



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Humanae Vitae
Part VIII: More on Values Grooming of Our Children



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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]

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, if we do not have questions, how are we to get to answers? Anyway, to answer my questions and correct my pronunciation is why we have our panelists, 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.

Dear Lord, we also lift up the prayers in our prayer basket. You know what is written on each one and you know the hearts of those who offer their thanks and praise and their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy. We especially join our prayers with the sick and afflicted who ask for Your hand of healing. We also lift up our prayers for those who are preparing to take their vows of religious life. May you guide them to do what is right and just and to encourage others in all which is right and just so hearts may be opened to You and Your will may be done.

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

If you would like to add your prayers to our prayer basket, send us an email at armoroffaithradio@gmail.com. Please include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we

will give it priority. Just so you know, Sharon and I lift up our prayers with those in the Armor of Faith Radio prayer basket during our daily prayers.

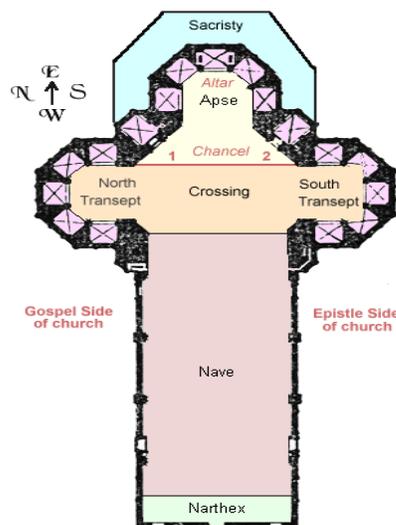
Why Catholics Do What We Do:

The Arrangement Churches: The Narthex and the Nave

For a long time now, I have been asking Priests to give up 5 minutes of their homily time to educate the congregation on what is behind the rubrics of our faith. Things like, church etiquette, protocols, explanations of the different “things” in the church and yes, to explain why Catholics do the things they do. As Doug points out at the beginning of every show, I am a Cradle Catholic and I was very amused when taking a course by Jeff Cavins. He talked about having a pile of Catholicism and trying to figure out what it all means. I have been untangling all the things I learned as a kid for all of my adult life. I believe that I am not the only kid to grow up doing things but not always understanding why.

After hearing me plug this for the millionth time, Doug suggested that we give this idea a shot on the radio show. Yep, that is how this all came about. I was not quite sure where to begin, so I picked a few things that we get questioned on during RCIA classes. Recently some questions have come in and I started to think that maybe I should be a little more organized. The questions were about visual things in the church. I began to research and then it hit me. I need to systematically explain the reasons, the history, the placements, etc, of things we see but perhaps do not understand. I began to put stuff together and guess what? I have enough to do this spot for well over a year! Now remember, this is only a 5 minute segment. Others have spent decades studying all of this and I am going to give you a very very condensed explanation. So please do some research on your own to more fully appreciate the “things of our church”.

I would like to first explore the church building itself. Of course, it is rather difficult to share a picture via radio, but it will be included in the topic summary for this show, so if you would like, check it out.



(Fisheaters)

The picture shows what was once required for building a church. This is a cross shaped building. While on a tour in Rome, it was explained that it is easy to differentiate between christian and pagan churches. Christians built cross shaped buildings and Pagans built rectangular buildings. This was a requirement so that all would know where they were going. Guess this is not so dissimilar as for a McDonald's restaurant. When you see a building's shape, the golden arches, etc, you know it is a McDonald's. When you see a cross shaped building, a steeple, stained glass windows, statues in the yard, you might safely guess it is a Catholic Church.

In our modern days, some things have changed and thus, so have the shapes of our Catholic Churches. This can cause confusion at times. The requirements for the worshiping space has changed since Vatican II, so the shape configuration has changed. However, the arrangement of various areas has not changed. So today we will begin to explore Catholic church settings.

The two areas for today's discussion are: the Narthex and the Nave. New words? They were to me a few years ago when I was asked to be on a building committee. The Narthex is the first place you come across when you enter the church. This word is also known as the vestibule, the entry, or the foyer. But the correct "church word" is Narthex. In days of old, this is where Catechumens had to stay until they were fully initiated into the Church. Non Catholics were not allowed into the Church proper. Today, this is the space where we meet and greet our fellow parishioners, sometimes it is also used as a cry room. The Narthex is to be separated from the worshiping space. Some churches have windows and some have curtains, but it is to be a separated space.

