



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: The Profession of Faith
Life of the World to Come



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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 represent a rather broad background in catechesis gained in support of various parishes as well as a variety of age and spiritual interest groups. So, welcome to our panelists as well as to 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:

As we concluded our discussion of our **belief** in the resurrection of the dead, I mentioned that we are confident in this **belief**. Indeed, the question is not whether we shall **rise**, but to where. As I also stated, the warnings are many that we must be watchful with our lives, but so too, we are told that if we **believe** in Him, He shall call us to His kingdom. That brings us back to previous discussions as to what **belief** in the Son of God really means, for we are told even the demons **believe**, (James 2:19) but to the netherworld they are still condemned.

I commented that there are many things to ponder here, but there is reason for our hope, and if we truly **believe** in the One who calls us to Him, then, we must also consider the responsibilities

of our **belief**. We must realize, His commandments are not only about us as individuals, but our relationship with God and those with whom He has surrounded us. As we profess and reflect upon our **faith**, let us consider our responsibilities in this life as they prepare us for **the life of the world to come**, which is the focus of the discussion we begin today.

(CCC: 1020) The Christian who unites his own death to that of Jesus views it as a step towards him and an entrance into everlasting life. When the Church for the last time speaks Christ's words of pardon and absolution over the dying Christian, seals him for the last time with a strengthening anointing, and gives him Christ in viaticum as nourishment for the journey, she speaks with gentle assurance:

Go forth, Christian soul, from this world in the name of God the almighty Father, who created you, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for you, in the name of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out upon you. Go forth, faithful Christian!

May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion, with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with Joseph, and all the angels and saints. . . .

May you return to [your Creator] who formed you from the dust of the earth. May holy Mary, the angels, and all the saints come to meet you as you go forth from this life. . . . May you see your Redeemer face to face. . . .

(Question 1: In this paragraph of the Catechism, we see reference to prayer for the dying Christian. Within it, is a request that we be greeted by Mary, the angels, and all the saints, and that we may see our Redeemer face to face; a heavenly greeting party, if you will. When we think about a greeting party, what are some of the motivations for such a party to form?)

(CCC: 1023) Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face:

By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints . . . and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, . . . or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, . . .) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment—and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven—have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.

(Question 2: In this paragraph of the Catechism, we see the reference to purity, that to be brought into His kingdom, we must be pure or made pure. What do we believe the nature of this

purity might be and how may we be made pure?)

(1 John 3:2-3) *2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.*

(CCC: 997) What is “**rising**”? In death, the separation of the soul from the body, the human body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its **glorified body**. God, in his almighty power, will definitively grant **incorruptible life** to our bodies by reuniting them with our souls, through the power of Jesus’ **Resurrection**.

(Question 3: If we remember from our last discussion, we mentioned CCC: 997 which refers to the reunion of our soul with a “glorified body.” In this passage from 1 John 3:2-3, we are told that “*what we shall be has not yet been revealed,*” but that “*when it is revealed, we shall be like him.*” What could this mean, “*we will be like him?*”)

(CCC: 1026) **By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has “opened” heaven to us.** The life of the blessed consists in the full and perfect possession of the fruits of the redemption accomplished by Christ. He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have **believed** in him and remained **faithful** to his will. **Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ.**

(CCC: 1027) **This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description.** Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, **wedding feast, wine of the kingdom, the Father’s house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: “no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.”** (1 Corinthians 2:9)

(Question 4: Here, we are told that heaven is “the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ,” but that this blessed communion is “beyond all understanding and description.” Why do we think that heaven is presented to us as “beyond all understanding and description?”)

(Isaiah 25:6-9)
*6 On this mountain [Zion] the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
A feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
7 On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples,
The web that is woven over all nations.
8 He will destroy death forever.
The Lord GOD will wipe away
the tears from all faces;*

*The reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.*

9 *On that day it will be said:*

“Indeed, this is our God; we looked to him, and he saved us!

This is the LORD to whom we looked;

let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!”

(Question 5: In this passage of Isaiah, the prophet speaks of a future time, but it is viewed in relation to a victory feast on Jerusalem's Mount Zion. What do we notice about the descriptions of this time and our expectations of heaven?)

(CCC: 1044) In this new universe, the heavenly Jerusalem, God will have his dwelling among men. *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.”*

(Revelation 21:1-8)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them [as their God]. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, [for] the old order has passed away.”

5 The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” Then he said, “Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true.” 6 He said to me, “They are accomplished. I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. 7 The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son. 8 But as for cowards, the unfaithful, the depraved, murderers, the unchaste, sorcerers, idol-worshippers, and deceivers of every sort, their lot is in the burning pool of fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

(Question 6: Here we observe the description of God dwelling with us, but also, we see reference to the holy city prepared as a bride. This aligns with one description in CCC: 1027, which refers to the scriptural description of a “wedding feast.” What do these images of making all things new, of wiping away every tear, the gift of life-giving water, and a wedding feast bring to mind?)

(Matthew 22:1-14)

1 Jesus again in reply spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. 3 He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come. 4 A second time he

sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those invited: "Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast."' 5 Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business. 6 The rest laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was enraged and sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. 9 Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.' 10 The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to meet the guests he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment. 12 He said to him, 'My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?' But he was reduced to silence. 13 Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the darkness outside, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.' 14 Many are invited, but few are chosen."

