



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: The Battle for Our Children
Part VII: The Church



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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]

Helen is a lay-Dominican, which is also known as the Order of Preachers, and she, along with her husband Dan, are engaged in youth catechesis and music ministry. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions. I've always been told there is no such thing as a stupid question, so asking questions is my opportunity to hide my stupidity. Fortunately, we have intelligent panelists to answer the questions I raise, 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.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Discussion:

Well, we hope everyone enjoyed the New Year. Of course, tradition has it that with the beginning of a new year, we think about what we might do to better ourselves during the year. We hope that in your consideration of things for self-improvement, you look to ways you may

strengthen and live the fullness of your faith. We might consider such things as making more time for prayer, perhaps saying the Rosary daily, making more time for reading scripture, the catechism, and/or church documents. Of course, one of the recommendations we have for those with children is to consider ways we might encourage and incorporate our children in faith.

Of course, there are many more suggestions we might consider for New Year's resolutions in relation to our Catholic faith because of the expanse and fullness of our faith. There is lots to study and lots to learn, but the journey is well worth it and increasingly enjoyable the more we learn. The evil one would have us believe it is all drudgery, but from my experience, the more I learn about my faith, the more I appreciate all the blessings our Lord has to offer.

So, last time, we discussed the social environment our children must navigate, those who influence them, the issues they may encounter, and the positive influences which are possible, and how priorities can influence our direction in life.

We mentioned that our relationship with our children morphs as they grow. Parents begin their role by providing for every need of their child, but as the child matures, we find more and more people influence the development of the child. As our children continue to mature, they seek increasing levels of independence, but we must also help them along the way to understand the responsibilities of independence.

The raising of our children, whether we are parents or family members, is also an opportunity for our own development. If we are to teach, we must first learn. As we attempt to look through the eyes of our children, we may also see the world from a different perspective. Every day is a learning opportunity, even as we teach. Let us take advantage and rejoice at the work to which God calls us.

As we look to protect our children from the evils of the world, the most important armor we can give them is the armor of faith and the values such armor instills from which the world is evaluated and decisions are made.

As we might expect, the evil one will use every tool at his disposal to pull our children away from their faith. The family of the child, both spiritually and physically, is the first and last line of defense as the child matures. Let us take this responsibility seriously. Let us perform this responsibility with love. Let us be vigilant over the passing days and let us never lose sight of the most important objective, the salvation of souls.

On a darker note, as a result of breaking news before Christmas, I must confess, that an organization of which I am associated was recently placed on the "extremist" list by two United States Senators. It was reported by CNA that as Senators Harris and Hirono submitted questions to a judicial nominee, they expressed concern over his membership in an "extremist" organization of which I, too, am a member. I suspect that with that Senate review; my name, along with the names of everyone registered in this organization, is now on the federal watch list of "extremists."

What is this extremist organization you might ask? Well, it is nefariously known to intelligence and law enforcement agencies around the world as the Knights of Columbus. If you are not

familiar with this organization, let me tell you a little bit about it. The Knights of Columbus is a fraternal organization of Catholic men which was formed in 1882 to render financial aid and assistance to members and their families. This “extremist” organization has since grown to approximately 2 million members worldwide, making it one of the largest “extremist” organizations in the world.

Some of their extremist activity includes parish service projects, fundraising and support for youth scholarships and faith formation activities, fundraising and support for the Special Olympics, projects in support of the elderly and handicapped such as the Global Wheelchair Mission and Habitat for Humanity, sponsorship and fundraising for Food for Families and Coats for Kids projects, as well as support to Christian refugees and those fleeing Christian genocide in the middle-east, just to name a few.

So, what are their “extremist” crimes you might wonder? They believe in the Catholic doctrines in support of the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage. Their “extremist” activities include providing “material, financial, labor and other support to pro-life pregnancy centers that help women during pregnancy and following the birth of their newborn children.” (KofC, Pregnancy Center Support). This “extremist” organization was also called out for their support of the Catholic Church's teaching concerning marriage as: “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life...” (CCC: 1601) along with the belief that: “The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator.” (CCC: 1603)

I must also confess that my personal “extremism” comes to me, not solely by my membership in the Knights of Columbus, rather, it comes through my affiliation with a much larger organization of over 1.2 billion “extremists” worldwide, which is known as the Catholic Church. Anyway, I thought all our listeners should be aware of the declaration of my “extremism,” and others like me, by members of the United States Senate. If you see the wanted posters in the Post Office for the Armor of Faith Radio Team, well, now you'll know why.

