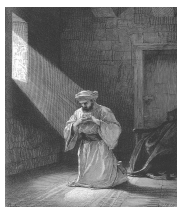




The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Put on the Armor of Prayer
Part V: Prayer in Private



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]

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, what would an answer be without a question. 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 pray especially for Michele as she begins a new school year teaching seven and eight year olds. We pray You will help her increase the knowledge of the children in her class while helping to protect their innocence.

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.

We would also like to ask for your assistance to help share our discussions. If you find an episode or series, which caused you to take a moment and think and you would like to share with family or friends, you only need to copy the URL of the show to which you are listening and drop it into an email or share it through social media.

Faith Event Announcements:

If you happen to be in Denver on Saturday, 21 Sep 2019, EWTN is holding a Family Celebration conference from 8am to 7pm at the University of Denver - Magness Arena. The conference includes a number of high powered speakers as well as an opportunity to be part of a live, televised broadcast. To find out more information, and to register to attend, you can visit: <https://www.ewtn.com/familycelebration>.

We also invite you to save 12 Oct 2019 on your calendar and encourage you to look for opportunities to participate in the 2019 Public Square Rosary Rallies being coordinated across the nation by America Needs Fatima and local parish volunteers. Our Lady said to Saint Dominic, “*The Rosary will be a very powerful armor against hell; it will destroy vice, deliver from sin and dispel heresy.*” The Public Square Rosary Rallies are an opportunity for communities to come together and share the blessings of this prayer as it leads us to reflect on the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior and the sacrifice made for the salvation of our souls. If your parish is not aware of this opportunity, you can find information to share by visiting <https://americanneedsfatima.org/>

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Things We Use for Mass – Sacred Vessels

Last week we discussed several of the Sacred Vessels that we see during Mass. Now we'll continue the discussion with more of the “shiny stuff”. The censor and boat, the monstrance, and the sanctuary lamp.

Censor and Boat

The censor is also called the thurible. We have all witnessed the censor. This is when the priest uses incense to reverence and lift up prayers to heaven. The incense smoke wafts through the church and often makes people cough or sneeze. Yep that stuff.

The thurible is normally made of brass and is shaped like a small bowl with a platform bottom so that when set down, it won't roll away. It has a cone shaped lid that slides up and down on a set of three chains. The chains are held together by a single ring. The ring is for ease of movement for the person charged with handling it. The bowl holds charcoal and incense. The

lid is for controlling the smoke. And the chains not only allow for opening and closing the thurible, but also allows it to be swung in a safe manor and not allow the contents to spill.

The second part of this set, is the boat. The boat is also made of brass and is a small bowl with a platform bottom, a top and a small spoon. Inside the boat is incense that will be spooned into the censor at the appointed time. The charcoal in the thurible is lit before Mass so that it will burn the incense easily. When the time arrives, the deacon or server presents the bowl to the priest, who will remove the lid, scoop up incense with the spoon and pour it onto the burning charcoal in the thurible. That is when the smoke fills the air.

And the third part of this set is the thurible stand. This is a metal pole that is high enough to hold the thurible when it is not in use. The ring of the thurible is slipped onto an arm of the pole. This keeps the thurible off the floor and from falling down and spilling the burning incense.

Incense is used on special solemn occasions when the priest reverences the altar, the communion, the Book of the Gospels, and the people. The deacon will incense the priest. On feast days, he may reverence a statue of a saint. He may reverence a nativity at Christmas time. Incense is also used during weddings and funeral services.

Monstrance

The monstrance is a sacred vessel and is made of a durable metal, like brass. It's purpose is to be used to expose the consecrated Host. It is used for adoration, but is also used to carry the Host in a procession. The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ is a very good time to process the monstrance so that all can see and adore our Lord. Because this is a sacred vessel, it should be handled with great care. It should be covered with a soft cloth to keep it clean when not in use.

The Sanctuary Lamp

The sanctuary lamp is the most important lamp in the church. It is always next to the Tabernacle. The lamp is either an oil lamp, or a wax candle in a red votive holder. The votive holder is adorned with brass decorations and usually matches the other candle holders used in the church.

The purpose for this lamp is to remind us that Jesus is in the house. When the consecrated Host is in the Tabernacle, the lamp is always lit. The only time the sanctuary lamp will not be lit is during the Triduum, on Good Friday, when Jesus is removed from the Tabernacle and reposed in another place. This is the time we remember Jesus' death. The lamp is a sign of honor shown for our Lord.

If you would like to learn more about the Sacred Vessels used during the Mass, 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 111.

