



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Put on the Armor of Prayer
Part I: The Importance of Prayer



Jesus, Teach Us How to Pray
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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 that is what gives our panel something to talk about. So, 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 pray especially for Lenny as well as all who are in need, dear Lord, of your healing hand, and may Your hand of comfort rest upon all who love and care for them.

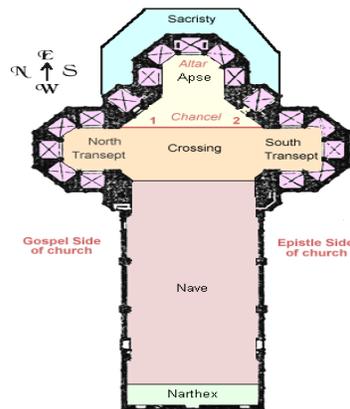
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

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 capture it first. 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.

Faith Event Announcements: If you have a faith event announcement, whether it is a conference, prayer vigil, training, or any other activity designed to help us learn and live our Catholic faith, please let us know, and we will be happy to announce it. You can send details and contact information to us at armoroffaithradio@gmail.com.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

The Arrangement of Churches: The Sanctuary



(Fisheaters)

Welcome back to another discussion on the history of how Catholic Churches should be arranged. We have covered the Narthex, the Nave, the Crossing, the Transepts and the Chancel/Choir spaces. Again, imagine a cross. We have now traveled from the lower end of the cross, past the space where the cross beam resides and have arrived at the head of the cross. Today let's begin to talk about the Sanctuary. When asked what the Sanctuary is, many Catholics respond that it is the inside of the church building. Actually, the Sanctuary is where the holy of holies happens.

In constructing the Sanctuary space of a church building, the word **Apse** is used to denote the space of the Altar and the Sanctuary. This term refers to the shape, of the Altar and Sanctuary. The space is more often done in the shape of a dome, but can also be done as a semicircle, a hexagon, a rectangle or even a multi faceted triangle.

In the general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal (Chapt 5 article II, paragraph 295) we learn:

(GIRM 295)

The sanctuary is the place where the altar stands, the Word of God is proclaimed, and the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers exercise their functions. It should be appropriately marked off from the body of the church either by its being somewhat elevated or by a particular structure and ornamentation. It should, moreover, be large enough to allow the Eucharist to be easily celebrated and seen.

The Church has always had “norms” of how things should be placed in the sanctuary, however, there is no formal or uniform code for positioning the pieces of furniture used for the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Vatican II did make comment on what is necessary for Services and it is expected that these guides will be adhered to.

Vatican II insisted that the settings be simple so that there be no distractions for the congregation who are there to worship the Eucharist and not the adornments. The required components of the sanctuary are: the Altar, the lectern/Ambulatory, the celebrant's seat as well as seating for other ministers, seating for the faithful, the Baptismal Font, and other facilities and decorations. Each of the components of Liturgical Environment are very important. Let us begin exploring.

The Lectern/The Ambulatory or Ambo

Vatican II guidelines for interior decoration and furnishing of churches states:

It is the place where God's Word is proclaimed. In liturgy, Christ is present among us when we proclaim his Word, and he talks to us. Hence, the lectern is a sacred and solemn place, reserved for proclamation of the Word and delivery of homilies. It is not for use by prayer leaders, commentators, choir conductors, or for announcement of other events. It should preferably be constructed in the same material as the altar and located close to the congregation, in order that they may feel the presence of Christ whenever Scripture is read.

The general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal (Chapter 5, article II, paragraph 309) refers to the Lectern as the Ambo and states:

(GIRM 309)

The dignity of the Word of God requires that in the church there be a suitable place from which it may be proclaimed and toward which the attention of the faithful naturally turns during the Liturgy of the Word.

It is appropriate that generally this place be a stationary ambo and not simply a movable lectern. The ambo must be located in keeping with the design of each church in such a way that the ordained ministers and readers may be clearly seen and heard by the faithful.

From the ambo only the readings, the Responsorial Psalm, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) are to be proclaimed; likewise it may be used for giving the Homily and for

announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer. The dignity of the ambo requires that only a minister of the word should stand at it.

It is appropriate that before being put into liturgical use a new ambo be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual.

Because the Lectern/Ambo are for the Liturgy of the Word and homilies only, many church buildings also have a second lectern on the opposite side of the the sanctuary or on a lower level than the rest of the Liturgical furniture. This one is for announcements, music leaders, prayer leaders, etc. This second lectern is also of lesser importance than the one for proclaiming the Word and is thus made of simpler ornamentation.

The Chair for the Priest Celebrant and other seats

The general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal (Chapter 5, article II, paragraph 310) states:

(GIRM 310)

The chair of the priest celebrant must signify his office of presiding over the gathering and of directing the prayer. Thus the best place for the chair is in a position facing the people at the head of the sanctuary, unless the design of the building or other circumstances impede this: for example, if the great distance would interfere with communication between the priest and the gathered assembly, or if the tabernacle is in the center behind the altar. Any appearance of a throne, however, is to be avoided. It is appropriate that, before being put into liturgical use, the chair be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual.