(Question 7: In this parable, Jesus tells us that heaven is like a wedding feast. We clearly see justification for the anger of the king against the ones who ignored the king, or worse, spurned him. We see they are turned over to destruction. Then, the king invites anyone who may be found and one who does come, fails to put on a wedding garment. When questioned by the king, the man is speechless, therefore, the king throws him also to the darkness, leading to that wailing and grinding of teeth thing which is a common reference to the experience of those left outside of heaven. We might wonder, why was this poor man of the street treated so harshly when it is unlikely he would have wedding garments and what might this reveal to us about the wedding feast of heaven?)

— Saint Augustine (Sermon #90) [selected passages from the Translation by Rev. R. G. MacMullen and Edited by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D.]

Ye will say, "Explain this 'wedding garment' to us." Without a doubt, that is the garment which none but the good have, who are to be left at the feast, reserved unto that other feast to which no bad man approaches, who are to be brought safely thither by the grace of the Lord; these have "the wedding garment." Let us then, my Brethren, seek for those among the **faithful** who have something which bad men have not, and this will be "the wedding garment." If we speak of sacraments, ye see how that these are common to the bad and good. Is it Baptism? Without Baptism it is true no one attaineth to God; but not every one that hath Baptism attaineth to Him. I cannot therefore understand Baptism, the Sacrament itself that is, to be "the wedding garment;" for this garment I see in the good, I see in the bad. Peradventure it is the Altar, or That which is received at the Altar. But no; we see that many eat, and "eat and drink judgment to themselves." (1 Corinthians 11:29) What is it then? Is it fasting? The wicked fast also. Is it running together to the Church? The wicked run thither also. ...

What is that "wedding garment" then? This is the wedding garment: "Now the end of the commandment," says the Apostle, "is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Timothy 1:5) This is "the wedding garment." **Not** charity of any kind whatever; for very often they who are partakers together of an evil

conscience seem to love one another. They who commit robberies together, who love the hurtful arts of sorceries, and the stage together, who join together in the shout of the chariot race, or the wild beast fight; these very often love one another; but in these there is no "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. The wedding garment" is such charity as this...

If then I have not charity, though I bestow alms freely upon the poor, though I have come to the confession of Christ's Name even unto blood and fire, these things may be done even through the love of glory, and so are vain. Because then they may be done even from the love of glory, and so be vain, and not through the rich charity of a godly affection, he names them all also in express terms, and do thou give ear to them; "though I distribute all my goods for the use of the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3) This then is "the wedding garment." Question yourselves; if ye have it, ye may be without fear in the Feast of the Lord.

(Question 8: In this selection from a sermon given by Saint Augustine, we see an explanation as to what the wedding garment is. What is this wedding garment and what is the nature of the qualification he makes about the garment? Why is this important to our understanding?)

(1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

*1 If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. 2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all **faith** so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

*4 Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, 5 it is not rude, **it does not seek its own interests**, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, 6 it does not rejoice over wrongdoing **but rejoices with the truth**. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*8 **Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. 9 For we know partially and we prophesy partially. 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. 12 At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. 13 So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.***

(Question 9: This passage of scripture is often said at weddings and is often selected to encourage the relationship between a man and a woman as they receive the sacrament of marriage, but we need only look to the news and the division within families, communities, and nations to see that love does not surround us. If we look to God's holy kingdom as the place where love is shared by all, what might this passage reveal to us about what we might expect in heaven?)

Quotes:

Still further did He also make it manifest, that we ought, after our calling, to be also adorned with works of righteousness, so that the Spirit of God may rest upon us; for this is the wedding garment, of which also the apostle speaks, Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up by immortality.

– *Saint Irenaeus (Against Heresies - Book IV, Chapter 36.6)*

There, good will shall be so ordered in us that we shall have no other desire than to remain there eternally. – *Saint Augustine*

Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. – *Saint Thomas More*

How insignificant earth seems to me when I consider heaven. – *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*

Final Thoughts:

During our conversation today, we discussed how we might be greeted as we pass from this world. We also examined questions as to the purity of heaven, how we may be transformed, and our expectations, but we also noted that despite reports from near death experiences, there is much beyond our comprehension.

The imaginary of which Jesus, the prophets, and the Apostle John relate to us is a place of great happiness. Jesus has given us the description of a wedding feast to which all are called, but we must also prepare ourselves. Saint Augustine helps us to understand the meaning of the wedding garment and what it truly is. Let us, then, put on this garment so we may prepare for the celebration of the One who sacrificed for us so we may have a seat at the celebration.

We do not know exactly what life in the world to come will be, but from scripture, we can hopefully see that it is a place where love is shared by all, where there is no pain or affliction, and where evil is not allowed to follow. Let us, then, look to the day where we may join in the celebration and eternal worship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So, this concludes our series on the **Profession of Faith**, which we have been discussing for the last fourteen weeks. This may seem like a long time to discuss a creed which only requires a little more than a minute to profess. I should note, though, we only scratched the surface of the mysteries, wisdom, and hope which it contains. What this should reveal is that what we may summarize in a minute represents a lifetime journey of learning, reflection, contemplation, and living.

We might wonder how are we to learn about all of this. The first place to begin is attendance at Mass where our clergy helps to bring scripture into our present day as we reflect upon and celebrate our Savior and Redeemer and give glory and praise to our God. We should also spend time in scripture so we may receive what it reveals, but as we have already discussed, that can be a daunting task. So, next time, we will begin a discussion as to how we may approach, study and learn the truth of His Holy Word.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with the study and discernment of scripture.

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 Study and Discernment of Scripture – Part I