Discussion:

Today, our discussion will be about our personal, private prayer. It is the first step to a personal relationship with God. Of course, some might point out that we already have a prayer life through the prayers we say at Mass, such as the Lord's prayer and the prayers of the faithful. Some add to that by coming together before Mass to say the Rosary and some gather together after Mass to say additional prayers such as the Saint Michael's prayer.

(Question 1: When we consider the number of prayers we lift up with others, some may believe that is a sufficient prayer life. **Why do we need a personal, private prayer life?)**

(CCC: 1779) It is important for every person to be **sufficiently present to himself** in order to **hear and follow the voice of his conscience**. This requirement of interiority is all the more necessary as **life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection**; Return to your conscience, question it. . . . **Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness.**

- Enables a conversation with our Creator
- Enables a personal relationship of love
- Enables us to open the door of hope
- Enables a personal introspection of that relationship and its meaning
- Enables a personal examination of the gifts and talents God created within us and the purpose to which He desires we put them
- Enables a personal examination of whether we are being responsible stewards of what God has placed within us as well as within our hands
- Enables a personal examination of our desires and hopes in relation to what God asks of us
- Enables a personal examination of our choices in relation to what God asks of us
- Enables us to lift up our sorrows and contriteness because of the ways we have failed our Creator as well as one another
- Enables us to listen for the direction God desires to lead us
- Enables us to explain our petitions and the love with which we lift them

(CCC: 2631) The **first movement of the prayer of petition is asking forgiveness**, like the tax collector in the parable: “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” It is a prerequisite for righteous and pure prayer. **A trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another**, so that “we receive from him whatever we ask.” **Asking forgiveness is the prerequisite for both the Eucharistic liturgy and personal prayer.**

(CCC: 2657) **The Holy Spirit, who instructs us** to celebrate the liturgy in expectation of Christ's return, **teaches us to pray in hope**. Conversely, the prayer of the Church and **personal prayer nourish hope in us**. The psalms especially, with their concrete and varied language, teach us to fix our hope in God: “I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.” As St. Paul prayed: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy

and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

(Matthew 6:5-7)

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

(Question 2: When we think about prayer in private, we might be drawn to reflect on Matthew 6:5-7 where we are told to go to our inner room and close the door to pray. That is certainly enables private, but what other places might we pray in private and what do we consider to be private prayer?)

- Private prayer includes our silent prayers, where others are not aware of for what we pray or may not even know we are praying
- Many pray privately before or after Mass
- Many pray privately in Adoration
- We can pray privately any place where we can take a moment to have a conversation with God and listen for His “light, silent sound.” (1 Kings 19:12)

(CCC: 2691) The church, the house of God, is the proper place for the liturgical prayer of the parish community. It is also the privileged place for adoration of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The choice of a favorable place is not a matter of indifference for true prayer. —For personal prayer, this can be a “prayer corner” with the Sacred Scriptures and icons, in order to be there, in secret, before our Father. In a Christian family, this kind of little oratory fosters prayer in common. — In regions where monasteries exist, the vocation of these communities is to further the participation of the faithful in the Liturgy of the Hours and to provide necessary solitude for more intense personal prayer.

(CCC: 2696) The most appropriate places for prayer are personal or family oratories, monasteries, places of pilgrimage, and above all the church, which is the proper place for liturgical prayer for the parish community and the privileged place for Eucharistic adoration.

(Question 3: When we reflect upon our private prayer life, there is a spectrum which ranges from spontaneous to routine. What are some of the advantages of having a prayer routine? What might we consider within our prayer routine?)

Advantages:

- Enables our focus towards ensuring time for prayer
- We are able to bring not only our daily life, but our faith learning as well
- Enables practices such as *Lectio Divina* during prayer (to learn more about *Lectio Divina*, we recommend listening to episode 45)

- Enables our persistence in prayer

Prayer Routine Considerations:

- A time usually free of distractions
- A place usually free of distractions
- A place which reminds us of the blessings which God brings
- A place where we may keep scripture and devotionals close by
- A sequence by which we open our conversation, examine His Word, lift up our petitions, give thanks for His blessings, lift up our love, and listen for His answers and guidance

Remember: “The choice of a favorable place is not a matter of indifference for true prayer.” (CCC: 2691)

(Question 4: With all the distractions of the world, it requires effort to set time aside for personal prayer. **How might we go about growing and nourishing our private prayer life?)**

- Recognize the importance of setting aside time
 - Establish a backup time should we be prevented from our normal time
 - Start with written or memorized prayers and reflect on their meaning – let God feel their emotion in our heart
 - ➔ Our Father
 - ➔ Hail Mary
 - ➔ Glory Be
 - ➔ Angel of Fatima Prayer
 - ➔ Fatima Prayer
 - ➔ The Rosary
 - Bring scripture, a devotional, favorite prayers, stories of saints, or writings from church documents, for meditation and contemplation
 - Use aids such as the Liturgy of the Hours, Daily Missals, devotional periodicals, or Catholic online prayer aids or apps
 - Maintain a prayer journal
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(Matthew 6:7-8)

