ministry is what it might cost us. As we consider all of these examples above, **what is the cost of responding to the call of ministry? What are some of the benefits of responding to the call?)**

**Costs:**

- Time
- Talent
- Treasure

**Benefits:**

- A sense of accomplishment in service
- A feeling of self-worth as we pitch in (something to contribute)
- Experience for school or work
- Opportunity to demonstrate discipline and work ethic
- Opportunity to learn
- Opens the door to friendships
- Opportunity to engage our youth in faith based activities
- Opportunity to keep active as we age
- Demonstrates our belief in the One who calls us to ministry

**Quotes:**

– John 15:16-17

*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.*

– Luke 6:38

*38 Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”*

– 1 Peter 4:8-10

*8 Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.*

– James 2:14-17

*14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? 17 So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

## Final Thoughts:

Today, we discussed our call to ministry to others. As we mentioned, ministry is service to others by one who serves. We are called to serve according to the two greatest commandments, for as we minister to others, we fulfill the second of the greatest commandments, and in so doing, we also demonstrate respect for the Creator as we endeavor to do His will.

We discussed a number of excuses we might have for avoiding ministry, but if we are honest, if we believe God is with us, we have no excuse to withhold ourselves from ministry. Of course, we are tempted to be timid and hide behind waiting for someone to ask us if we would help. In reality, we should take inventory of ourselves and offer our time and talents where we believe they might be of use. If we are uncertain or unsure, then, we can ask in prayer for God to help us see the gifts and talents He has placed within our stewardship and the purpose to which He desires we should put them so that His will may be done.

Of course, we must understand, our efforts in ministry will not buy us a seat in heaven. That was purchased for us from upon the cross. Our response to the call to ministry is simply a demonstration of our belief in our Lord and Savior, for if we believe in Him, then what we do demonstrates the nature of our belief. Should Jesus ask us if we believe in Him, hopefully we will say, “Yes,” but our endeavors in ministry will help answer the possible follow-on question, which might be, “And how would I know.” If we love Him, we will respond to His call.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we turn our discussion to the family.

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:** What Does God Ask of Us – Part IX: Care of Family

## References:

Bandler, Aaron; (25 Feb 2015); “Rejected as ‘discriminatory’ and shunned from campuses, Christian clubs struggle;” The College Fix; <https://www.thecollegefix.com/rejected-as-discriminatory-and-shunned-from-campus-christian-clubs-struggle/>

Clark, Matthew; (13 Jul 2015); “Exposed: Christian Students Rejected, Failed, and Expelled for their Faith by State Colleges and Universities;” ACLJ; <https://aclj.org/religious-liberty/exposed-christian-students-rejected-failed-and-expelled-for-their-faith-by-state-colleges-and-universities>

“Online Dictionary;” (2015); Merriam-Webster, Incorporated; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

USCCB; (May 2016); *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html>

The New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE); (9 Mar 2011); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>