



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Parents, Teach Your Children



Jesus and the children *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]

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 discernment and study to become 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.

Presentation:

God made us male and female. He gave us the power of procreation. Our **children** are both our blessing and our responsibility. As we raise them, we set in motion lives which shall influence the future. If we do our jobs well, we will prepare our **children** to assume their future position

as those who will prepare the **generation** which shall come after them. If we fail in our job, then, we also set the conditions for the future.

Of course, we are all called to different vocations. Some are called to be **parents** while others are called to be religious. What we have in common is that we are all the product of **parents**. What we also have in common is that the **children** we influence in our day will influence the relationship future **generations** will have with God and one another.

We have all heard the warning of how the sins of the **fathers** shall be visited upon their **children**. This confused me for many years in that it did not seem right and just that **children** must pay for the sins of their **parents**, but indeed they do, for what **parents** do or fail to do will create the conditions for the lives which are led by their **children**. It is not the choice of the **children**, but the choice of the parents as to what is passed to the **generation** to come. What one **generation teaches** to the next becomes the legacy which flows through the **generations** for better or worse.

Keeping this in mind, let's consider the following scripture:

Old Testament:

[Moses instructed the people:]

*9 However, be on your guard and be very careful not to forget the things your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live, but **make them known to your children and to your children's children,** 10 that day you stood before the LORD, your God, at Horeb, when the LORD said to me: Assemble the people for me, that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me as long as they live in the land and may so **teach their children.** (Deuteronomy 4:9-10)*

[We see a similar instruction from Moses in Deuteronomy 11:18-21, which reads:]

*18 Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul. Bind them on your arm as a sign, and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. 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 11:18-21)*

(Question: Moses used these words as he was encouraging the people to follow the commandments of the Lord. **What is required before we can teach someone else? In what ways may we learn so we might be able to teach our children? Does our responsibility, as parents, to teach, stop with our children?)**

- 1 Attend, my people, to my **teaching**;
listen to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable,
unfold the puzzling events of the past.

3 What we have heard and know;
 things our **ancestors** have **recounted** to us.

4 We do not keep them from our **children**;
 we **recount** them to the **next generation**,
 The praiseworthy deeds of the LORD and his strength,
 the wonders that he performed.

5 God made a decree in Jacob,
 established a law in Israel:
Which he commanded our **ancestors**,
they were to **teach their children**;

6 That the **next generation** might come to know,
children yet to be born.
 In turn they were to recount them to their **children**,

7 that they too might put their confidence in God,
 And not forget God's deeds,
 but keep his commandments.

8 They were not to be like their **ancestors**,
 a rebellious and defiant **generation**,
 A **generation** whose heart was not constant,
 and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

(Psalm 78:1-8)

(**Question:** The raising of **children** is the responsibility of **parents**, but they are also the future of a community, indeed, they will one day determine the direction of nations by their choices, deeds, votes, and positions of leadership. There are also those who lie in wait to lure our **children** away to agendas and causes which are not aligned with the will of God. In what ways can we assist **parents** in the **teaching of children**? In what ways can we encourage our **children** in the ways of God such that they do not fall to the same temptations as the **ancestors** who turned away from God?)

1 *Hear, O children, a father's instruction,*
be attentive, that you may gain understanding!

2 *Yes, excellent advice I give you;*
*my **teaching** do not forsake.*

3 *When I was my father's child,*
tender, the darling of my mother,

4 *He **taught** me and said to me:*
"Let your heart hold fast my words:
keep my commands, and live!

5 *Get wisdom, get understanding!*
Do not forget or turn aside from the words of my mouth.

6 *Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;*
love her, and she will safeguard you;

7 *The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom;*
whatever else you get, get understanding.

(Proverbs 4:1-7)

(**Question:** In these verses, we observe a **father** providing **instruction** to his **children**. The **instruction** he provides is what he received from his **father**. The blessing of **teaching** continues from **generation to generation**. What happens when a **generation** is not attentive to their responsibility to **teach their children**?)

New Testament

6 “Whoever causes one of these **little ones** who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of things that cause sin! Such things must come, but woe to the one through whom they come! (Matthew 18:6-7)

(**Question:** The warning of this scripture not only appears in Matthew, but Mark and Luke as well. (Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2) We should note that we can be the “cause” of something by commission or omission. What we do or fail to do can be the cause of blessing or plight. This is the reason we confess during the Penitential Act of the mass, that we have greatly sinned in what we have done and what we have failed to do. In what ways does this apply to what we **teach** to the **generation which follows us**?)

