



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Bringing Faith to our Children



Jesus and the 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: Dora, Abigail, and Gabriel.

Our panelists are a Catholic family who reside in Alabama.

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 previous discussions, we mentioned the importance of **faith** and works. As we discussed, this is an area where Catholics receive much criticism, because we **believe** works matter, but we also believe that one cannot buy their way into heaven. We are saved by the grace of God and without that, no mountain of works can earn us a place within God's kingdom, for our salvation is not received because of our works so we might boast, but by our **belief** in the One who was placed upon the cross in sacrifice and atonement for our sins. Consider Ephesians 2:8-9, which reads:

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God: 9 it is not from works, so no one may boast.*

Still, we contend that our **belief** and **faith** is demonstrated by what we do; therefore, if Jesus were to ask us, “Do you **believe** in me?” and we profess, “Yes, Lord,” we must also be prepared to answer the question which might follow, “And how would I know from the way you live your life?” No matter how we interpret scripture, Jesus will be our judge as we are told in John 5:19-30, where Jesus tells us:

“19 Jesus answered and said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing: for what he does, his son will do also. 20 For the Father loves his Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes. 22 Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to his Son. 23 so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life. 25 Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his Son the possession of life in himself. 27 And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation. 30 “I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me.”

(John 5:19-30)

So, how do we prepare for this judgment? We begin with what we **believe**, but we must also recognize that our **belief** drives the choices we make. It drives what we choose to do and what we choose not to do. Bottom line, as we are told in James 2:26, “*For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*” Our works, therefore, demonstrate the life and spirit of our **faith**.

The profession of **faith** we share during the Mass is the Nicene Creed. The creed is recognized and authoritatively accepted by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches as well as many Protestant denominations. It is spoken as an individual **belief**, but is also the creed of the church. It was established at the Councils of Nicaea (325 A.D.) and Constantinople (381 A.D.) as the early church sought to discern **faith** and dispel heresies.

The profession of **faith** is a very brief summary which highlights the central components of our **belief** as it is reflected in scripture. We do not say it during the Mass as a simple matter of rote

memorization and recitation, rather, the profession of faith is an opportunity to reflect upon the meaning of what we believe as well as its importance to us.

Today, we have the opportunity to discuss the meaning of **faith** through the eyes of some of the younger members of our family. During past discussions, we mentioned the responsibility of parents to teach their children just as Moses encouraged those to whom he presented the commandments of the Lord as reflected in Deuteronomy 11:19-21, which reads:

19 Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up, 20 and write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates, 21 so that, as long as the heavens are above the earth, you and your children may live on in the land which the LORD swore to your ancestors he would give them. (Deuteronomy 11:19-21)

(**Question 1:** So, keeping this in mind, I would like to open our discussion by asking our panel to tell us a little bit about, what does **faith** mean to you?)

(**Question 2:** Tell me a little bit about how you learned the profession of **faith**?)

(**Question 3:** In what ways do you have the opportunity to learn about the fullness of our **faith** and the blessings we may share as we live our **faith**?)

(**Question 4:** If someone asked you about what you **believe** as a Catholic, how would you answer them?)

(**Question 5:** So, let me turn to Mom and ask her, in what ways do you seek to teach the blessings of **faith** to your children?)

(**Question 6:** What challenges do you face as you seek to teach your children about their **faith**?)

(**Question 7:** What resources do you use to enable your children to learn about **faith**?)

(**Question 8:** As your children grow, what observations do you have about how their learning style changes and how do you adjust to such changes?)

(**Question 9:** How has teaching your children about **faith** influenced your own **faith**?)

(**Question 10:** In what ways do you put your **faith** into action and how does it make you feel when you do?)

Catechism:

(CCC: 2223) Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery—the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the

“material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.” Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them:

(CCC: 2225) Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the “first heralds” for their children. They should associate them from their tenderest years with the life of the Church. A wholesome family life can foster interior dispositions that are a genuine preparation for a living faith and remain a support for it throughout one’s life.

(CCC: 2226) Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.

Quotes:

“Never deem it an unnecessary thing that he should be a diligent hearer of the divine Scriptures. For there the first thing he hears will be this, ‘Honor thy father and thy mother’; so that this makes for thee. Never say, this is the business of monks. Am I making a monk of him? No. There is no need he should become a monk. Why be so afraid of a thing so replete with so much advantage? Make him a Christian.” – St. John Chrysostom

In children we have a great charge committed to us. Let us bestow great care upon them, and do everything that the Evil One may not rob us of them. But now our practice is the reverse of this. We take all care indeed to have our farm in good order, and to commit it to faithful manager, we look out for it an ass-driver, and muleteer, and bailiff, and a clever accomptant. But we do not look out for what is much more important, for a person to whom we may commit our son as the guardian of his morals, though this is a possession much more valuable than all others. It is for him indeed that we take such care of our estate. We take care of our possessions for our children, but of the children themselves we take no care at all. Form the soul of thy son aright, and all the rest will be added hereafter.” – St. John Chrysostom

So often people say that we should look to the elderly, learn from their wisdom, their many years. I disagree, I say we should look to the young: untarnished, without stereotypes implanted in their minds, no poison, no hatred in their hearts. When we learn to see life through the eyes of a child, that is when we become truly wise. – Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

(Observation: Saint Teresa helps us to see another perspective, that as we raise our children, we also have an opportunity to learn. We should keep in mind that if we are to teach, we must first learn.)

If it be true that the world has lost its respect for authority, it is only because it lost it first in the home. – Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Final Thoughts: We all have different paths to our faith. In some cases, we found our way despite what we did not learn as children, but others are blessed because of what they learned as children. There are parents who believe they should not impose their faith on their children, for the children should have the right to decide in what they believe from what they learn of the world. This is simply an enticement to leave our children vulnerable to the one who would deceive them.

The knowledge of faith which we impart to our children enables them not only in how they approach the world, but enables the quality of their decisions as they face the trials of life. As we discussed, what we invest in terms of time and example to help our children learn the foundations of their faith will also enable them to assume their role in adulthood as well as the vocation to which they are called by God.

Our objective should be that our children should never have to lament, if only my parents would have helped me to learn the fullness and blessings of my faith.

Wrap Up: Well, once more our hour has quickly come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we begin a discussion concerning the miracles of God.

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: Miracles – Part 1.