



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: What Does God Ask of Us?
Part IX: Care of Family



Flight into Egypt
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, because through questions, I have an opportunity to learn. To answer my questions and expand my knowledge 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 our call to ministry to others. As we mentioned, ministry is service to others by one who serves. We are called to serve according to the two greatest commandments, for as we minister to others, we fulfill the second of the greatest commandments, and in so

doing, we also demonstrate respect for our Creator as we endeavor to do His will. Our work in service to others, then, is also service to Him in respect and love of His creation.

We also discussed a number of excuses we might have for avoiding ministry, but if we are honest and believe God is with us, we have no excuse to withhold ourselves from ministry. Of course, we are tempted to be timid and hide behind waiting for someone to ask us if we would help. Rather than hiding, we should take inventory of ourselves and offer our time and talents where we believe they might be of use. If we are uncertain or unsure of our talents, then, we can ask in prayer for God to help us see the gifts and talents He has placed within our stewardship and the purpose to which He desires we should put them so that His will may be done.

Of course, we must understand, our efforts in ministry will not buy us a seat in heaven. That was purchased for us from upon the cross. Our response to the call to ministry is simply a demonstration of our belief in our Lord and Savior, for if we believe in Him, then what we do demonstrates the nature of our belief. Should Jesus ask us if we believe in Him, hopefully we will say, “Yes,” but our endeavors in ministry will help answer the possible follow-on question from Jesus, which might be, “And how would I know?” If we truly love Him, we will respond to His call.

Today, we will talk about a special ministry and that is family. The word, “family,” is not exactly easy to define. Our friends Merriam-Webster incorporate eight different segments in their definition of family, but the top of the list is the following:

[T]he **basic unit in society** traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children also : any of **various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family** [such as] a single-parent family

(Question 1: When we think of family, we all have different experiences. **What are some of the things we think about when we use the term, “family,” and are they all positive thoughts?)**

- Loving parents
- Loving children
- Harmony
- Disharmony
- Divisions
- Love/indifference/hate
- Kindred spirits
- Orphans
- Adoption
- Parish family
- Human family
- Body of Christ

(Genesis 2:20-24)

20 The man gave names to all the tame animals, all the birds of the air, and all the wild

animals; **but none proved to be a helper suited to the man.** 21 So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man, 23 the man said:

*“This one, at last, is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
This one shall be called ‘woman,’
for out of man this one has been taken.”*

24 That is why a man **leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.**

(Question 2: As we go back to the beginning, we see God created Adam, but so the man would not be alone, God also created Eve. Given there are only the two at this point, what is interesting about this segment of scripture and what does it foreshadow?)

- none proved to be a helper suited to the man
- bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh
- man leaves his father and mother
- clings to his wife
- the two of them become one body

(Genesis 4:1-1-)

1 The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, saying, **“I have produced a male child with the help of the LORD.”** 2 Next she gave birth to his brother Abel. Abel became a herder of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground, 4 while Abel, for his part, brought the fatty portion of the firstlings of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. **So Cain was very angry and dejected.** 6 Then the LORD said to Cain: Why are you angry? Why are you dejected? 7 **If you act rightly, you will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.**

8 Cain said to his brother Abel, **“Let us go out in the field.”** When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9 Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, **“I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”** 10 God then said: **What have you done? Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!**

(Question 3: In essence, we see the formation of the first family, through which all other families would spawn. What might we observe in this short story as a family grows from the man and woman God has brought together?)

- I have produced a male child with the help of the LORD
- Abel became a herder of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the ground
- The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering

- So Cain was very angry and dejected
- If you act rightly, you will be accepted
- If not, sin lies in wait at the door
- Yet you can rule over it
- Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him
- What have you done?

(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.

(Exodus 2:1-10)

1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 and the woman conceived and bore a son. Seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket, daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and putting the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the bank of the Nile. 4 His sister stationed herself at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 Then Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, while her attendants walked along the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it. 6 On opening it, she looked, and there was a baby boy crying! She was moved with pity for him and said, "It is one of the Hebrews' children." 7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and summon a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?" 8 Pharaoh's daughter answered her, "Go." So the young woman went and called the child's own mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 When the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses; for she said, "I drew him out of the water."

(Question 4: To give full context, in Exodus 1, we observe that the Egyptians became fearful as the Israelite population grew to significant size. To prevent this, Pharaoh instituted a form of birth control by instructing the mid-wives to kill all the male children at birth. As we pick up the story, we find a woman unable to protect and care for her son, so, in a sense, she left him for adoption. What came of this adoption and what might this story reveal to us about the nature of family and the plan of God?)