Catechism:

(CCC: 2372) The state has a responsibility for its citizens’ well-being. In this capacity it is legitimate for it to intervene to orient the demography of the population. This can be done by means of objective and respectful information, but certainly not by authoritarian, coercive measures. The state may not legitimately usurp the initiative of **spouses, who have the primary responsibility for the procreation and education of their children**. In this area, it is not authorized to employ means contrary to the moral law.

(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:

He who loves his son will not spare the rod. . . . He who disciplines his son will profit by him. (Sirach 30:1-2)

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

(CCC: 2224) The home is the natural environment for initiating a human being into solidarity and communal responsibilities. **Parents should teach children to avoid the compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies.**

(Question: The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly expresses that the primary responsibility of the **education of children** resides with the **parents**. It also points out the value of the home as the natural environment for learning critical religious and social responsibilities. Schools outside the home provide a means of assistance to **parents**, but they also pose the danger of the temptation for parents to turn over all the responsibility of **teaching** to the school. In what ways may **parents** fulfill their responsibility and yet leverage the capability of schools which have resources beyond the home?)

Quotes:

“[T]he only reason under God that **parents** even should bring **children** into the world is to prepare them for heaven.” – Father John A. Hardon, S.J.

“**Parents** must set themselves very definite priorities, such as the determination to have schools in which their **children’s** faith will be respected, fostered and enriched; schools in which their **children learn** the value and beauty of the Church’s **teaching**. They must also see to it that their own homes are places in which these values are first fostered and lived. **Parents’** own practice of the faith, their own love for Christ, is of course fundamental.” – Saint Pope John Paul II

“...**Christian families** are a decisive resource for **education in the faith**, for the up-building of the Church as a communion and for her missionary presence in the most diverse situations in life. – Pope Benedict XVI

Dear parents, commit yourselves always to **teach your children** to pray, and pray with them; draw them close to the Sacraments, especially to the Eucharist, ... and introduce them to the life of the Church; in the intimacy of the home do not be afraid to read the sacred Scriptures, illuminating family life with the light of faith and praising God as Father. **Be like a little Upper Room**, like that of Mary and the disciples, in which to live **unity, communion and prayer!** – Pope Benedict XVI

Final Thoughts: As we began this episode, I mentioned the sins of the **parents** being visited upon the **children**. Indeed, one **generation** laments, “Our **ancestors**, who sinned, are no more; but now we bear their guilt.” (Lamentations 5:7) I raised the question as to how this could be right and just, and it is not, but it is by the choice of one **generation** which rests upon another. It is the consequence of what comes before influences that which comes after.

It is an important point for our to consider as to what legacy we shall provide. As we have discussed, **parents** have the primary responsibility for raising and **educating their children** in the faith. We might be tempted by a secular society to believe that our children must make their own choice as to their religious beliefs and their relationship with God. To a certain extent that is true, for as they lead their lives, they must choose whether they will turn towards or away from God; but how can they make an informed choice if we do not **teach** them the fullness of faith available to them? How can they make choices which are right and just if we do not give them the basic values from which to assess and act upon the objective of righteousness?

Parents, love your **children** and perhaps the greatest means by which to demonstrate that love is to **teach** them about the One who commands us in love and the One who poured out His love to us from upon the cross so that we might be forgiven of our sins and cleansed of our iniquities so we may have the opportunity to walk with Him forever within His kingdom where love is shared by all.

Of course, as we have discussed that before we can **teach**, we must also **learn**. We congratulate the listeners of this show, because, by your listening, you are also seeking to **learn** and we hope to assist in that regard. Towards that end, next week, we will begin to discuss scripture and the Mass. The celebration of the Mass is central to our faith. As we dive into the scriptural foundations of the Mass, we will see that during the course of the Mass, we reflect upon or celebrate over 100 scriptural references. Learning the foundations of the Mass will also enable us to discuss the Mass with our children, grandchildren, and perhaps even great-grandchildren, to help them understand what is behind our reflection and celebration.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin our discussion on the **Scripture and the Mass**.

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: Scriptural Walk Through the Mass – Session 1.