



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: The Profession of Faith
The Life of Jesus



Nativity

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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:

During our last two sessions, we discussed two very important segments of the **Profession of Faith** which are, “I **believe** in one God” and “I **believe** in one Lord Jesus Christ.” We mentioned that there are those who would challenge us in those two assertions which we **believe** to be true. Our discussion, perhaps to the frustration of some of our listeners, approached our assertions from the aspect of reasoned logic and experience rather than scripture. We start there in that those who do not **believe** in God or His only begotten Son also do not **believe** in scripture, therefore, to be able to begin the discussion with those who do not

believe in God, we must first address why we **believe** outside of what scripture tells us. Once we reach the state where we acknowledge God, we then, can progress to the Word which we **believe** God inspired to be written. Once we open the door to the scripture of God, we also open the door to His wisdom as well as His message to us as to the blessings we may share through living as He commands us.

As we continue our reflection on our **Profession of Faith**, we transition from our core **belief** in the Father and the Son to the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Our interest here transitions from our **belief** in the Father and the Son to wanting to know the Father and the Son. If we **believe** in the Father and the Son, then, we also **believe** in the scripture which God inspired to be written, therefore, as we go forward in our examination of our **faith**, the handcuffs are off and we can allow scripture to be our guide.

In John 14:7, Jesus tells us, “*If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.*” In the Old Testament, we see the relationship of God with the children of His creation. We see that He created man and woman and how they were seduced to disobedience of their Creator. We see how God works in the lives of those He created. We see His commandments, but what Jesus is telling us is that if we truly desire to know the Father, then, we must look to know the Son.

As we begin to read the book of John, this should make sense to us. John 1:1-5 states,

*1 In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
2 He was in the beginning with God.
3 All things came to be through him,
and without him nothing came to be.
What came to be
4 through him was life,
and this life was the light of the human race;
5 the light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.
(John 1:1-5)*

Later we are told:

*14 And the Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory as of the Father's only Son,
full of grace and truth.
(John 1:14)*

So, we see the Father and the Son are consubstantial, but even more, the Son is the Word made flesh, therefore the Son is also the revelation of the Father. If we are to comprehend the Father, we must know the Son. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No*

one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

(CCC: 49) “Without the Creator, the creature vanishes”. This is the reason why **believers** know that the love of Christ urges them to bring the light of the living God to those who do not know him or who reject him.

What this tells us is that we have this innate desire to know the One who created us. In that desire, we also want to share of that relationship with those who were created along with us, especially those who reject the possibility of a relationship with God and who do not know what they are missing. We also want to learn and share the truth. If we are to know the truth of God, we must start with the ways God endeavors to communicate with us.

(Question: In the last session, we mentioned Hebrews 1:1-2, where we are told: “*1 In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; 2 in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe.*” In what ways and means may we learn what God revealed to us through His only begotten Son?)

(CCC: 101) In order to reveal himself to men, in the condescension of his goodness God speaks to them in human words: “Indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men.”

(Question: In the Profession of Faith, we say, “For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven.” In what form did Jesus come down from heaven and why is this form important to us?)

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.
(Galations 4:4-5)

(CCC: 437) To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” From the beginning he was “the one whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world,” conceived as “holy” in Mary’s virginal womb. God called Joseph to “take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit,” so that Jesus, “who is called Christ,” should be born of Joseph’s spouse into the messianic lineage of David.

(Question: God chose Mary and Joseph to be the earthly family for His only begotten Son. Why did God choose Mary, a young woman betrothed to a carpenter, through which to bring Jesus into the world rather than choosing the wife of a king or emperor where from such position of nobility Jesus could have raised great armies to free Israel from the Roman oppression and through which to wield great power over the people?)

458 **The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God’s love:** “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we

might live through him.” “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever **believes** in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

(Question: What did Jesus accomplish during the course of His life on earth and how did this enable the salvation of Man?)

(CCC: 108) Still, the **Christian faith** is not a “religion of the book.” Christianity is the religion of the “Word” of God, a word which is “not a written and mute word, but the **Word which is incarnate and living.**” If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, “open [our] minds to understand the Scriptures.”

(Question: What does this mean, “a word which is 'not a written and mute word, but the Word which is incarnate and living?’”)

(CCC: 426) “**At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father . . . who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.**” To catechize is “to reveal in the **Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person.** It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ’s actions and words and of the signs worked by him.” **Catechesis aims at putting “people . . . in communion . . . with Jesus Christ:** only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.”

(Question: In this article, we are told that “To catechize is 'to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person.” **If this is the objective of catechesis, how are we to know when our catechesis is complete?)**

(CCC: 459) **The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness:** “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.” “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.” On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: “Listen to him!” **Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: “Love one another as I have loved you.”** This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example.

(Question: We are told in this article, “The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness.” **What do we perceive that model of holiness to be and what is the importance of that model to how we lead our lives?)**

(CCC: 520) **In all of his life Jesus presents himself as our model.** He is “the perfect man,” who invites us to become his disciples and follow him. In humbling himself, he has given us an example to imitate, through his prayer he draws us to pray, and by his poverty he calls us to accept freely the privation and persecutions that may come our way.

(CCC: 516) **Christ’s whole earthly life**—his words and deeds, his silences and sufferings, indeed his manner of being and speaking—is **Revelation of the Father.** Jesus

can say: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,” and the Father can say: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” Because our Lord became man in order to do his Father’s will, even the least characteristics of his mysteries **manifest “God’s love . . . among us.”**

(Question: Here, we are told that “Christ's whole earthly life...is Revelation of the Father.” **How might we summarize this revelation?)**

*34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, 36 “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” 37 He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the greatest and the first commandment. 39 The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 **The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.**” (Matthew 22:36-40)*

(CCC: 546) **Jesus’ invitation to enter his kingdom comes in the form of parables,** a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: **to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough; deeds are required.** (Matthew 21:28-31) **The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word?** What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, **become a disciple of Christ, in order to “know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.”** For those who stay **“outside,” everything remains enigmatic [difficult to interpret].**

(Question: In this article, we are told, “The parables are like mirrors for man.” **As we observe the life of Jesus, as we reflect upon His parables and His teachings, what does this enable us to see?)**

Quotes:

Life without Christ is crisis. – Father Paul Attah-Nsiah

“Jesus is the one who brings God to us and us to God.” – Pope Francis

“Catholicism is a matter of the body and the senses as much as it is a matter of the mind, precisely because the Word became flesh.” – Bishop Robert Barron

“It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle.

It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit

yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.” — Pope Saint John Paul II

Final Thoughts:

As we discussed the life of Jesus, we discussed that Jesus reveals the Father to us and the opportunity for salvation. We also discussed that in the process of that revelation, Jesus is the Word made flesh, therefore He came to walk among us in the form of man. He came to teach us and provide an example to us, but He also came to hold up a mirror to us. As He holds up that mirror, the basic question before us is, “Who are we?” If we do not like what we see, will we endeavor to change?

As one example of the parables Jesus used, I would like to share Matthew 21:28-31.

28 “What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 He said in reply, ‘I will not,’ but afterwards he changed his mind and went. 30 The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, ‘Yes, sir,’ but did not go. 31 Which of the two did his father’s will?” They answered, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.” (Matthew 21:28-31)

As we reflect on this story, we should ask questions of ourselves, such as:

- Who are we?
- Do we like what we see?
- Will we follow our Teacher?
- Will we allow what He did and what He taught to guide the choices we make?
- Will we seek to share what He teaches and what we learn?
- If we fall, will we take His hand so we may get back up again?

Wrap Up: Well, our hour has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with the death of our Lord and Savior.

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 Death of Jesus.