Likewise, seats should be arranged in the sanctuary for concelebrating priests as well as for priests who are present for the celebration in choir dress but who are not concelebrating.

The seat for the deacon should be placed near that of the celebrant. Seats for the other ministers are to be arranged so that they are clearly distinguishable from those for the clergy and so that the ministers are easily able to fulfill the function entrusted to them.

Seating for the Faithful

The general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal (Chapter 5, article III, paragraph 311) states:

(GIRM 311)

Places should be arranged with appropriate care for the faithful so that they are able to participate in the sacred celebrations visually and spiritually, in the proper manner. It is expedient for benches or seats usually to be provided for their use. The custom of reserving seats for private persons, however, is reprehensible. Moreover, benches or chairs should be arranged, especially in newly built churches, in such a way that the people can easily take up the postures required for the different parts of the celebration and can easily come forward to receive Holy Communion.

Care should be taken that the faithful be able not only to see the priest, the deacon, and the lectors but also, with the aid of modern technical means, to hear them without difficulty.

The seating for the faithful is, as we have already discussed, is in the Nave. It is not in the sanctuary. However, this is included with the sanctuary needs as this is also a mandatory requirement according to church documentations.

Next week we will continue this trip through the Church and discuss the Altar.

If you would like to learn more about the Sanctuary within the arrangement of the church, 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 107.

Discussion:

Last time, as we concluded our series in relation to *Humanae Vitae*, I mentioned that the moral compass of “Political Correctness” has left many scarred souls and perhaps many blind one's as well. What I mean by that is that when we reject the design of God, it is often because we do not see or comprehend the purpose for which He made us. If we understand the purpose God intended through His design, then, we are likely to seek the blessings He offers. If, instead, we are disciples of “Political Correctness,” we find ourselves wandering through ever changing mazes of political power struggles without the benefit of a true moral compass which enables us to understand what is truly right and just. Suffice it to say that the rules of “Political Correctness” distracts us from what God asks of us.

We have all made bad choices during our journey of life. That is why we are called sinners. If we have made bad choices, can we repent and accept the blessings of God's design? Yes, because God does not want to condemn the world. That is the reason He sent His only begotten Son, so that we might be saved and receive His mercy and forgiveness. (cf. John 3:16-21)

(John 3:16-21)

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. 21 But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Jesus also calls us to understand the words, “*I desire mercy, not sacrifice.*” (Matthew 9:13, 12:7) Let us reflect on these words during prayer and let us engage as Jesus would have us do to

encourage one another to live according to the design of God and the vocations to which He calls us. Whether we respond to the call to the vocation of single life, the priesthood, religious life, or married life; let us encourage one another, with all humility, civility, dignity, and respect; to do what is right and just. Let us turn away from the arrogance of the world and the confusion of “Political Correctness,” and instead, ask God, through prayer, to guide our hearts so that we may share all the blessings He offers through living the fullness of our faith.

Speaking of prayer, this week, our discussion turns to putting on the armor of prayer. We are all encouraged to pray, but we might ask ourselves, do we really understand the importance and value of prayer to our life; not just our daily life, but also our eternal life?

(Question 1: Before we can begin that discussion, we should probably take a moment to first examine what prayer is. So, what is prayer and how does it compare and contrast with a conversation we might have with a loved one?)

– *St. Thérèse of Lisieux*

For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.

(CCC: 2567) In the Old Testament, the revelation of prayer comes between the fall and the restoration of man, that is, between God's sorrowful call to his first children: "Where are you? . . . What is this that you have done?" and the response of God's only Son on coming into the world: "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God." Prayer is bound up with human history, for it is the relationship with God in historical events.

(CCC: 2590) "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God" (St. John Damascene).

- Prayer is a conversation, but we sense the feedback differently
- Prayer allows us to reflect on our relationship with God
- Prayer enables the growth of our relationship with God
- Prayer opens our heart to God so He may guide us to what is right and just

During the course of the Mass, we say together the prayer which we call the, “Our Father.” This prayer comes from what Jesus taught as reflected in Matthew 6:9-13 and a similar version in Luke 11:2-4).

(Matthew 6:9-13)

[Jesus said,] 9 “*This is how you are to pray:*

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread;

- 12 *and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;*
13 *and do not subject us to the final test,
but deliver us from the evil one.*

(Question 2: Here, Jesus provides an example from which to teach us about prayer. One might say that Jesus gave us a formula, of sorts, by which we might learn how to pray. What might we observe as the elements of this example of how we are to pray?)

- Greeting and adoration of our Father in heaven
 - Acceptance and deference to His will
 - Petition of sustenance
 - Petition of forgiveness
 - Petition of protection
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(Luke 17:11-19)

*11 As he continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee.
12 As he was entering a village, ten lepers met [him]. They stood at a distance from him
13 and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" 14 And when he
saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were
cleansed. 15 And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in
a loud voice; 16 and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.
17 Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? 18
Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" 19 Then he said to him,
"Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."*

(Question 3: In this segment of scripture, we see a petition raised to Christ, to which He responds with healing. Only one comes back to thank Him. What does this reveal to us about the importance of prayer?)