After entering the Narthex, we go into the worship space and find a seat. This is called the Nave. The word *navis* is Latin and this is where the word Nave comes from. It means ship and refers to the "barque of Peter" and "Noah's Ark".

In the Nave, you will find pews for sitting. The pews for worship is really a very modern addition. In ancient days, the Nave was truly a multi purpose building. People gathered to worship and standing was the posture. When wars broke out, the space became a barn for horses and where fires were built to keep soldiers warm in winter. This space was perfect for this kind of multi purpose use as they were normally built with very high ceilings. Again, something learned from a tour guide in Rome. Today's churches are built with heating and cooling conservation in mind, so keeping the ceilings lower is more common for energy efficiency.

Well, we are on our way to learning the language of our Church structure! Next we will discuss the placements for the Altar and the Choir.

If you would like to learn more about the arrangement and ornamentation of churches for the celebration of the Eucharist, we invite you to follow the links in the reference section of the topic summary for this show. You can obtain the topic summary by visiting <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/> and look for episode 105.

Discussion:

During our previous discussion, I mentioned that I noticed that one of the hooks used to justify bringing LGBTQ education into elementary schools is the need to stop bullying. The following is from guidance promoted by the National Education Administration and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

It doesn't matter if it is a first grader who might not know what the word "gay" means, a sixth grader trying to sound cool, or a tenth grader "teasing" a friend. All of these scenarios have the potential of creating an unsafe classroom or school environment and must be addressed. (Welcoming Schools; What Do You Say?)

So, we agree, bullying is bad and we must work to end it in all its forms. We must recognize that children often resort to ridicule those who are not like them for purposes of their own affirmation and self-esteem, or to manipulate them or others. The problem of bullying is wide and complex and is not confined to issues of gender or sexual orientation, especially when we are talking about the formative minds of elementary schools students. Still, in the process of steering our children away from the harm of teasing and bullying, we must endeavor to protect the innocence of our children, for once it is lost, the consequences ripple through lives.

So, in the name of stopping bullying, we declare we must encourage a positive education environment for our children. So, what does that look like? According to the Human Rights Campaign guidance, which is also promoted by the National Education Association, we must develop gender inclusive schools. They state:

Creating schools that nurture academic achievement, provide physical and emotional safety and welcome all students are common goals for all educators. As educators, one can create gender-expansive environments that affirm all children by reducing gender role stereotyping and allowing them to express their interests and find confidence in their strengths. (Welcoming Schools; Developing a Gender Inclusive School)

How is this implemented? The article specifies the need for policies and regulations which enforce the following:

- Ensure anti-bullying policies are enumerated and specifically name groups that are more frequently targeted for harassment. Make sure these policies include actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation. Naming it, helps stop it.
 - Provide access to gender neutral restroom/facilities with options for privacy that do not stigmatize any students.
 - Allow children to use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity.
 - Have policies in place regarding gender inclusion.
 - Have policies and procedures in place regarding challenges to books or curricula.
 - Reframe dress codes to describe what the school considers appropriate clothing without assigning clothing options to particular genders.
- (Welcoming Schools; Developing a Gender Inclusive School)

(Question 3: We agree that we all are called to approach one another with humility, civility, dignity, and respect and that we should not disparage one another concerning our differences. We also know that children compete, tease, and bully one another over gender as they explore the social boundaries of gender. The question we should have concerning matters of childhood education is why is there such a push to focus on only LGBTQ association, especially at the elementary school level? What might be another objective hidden within this education beyond just stopping bullying? In what ways might we approach anti-bullying without opening doors to gender confusion?)

