



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?

Part IV: Vocations



Jesus Calls the Apostles
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]

Sister Sara Draney is a Dominican Nun from the Monastery of the Infant Jesus in Lufkin, Texas. Helen is a lay-Dominican and has a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I should mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions and mangle biblical names. To answer my questions and correct my pronunciation is why we have our panelists, 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:

Last time, we discussed the Christian conduct which God desires of us, but obviously, during the course of an hour, we barely scratched the surface. As we consider the question of what is Christian conduct and reflect upon what God asks of us, we find we must look beyond the “thou shalt nots,” of His commandments and consider the action to which we are called. Our faith is

not only a matter of the study of His Word, but how we put His Word into action, for if we do not put His Word into action, its meaning becomes merely academic or simply a curiosity.

Jesus told us the two greatest commandments are to love God as well as one another. As we discussed last time, love is both a noun and a verb, therefore, it is both something we can give and something we can do. If we comprehend the meaning and purpose of the greatest commandments, then, everything else should fall into place for us as we consider the meaning and purpose of our choices.

The Word of the Lord guides us with great wisdom. As we study it, we should also consider the opportunities to put it into action. As we do, we become part of the force within the world that turns the tide against evil and brings forth the blessings God intends for us all.

(Question 1: One means by which we put our faith into action is the vocation to which we respond. Why do you think I use those words, “the vocation to which we respond?)

According to our friends Merriam-Webster, the word vocation comes from the Latin, *vocare*, meaning to call.

(Question 2: So, if we are responding to a calling, we might consider another question. Who is calling us to our vocation and to whom are we responding? Remember that question we received when we were young, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Who asked us that question?)

- Self?
- Family?
- Friends?
- Community?
- Employers?
- Politics?
- The evil one?
- Or God?

(Jeremiah 1:5)

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

(Question 3: As we see, there are a number of voices calling to or seeking to influence us in our choices. With so much noise, how might we sift through the expectations of the world versus the expectations of God? How might we discover to what God is calling us?)

(CCC: 373)

In God’s plan man and woman have the vocation of “subduing” the earth as stewards of God. This sovereignty is not to be an arbitrary and destructive domination. God calls man and woman, made in the image of the Creator “who loves everything that exists,” to

share in his providence toward other creatures; hence their responsibility for the world God has entrusted to them.

(Question 4: In this paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, three words stand out in relation to “vocation.” These words are “call, steward, and responsibility.” What do these words imply in relation to our personal vocation?)

(CCC: 490) To become the mother of the Savior, Mary “was enriched by God with gifts appropriate to such a role.” The angel Gabriel at the moment of the annunciation salutes her as “full of grace.” In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God’s grace.

(Question 5: There is a lot in this short paragraph. What relationships to “vocation” do we see here? What message should this have for us as we consider our personal vocation?)

(CCC: 549) By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness, and death, Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below, but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God’s sons and causes all forms of human bondage.

(Question 6: This is an important realization, that our “gravest slavery” is sin. We are also told here that it “thwarts” us in our vocation. What meaning does this have for us as we consider how we live our vocation?)

(CCC: 1533) Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. They ground the common vocation of all Christ’s disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world. They confer the graces needed for the life according to the Spirit during this life as pilgrims on the march towards the homeland.

(Question 7: In addition to the common vocation to which we are called, the Catholic Church recognizes four main vocations: priesthood, religious life, matrimony, and single life. How might we compare and contrast these vocations? What is the common thread? Are there sub-vocations within these four? What is the primary objective of a vocation?)

Quotes:

– *St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face*
” I will be love in the heart of the Church.”

– *Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity*

As our Lord dwells in our souls, His prayer is ours and I want to share in it unceasingly, remaining like a little vessel at the spring, at the fountain of life, and so be able to communicate it to souls by letting its floods of charity overflow.

– *Saint Catherine of Siena*

If you are what you should be, then you will set the world on fire.

– *Saint Francis de Sales*

Religious Orders are not formed for the purpose of gathering together perfect people but those who have the courage to aim at perfection.

– *Mother Theodore Guerin*

We are not called upon to do all the good that is possible, but only that which we can do.

– *Fr. Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O*

Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice ‘out there’ calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice ‘in here’ calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.

Final Thoughts:

I have a daily prayer for my eldest grand-daughter as she proceeds through her confirmation formation. The prayer goes something like this:

Dear Lord, we lift up these prayers for our eldest grand-daughter. (I use the plural, “we,” here, because my wife and I pray together during our morning prayers) As she continues through her confirmation process, we pray You will grant her wisdom and understanding and help her to see all the blessings of the fullness of faith. We pray also, dear Lord, that You will help her see the gifts and talents You have placed within her stewardship and the purpose that You desire they should be put so that Your will may be done. Amen.

Some might wonder at the meaning of the final sentence when we pray that God help her see the gifts and talents He has placed within her “stewardship.” Stewardship implies a responsibility of management and control of resources. A good steward seeks to enhance and optimize what they are allowed to use in their capacity as steward. It may be a resource they own or it may be that of another. If they are a leader in some capacity, that means their stewardship extends to that for which they have leadership responsibility. We must remember that within our vocations, we may also be called to leadership, so it is not only a matter of what we do, but what we encourage others to do.

We are all blessed with gifts and talents of which God calls us to share. We are all stewards of what He has given us, for we are His creation. The question is, will we be responsible stewards of those gift and talents, or will we squander them? As His steward of our personal being, He has left that choice to us, but we must also remember, if we are not responsible stewards, He can take back those gifts and talents at any time. We can also expect He will hold us accountable for what He has entrusted to us. Let us pray, then, He will guide us so His will may be done.

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

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: What Does God Ask of Us? - Part V: Prayer

References:

“Online Dictionary;” (2015); Merriam-Webster, Incorporated; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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The New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE); (9 Mar 2011); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>