- If we examine our prayer, we raise up many petitions
 - In our petitions, we often plead for His mercy and help
 - What message do we send when we fail to thank Him?
 - Jesus responds to the one who does give thanks, "*Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.*"
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(Matthew 10:28)

*[Jesus said,] And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul;
rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.*

(Question 4: The title of this series is "Putting on the Armor of Prayer." How might we consider prayer to be armor for the soul?)

- A means to reflect on God's Holy Word
- A means to reflect on our daily life
- A means to reflect on our choices as God sees them
- A means to reflect on what is right and just
- A means to reflect on our personal growth in the eyes of God
- A means to reflect on how we might help others as God asks of us
- A means to reflect on how to better live what God asks of us
- A means to reflect on where we place God in our lives

As we reflect upon what God asks of us, our life, our choices, and our relationship with God; as we converse with God and draw closer to Him, we make the work of the evil one, who seeks the ruin of our soul, more difficult. As we put on the armor of God, through accepting what God teaches, expressing our love, and deferring to His will; we put on His will as the armor to protect our soul.

(1 Kings 19:11-12)

11 Then the LORD said: *Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will pass by.* There was a strong and violent wind rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD—but the LORD was not in the wind; after the wind, an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake; 12 after the earthquake, fire—but the LORD was not in the fire; after the fire, *a light silent sound.* 13 *When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.* A voice said to him, *Why are you here, Elijah?*

(Question 5: In this scripture, we are told that Elijah recognizes the Lord as “*a light silent sound.*” In other words, we do not always hear the Lord in our ears, but He does speak to us, perhaps in ways only the ears of our heart might hear. During the course of our discussion, we mentioned many ways we might reflect in prayer. In prayer, of course, we speak to God, but do we listen? How might we listen, as we pray, for what God speaks to us?)

- Incorporate scripture as part of our prayer time and contemplate its meaning
- Reflect on the course of our days and sense to what God is leading us
- Reflect on our perception of His answers – our petitions are answered, but not always as we expect – sometimes the answer is, “No”
- Reflect on our patience – do we expect His answer in our time or His?
- Reflect on the opportunities and trials we see before us and sense how God would have us face them?
- Reflect on what our choices say to God – sense the choices to which He guides us

As we consider the importance of prayer, we might wonder why we do not spend more time in prayer? For some, it is a matter of neglect. For others, it is a perception of time. For others, it is a matter of not really understanding the value of prayer or how it brings us closer to our Creator.

For still others, it is a matter of not understanding the reasons as to why we should pray or believing that prayer is mostly for times when we are in need or face trial and tribulation. Let us remember the lepers who cried out to Jesus as we are told in Luke 17:13, *Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!*” Let us also remember the questions of Jesus after He answered their cry. *“Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine?”* (Luke 17:17)

(Question 6: As we consider the importance and value of prayer, we must also consider how we can allow prayer to take its proper place within our life. How might we turn our prayer life from a matter of circumstance or opportunity such that it becomes an intentional and valued part of our day? Where might we start?)

- Consider what distracts us from prayer and adjust our priorities – do we place less important pursuits over our opportunity for prayer?
- Set aside a place and time – manage time to allow for daily prayer
- Begin with prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be
- Consider the reasons for which we pray and turn them into a conversation
- Use a prayer journal to help focus thought
- Learn the Rosary and make a goal to say at least one a day
- Allow the time we spend in prayer to grow
- Remember to give thanks for the blessing we receive
- Incorporate adoration and preparation for Mass as part of our prayer life
- Let us consider what Jesus told us when He said, *“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”* (Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34) – let our prayer become a precious treasure

Quotes:

– *Pope Benedict XVI – from his meeting with members of the Roman clergy March 2, 2006*
In a world where there is so much noise, so much bewilderment, there is a need for silent adoration of Jesus concealed in the Host. Be assiduous in the prayer of adoration and teach it to the faithful. It is a source of comfort and light, particularly to those who are suffering.

– *St. Louis de Montfort*
Pray with great confidence, with confidence based upon the goodness and infinite generosity of God and upon the promises of Jesus Christ. God is a spring of living water which flows unceasingly into the hearts of those who pray.

– *St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori*
Without prayer we have neither light nor strength to advance in the way which leads to God.

Final Thoughts:

Today, we discussed the importance and value of prayer. We also discussed it as armor for the soul. As we lead our lives, we have the choice of being unruly and selfish children, or we can seek a relationship with our Creator and ask Him to guide us to the purpose for which He

created us. Prayer, is the means by which we speak with Him and by which we may also listen for Him within our hearts.

Just as a child must learn to communicate with a parent, we must learn how we might communicate with God. Our first efforts may feel awkward. At first, we may not even perceive the blessings He brings or the many wonderful ways He works within our lives, but the more we spend time with Him in prayer, we will begin to recognize His “*light, silent sound,*” within our hearts. As we converse with Him each day, we will begin to see the ways He leads us and the paths to which He calls us.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we begin to discuss the various forms and types of prayers we can incorporate into our prayer life.

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: Put on the Armor of Prayer – Part II: Forms and Types of Prayer

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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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>