- Child born of man and woman
 - Could no longer care for the child
 - Essentially left him for adoption
 - Pharaoh's daughter took pity
 - Child raised by Pharaoh's daughter – he became her son
 - Adoptive mother named the child Moses
 - God chose Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery and into the promised land
-

(Luke 2:26-35)

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, 33 and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" 35 And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

(Question 5: In this scriptural passage, we observe the annunciation of a very special family to be formed. What was unique about this family and in what ways did God provide for His only begotten Son?)

- Betrothed to a man named Joseph
 - The Lord is with you
 - You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus
 - How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?
 - The holy Spirit will come upon you
 - The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God
-

(Mark 3:31-35)

31 His mother and his brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent word to him and called him. 32 A crowd seated around him told him, "Your mother and your brothers [and your sisters] are outside asking for you." 33 But he said to them in reply, "Who are my mother and [my] brothers?" 34 And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 35 [For] whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

(Question 6: As we examine this scripture, Jesus declares that "whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." What does this reveal to us about the nature of Christ's family?)

- The meaning of our "Yes," to the will of God in our relationship to Christ
 - The meaning of our "Yes," to the will of God in our relationship to one another
 - The bond of family is not just lineage, but our relationship with God and His Son
-

(Ephesians 5:21-31)

21 *Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.* 22 *Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord.* 23 *For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body.* 24 *As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything.* 25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her* 26 *to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word,* 27 *that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* 28 *So [also] husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* 29 *For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church,* 30 *because we are members of his body.*

31 *“For this reason a man shall leave [his] father and [his] mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”*

(Question 7: In our modern day of femininity, there is perhaps no other segment of scripture which gives priests more consternation than when the passage on husbands and wives comes around in the Mass readings. The word which stirs the passions of the politically correct perhaps more than anything else is the word, “subordinate.” If we look at the full context, however, what are we being told here about the relationship of man and women in marriage?)

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

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.*

(1 John 15:13)

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

(Mark 9:33-37)

33 *They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, “What were you arguing about on the way?”* 34 *But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest.* 35 *Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.”* 36 *Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them,* 37 *“Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”*

(Colossians 3:20-21)

20 *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord.* 21 *Fathers, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.*

(Question 8: As we consider this scripture, most parents will give a resounding cheer for the first verse, but **what is the meaning of the second?**)

(Ephesians 6:1-4)

1 Children, **obey your parents** [in the Lord], for this is right. 2 **“Honor your father and mother.”** This is the first commandment with a promise, 3 **“that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth.”** 4 Fathers, **do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.**

Quotes:

– *Saint John Paul II on the role of the family in the modern world*

- Willed by God in very action of creation, marriage and family are interiorly ordained to fulfillment in Christ and have need of His graces in order to be healed from the wounds of sin and restored to their “beginning,” that is, to full understanding and the full realization of God’s plan.
- Spouses are therefore the permanent reminder to the Church of what happened on the Cross; they are for one another and for the children witnesses to the salvation in which the sacrament makes them sharers
- The family, which is founded and given life by love, in a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives...with love the family is not a community of persons and, in the same way, without love the family cannot love, grow and perfect itself as a community of persons.
- Thus the little domestic Church, like the greater Church, needs to be constantly and intensely evangelized: hence its duty regarding permanent education in the faith...the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates...the future of evangelization depends in great part on the Church of the home.

Final Thoughts:

Today, we talked about a special ministry and that is the care of one another in family. As we began our discussion, we identified that while the family is the basic unit of society and is traditionally a result of a man and woman in matrimony raising their children, there are also variants, such as single-parent and adoptive families. We also observed how we are all one extended family, not just by our lineage from Adam and Eve, but by our relationship with God.

As Saint John Paul II reminded us, the family is a “little domestic Church.” Within this church, we are called to learn, share, and live our faith. Parents are called to teach their children and children are called to learn from their parents.

As we look to the example of Christ, the key to blessings in our family relationships is not found in our personal desires or our selfishness, but by subordinating our desires so we may better share the blessings of love within our family.

Family relationships can be the best of times and they can be the worst of times. We are blessed when our families are able to sail the calm seas. We are even more blessed when the bond of family survives the storms, for what is revealed in such times is the strength of the bond of love. If we struggle in the storm, let us pray that God will guide us through and heal any wounds of the heart.

I pray every married couple shall receive the wisdom, courage, and strength through which the family which is begun through their matrimony will thrive with the blessings of love. I pray every parent will see the blessing God has given them through their children. I pray every parent will live up to the trust God places within them to receive that gift and the responsibility to teach and raise their children in the ways of the Lord. I pray every child will not only receive and enjoy the love of their mother and father, but will also share in the blessings of returning that love.

To share in love is not always easy in this world, indeed, the love to which we are called requires sacrifice and work, but if we allow, love will prepare us for the world to come.

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 call to give and receive forgiveness.

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 X: To Offer and Receive Forgiveness

References:

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

USCCB; (May 2016); [Catechism of the Catholic Church](http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html>

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>