7 In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

(Question 5: So, we recommended the use of written or memorized prayers to help us nourish our prayer life. Catholics are often criticized for the use of such prayers as “vain repetition” which some point to Matthew 6:7-8 as instruction which prohibits such prayer. **Is this what Matthew 6:7-8 is telling us? What benefit might we derive from written or memorized prayers and why are these not considered “vain repetitions?”)**

(Footnote to Matthew 6:7, NABRE)

The example of what Christian prayer should be like contrasts it now not with the prayer of the hypocrites but with that of the pagans. Their babbling probably means their reciting a long list of divine names, hoping that one of them will force a response from the deity.

(Luke 11:5-8)

5 And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,’ 7 and he says in reply from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.’ 8 I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

(Luke 18:1-8)

1 Then he [Jesus] told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said, 2 “There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. 3 And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, ‘Render a just decision for me against my adversary.’ 4 For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, ‘While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, 5 because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.’” 6 The Lord said, “Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. 7 Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? 8 I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

(CCC: 2688) The catechesis of children, young people, and adults aims at teaching them to meditate on The Word of God in personal prayer, practicing it in liturgical prayer, and internalizing it at all times in order to bear fruit in a new life. Catechesis is also a time for the discernment and education of popular piety. The memorization of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer, but it is important to help learners savor their meaning.

- The Psalms are songs and prayers of David – are they not written? Should we not share them because God already knows them and it is vain to repeat them?
- When a prayer is like a song or poetry which lifts the heart, should we not share with God the love, faith, hopes, joy, thanks, and repentance they represent?
- Should we not allow the prayers repeated by saints and faithful hearts to inspire and lift our hearts as we converse with God?
- Even in private, personal prayer, we may join our prayer with others.

(CCC: 2655) In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation,

which is continued in the heart that prays. The spiritual writers sometimes compare the heart to an altar. Prayer internalizes and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration. Even when it is lived out “in secret,” prayer is always prayer of the Church; it is a communion with the Holy Trinity.

(Colossians 3:16)

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

(Question 6: We recommend including a prayer journal as part of our personal prayer life. **What are some of the benefits of a prayer journal?)**

- Engages more of self in prayer – brain, eye, hand, heart, and soul
- Enables our focus of thought and reflection
- Enables reflection and observation across time → simmering thought
- Letters to God also serve as reminders to us of what we share with Him
- As we write, and our heart is open to Him, He will inspire us to see His answers
- It can enable us to see how we are moving forward in faith
- It enables the songs of prayer to form in our heart
- As we write and listen, He will help us navigate our stress
- By the way, God does not care about our grammar, He cares about our soul

Quotes:

– *St. Teresa of Avila*

Mental prayer is nothing else but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him.

– *St. Jane Frances de Chantal*

There is no danger if our prayer is without words or reflection because the good success of prayer depends neither on words nor on study. It depends upon the simple raising of our minds to God, and the more simple and stripped of feeling it is, the surer it is.

– *St. John Vianney*

We do not have to talk very much in order to pray well. We know that God is there in His holy tabernacle; let us open our hearts to Him; let us rejoice in His Presence: This is the best prayer.

– *St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*

When you do not succeed in meditating well, do not for this reason cease to do your duty. If there are many distractions do not lose heart. Make a meditation of patience; you will profit all the same.

– *St. John Chrysostom*

Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness.

Final Thoughts:

During the course of our discussion, we noted the many distractions to our prayer as well as means by which we may commit to and protect our time for prayer. While we may have many opportunities for joining in prayer during Mass, faith formation, or faith fellowship, we must also consider our private prayer life. It is a means by which we may allow God to take us aside and speak to us alone. It is an opportunity to allow God to bring peace to our heart as He listens to how we reflect on our experience, thoughts, and decisions.

If we feel like He is not there, that He is not answering, we might ask ourselves, are we observing? It may take time, at least in our perception of time, before we recognize an answer, but we must trust, God hears and answers every prayer. When we do not perceive an answer, it could be because we are looking in the wrong places and simply not listening. If we are observant, we shall see. If we open our hearts, we shall hear.

If we allow, prayer can bring us peace. As we converse with God, He will help us navigate what we consider to be our problems, but let us also allow Him to lead us to the purpose for which He created us and the work He desires that we perform. Let us allow Him to lead us to how we may use what He has created in us so that we may help accomplish His will and so we might fulfill the purpose for which He created us.

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 prayer with 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: Put on the Armor of Prayer – Part VI: Prayer with Family

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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