This brings us to the subject of today's discussion in relation to the battle in progress for the hearts, minds, and souls of our children, and that is, the Catholic Church.

(Question 1: Let's start with the bad news. Not everyone in the Catholic Church have the best interests of children and families in mind. What are some concerns we might have which we might draw either from personal experience or world news?)

- Sexual abuse
- Political Agendas
- Heresy

(Question 2: As we continue to uncover priests and others who have abused children, some are tempted to leave the church. Why might this be a mistake and what can we do to help prevent the scandals before us?)

- Support due process of allegations (hear and see the evidence of both sides)

- Participate in training and education to promote a safe environment for children
- Support background checks
- Do not enable an environment which presents temptation

(Question 3: So, after we consider these issues, perhaps we should consider who makes up the Catholic Church. So, who makes up the Catholic Church?)

- Priesthood
- Diaconate
- Religious
- Laity → We are the body of Christ

(Question 4: After consideration of the scandals which are before us, we might be tempted to shy away from the Catholic Church. Why is the Catholic Church an important ally in the battle for the hearts, minds, and souls of our children?)

- Magisterium of doctrine and teaching
- Faith formation
 - ➔ Catechism Classes
 - ➔ First Communion Classes
 - ➔ Confirmation Classes
 - ➔ Youth Retreats and Conferences
- Youth Ministries
 - ➔ Youth fun with other Catholics
 - ➔ Parish service
 - ➔ Community service
 - ➔ Teamwork experience
 - ➔ Leadership experience

(Note: Service, teamwork, and leadership experience may be cited on college, scholarship, and similar applications)

(Question 5: As we consider all the Catholic Church may provide for our children, there is a question of concern. Who does all this work and what is the role of the laity?)

- Nothing gets done without people who step up
- If we want a vibrant church, we must contribute time, talent, and treasure
- By volunteering in ministry, we provide an example for our children
- We can invite and encourage others to help
- We can encourage investment in Youth ministry education and training
- As we work in ministry, we can engage our children

(Question 6: As we engage, we not only help our children, but, we might also help ourselves. In what ways does our participation in ministry enable us in our personal faith?)

- Opportunity to learn
- Opportunity to put our faith into action
- Opportunity to set an example for our children
- Opportunity to engage our children and put their faith into action

Quotes:

– *Prayer of Saint John Paul II on Families:*

Lord God, from You every family in Heaven and on earth takes its name. Father, You are love and life. Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, born of woman, and through the Holy Spirit, the fountain of divine charity, grant that every family on earth may become for each successive generation a true shrine of life and love.

Grant that Your grace may guide the thoughts and actions of husbands and wives for the good of their families and of all the families in the world.

Grant that the young may find in the family solid support for their human dignity and for their growth in truth and love.

Grant that love, strengthened by the grace of the sacrament of marriage, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials through which our families sometimes pass.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that the Church may fruitfully carry out her worldwide mission in the family and through the family. We ask this of You, Who is life, truth and love with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Final Thoughts:

Today, we talked about some concerns within the Catholic Church as they may influence our children, but we must also recognize that we are all part of the body of Christ, therefore, we all have a role in support of the efforts of the Church to accomplish what God asks of us and part of that is to raise our children to know and respect God.

While the evil one will continue to attack the church Christ built upon Peter both from within and without, we must remember the promise of Jesus that “the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it [His church].” (Matthew 16:18) That promise is fulfilled through the efforts of those who believe in Jesus and endeavor to do His will.

As we participate in His church and the ministries of the church, we put our faith into action and we provide an example for our children. As we engage our children in the faith, our actions in support of their learning and activities will speak louder than words. As our children are provided the opportunity to live their faith, we prepare them with knowledge and skills which will enable them to assume their role as adults so they may help to educate and encourage the generations to come.

The Catholic Church is there to help us in that endeavor, but it will not happen if we are seduced to be passive in our faith. If we want our children to learn and grow, we must be active with them. As we engage, we too, will have opportunities for our own growth and learning. We must remember that our children are our future. If we want the future to be bright, we cannot cede them to the world and the designs of the evil one. Let us, then, work with the church Jesus built for us, not only for the blessings of our children, but for the blessing of all who will cross their path.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we discuss resources available to help parents to help their children put on the Armor 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: The Battle for our Children – Part VIII: Parents, Teach Your Children

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