Hidden objectives:

- Opens the door to gender confusion – what are the boundaries of my behavior?
- Opens door for children's curiosity as to the meaning of LGBTQ
- Opens the door to the question, “Should I identify as LGBTQ even though I do not know what it really means? (What attention will I get by identifying as LGBTQ?) (Note: Our identity is partially formed by what other expect of us.)
- Normalizes or even elevates status of LGBTQ behavior without consideration of God's design or lifestyle consequences (Only one side of the story)
- Behavior and behavior choices are assumed normal or even desirable without understanding physical or spiritual consequences

Alternatives:

- Focus on the positive behavior we should expect from one another → humility, civility, dignity, and respect
- Discuss that we must not disparage others and call names, especially when we do not even understand what those names mean
- Bullying diminishes the bully and harms the bullied
- We should encourage one another rather than judge, condemn, or disparage
- We do not need to justify lifestyles to help children understand it is wrong to judge and disparage another because they appear different from us
- There are boundaries to behavior (do no harm) and there are appropriate times and places for behavior (a time to work, a time to play, a time to rest, a time to pray) (Note: We took prayer out of schools, but we can still help our children pray at home, pray with us, and pray with family, friends, and others)

Let's consider the magnitude of the problem and the magnitude of the promoted solution. According to Education Week, approximately 0.7% of teenagers, 13 to 17 years of age identify as transgender. The article states:

Although it's generally believed that transgender children make up a relatively small share of the population, advocates surmise some are now more likely to “come out” and transition at younger ages than in years past because of greater public awareness of the issue. (Blad)

(**Question 4:** The theory presented is that more of our youth will transition their gender as public awareness is raised. What might that reveal to us about objectives of values grooming?)

- Values grooming is not just awareness, it is about norms acceptance
 - Children are vulnerable to fads, new interests, and they explore boundaries
 - Early adopters use rebellion to gain attention and/or power (bad attention is better than no attention)
 - Later adopters adapt to conform (fit in)
 - Sowing doubt disrupts and unfreezes social norms
 - Doubting, demonizing, or promoting norms opens doors to social change
 - Early adopters of social change hold a level of power
 - None of these are bad and may even be desirable, but....what are the outcomes?
 - Social change is not always for the good – we can change in the wrong direction
 - True awareness requires evaluation of all objectives and potential consequences
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The following are the teaching goals from a lesson plan entitled, “Gender Snowperson: Understanding Gender Identity,” which is produced by the Human Rights Campaign and promoted by the National Education Association (NEA) for presentation to grades 3 through 8.

- To explore the concepts of gender identity and gender expression with students
- To help students understand the differences between gender identity, sexual orientation and sex assigned at birth
- To help students understand that there are many ways to be a girl, boy, both or neither
- To help students understand that gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and sex assigned at birth are not binaries, but spectrums
(Welcoming Schools; Gender Snowperson)

Within the “Educator's Notes,” section, it states:

For schools that do not want to use the word “sex,” we have provided alternative language, such as “pronoun assigned at birth” instead of “sex assigned at birth” and “who you love or are attracted to” instead of “sexual orientation.” This model provides age-appropriate language to discuss these topics with students in grades 3 –8.
(Welcoming Schools; Gender Snowperson)

The following instructions are provided for the execution of the Gender Snowperson lesson plan.

- Ask students to turn to their neighbor and talk about what that word might mean. Have students share out their responses. Usually, students will say that gender is if you are a boy or a girl.

- Let students know that gender is your internal sense of being a girl, boy, both or neither. There are many ways that people identify their gender, and there are many genders.
- Also, let students know that there are many, many ways to be a girl, boy, both or neither and that you all will be discussing this as you do this activity (Welcoming Schools; Gender Snowperson)

(Question 5: As we look at these goals, educator notes, and lesson plan instructions, we must consider the target age of the students. What seems to be out of place for elementary school students and what is being done here through the use of “alternative language?”)

- What does “sexual orientation” mean to elementary school students?
- What is the implication of “sex assigned at birth?”
- Who really “assigns our sex?”
- What does gender described as “both” or “neither” mean?
- Are we opening the door of rebellion against the design of God?
- Yes, gender contains spectrums, but fluidity without boundaries makes everything OK – but is it?
- What happens when we present behavior as acceptable, “happy,” without presentation of the consequences?
- How does a child perceive consequences about something they do not yet comprehend?
- So, we plant the seeds that something is normal, fine, and acceptable, even desirable, while we overlook complexities, issues, harms, and consequences

Two news sources have different takes on a survey as to the views rising from our youth. According to a *LifeSiteNews* article:

Despite nonstop promotion from corporations, the mainstream media, the entertainment industry, and progressive politicians, a new set of polls seems to indicate that younger Americans are growing increasingly uncomfortable with the growing extremism of the LGBTQ movement.

Additionally, as the movement shifts into the post-gay "marriage" era and begins to radicalize around gender fluidity, transgenderism, and the rejection of science in favour of self-identification, many of those who were neutral or supportive are deciding that this is where they get off the train. (Van Maren)

The *LifeSiteNews* Article later continues:

Young people also have a front-row seat to the chaos the LGBTQ movement is wreaking on their schools. Biological males in the girl's bathroom, biological males destroying the female competition at women's sporting events, the utter confusion of transgenderism, transition, and the LGBTQ indoctrination—they have lived these things, and it is notable

that much of the pushback to this agenda is coming from young people, not from adults. It is teenage girls who are suing their schools over bathroom privacy and biological males in female sports competitions. Their childhoods are being turned into battlefields in the culture wars, and many of them are profoundly unhappy with this.

Reporting on the same survey, *USA Today* states:

Ellis [Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) president and CEO] is confident the younger generation can rise again as beacons of unbiased values. When numbers dipped a year ago for young males, GLAAD went to where male audiences consume content: video games. The advocacy group worked with the industry to introduce diverse characters and help shape attitudes.

The group has similar outreach plans for targeting young women in a popular female venue, country music concerts, she said. (Miller)

(Question 6: The *LifeSiteNews* article points to the childhood of our youth as “culture war battlefields.” The *USA Today* article provides some insight as to the nature of those battlefields. What is the role of parents in this battle?)

- Teach their children (Deuteronomy 4:10, 11:19)
- The raising of children so they are prepared to raise the coming generations
- To work in partnership with administrators and teachers to protect the innocence of our children while promoting the behaviors of humility, civility, dignity, and respect
- To monitor what is seen by little eyes and heard by little ears so that little minds may grow and flourish without corruptions of the world
- To treasure, protect, and nourish; both physically and spiritually, the gift they received from God

Quotes:

(Proverbs 22:6)

Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it.

– *Congregation For Catholic Education - “Male and Female He Created Them”*

It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with what might accurately be called an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality. In many places, curricula are being planned and implemented which “allegedly convey a neutral conception of the person and of life, yet in fact reflect an anthropology opposed to faith and to right reason” The disorientation regarding anthropology which is a widespread feature of our cultural landscape has undoubtedly helped to destabilize the family as an institution, bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning.

– *Congregation For Catholic Education - “Male and Female He Created Them”*

The context in which the mission of education is carried out is characterized by challenges emerging from varying forms of an ideology that is given the general name ‘gender theory’, which “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.

– *Congregation For Catholic Education - “Educational Guidance In Human Love”*

Sexuality characterizes man and woman not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual, making its mark on each of their expressions. Such diversity, linked to the complementarity of the two sexes, allows thorough response to the design of God according to the vocation to which each one is called.

Final Thoughts:

While today's discussion focused mostly on efforts to values groom our children within our schools, we must recognize that the values systems of our children are constantly developing and therefore, constantly influenced by a variety of sources. Some of the influence will occur by accident, but we must also be observant for those who are in a tug-of-war with us; not just the values of our children, but potentially their souls.

Our children are a gift to us from God, a special gift entrusted to us, not only to love, but also to protect, cherish, and to prepare them for the vocations and purpose to which God calls them; whether it is to single life, religious life, the priesthood, or married life. Jesus tells us in Matthew 18:6, “*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*” The question for us, then, is what are we doing with the gifts He has entrusted to us; the innocent souls of our children? How are we preparing our children to face down the corruptions of the world and live God's design, the true design of love?

The issues before us are complex, but we will not resolve them with vitriol and anger. We must remember to what we are called in 1 Peter 3:15-16 where we are told, “*Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.*”

We must be vigilant if we are to protect our children, for their innocence is under attack from many directions. We must also engage them with love if we are to enable them to do what is right and just as well as prepare them to face the world in the manner outlined in 1 Peter 3. Next time, we will discuss ways we might engage to help those who surround us to see and live the blessings of God's design.

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 how we may encourage respect of God's design.

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: Humanae Vitae – Part IX: Promoting Respect of God's Design

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