



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Culture of Life**  
***Part I: Sanctity of Life***



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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]

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 that way I can escape the hard work of answering those questions. That is why we have our panel, 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:**

As we concluded our series concerning “What Does God Ask of Us,” I mentioned that during Easter vigil, it is the tradition for parishioners to light a candle from the Pascal Candle, which represents the Light of Christ. We should note, though, that while each of the smaller candles held by those present may be lit directly from the Pascal Candle, the majority of the candles are lit from the candle

of one whose candle has already received the fire of the Pascal candle. As this light spreads from one candle to another, we see a room of darkness suddenly illuminated. This is an example of how the Word of God may spread from heart to heart and how evangelization may spread light to the world.

We are asked in Romans 10:14, “*But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach?*” As we reflect on the answers, we must conclude that the faithful must speak and testify to their faith.

As we discussed, God has spoken to us in many and varied ways, but, if we allow, He also speaks through us. Some are gifted with the abilities of public speaking while others are quite intimidated by the thought. We must remember, though, we are all gifted with the opportunity to preach by what we do and how we live. Through both conversation and deed, we have the ability to spread the light of the gospel.

Evangelization of the gospel is not always done at the pulpit, for if it were, many would never hear or see the Word. If we think about it, most are brought to the pulpit as the result of a conversation or invitation which occurs well away from that space.

Through our interactions with others, we leave seeds of our beliefs and values. Such seeds are sown by what we say, but more importantly, by what we do. We do not always know if such seeds shall bear fruit, but one thing we do know is that if we do not sow, there will be no fruit.

Today, we will begin a new series concerning the culture of life. The value of life is beyond measure. Sadly, this view is not shared by everyone. We should all be united concerning the sanctity of life, but, unfortunately, it is one of the most sensitive, political, and divisive issues of our day.

During previous discussions, we mentioned 1 Peter 3:8-16, which reads:

*8 Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. 9 Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For:*

*“Whoever would love life  
and see good days  
must keep the tongue from evil  
and the lips from speaking deceit,  
11 must turn from evil and do good,  
seek peace and follow after it.  
12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous  
and his ears turned to their prayer,  
but the face of the Lord is against evildoers.”*

*13 Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be*

*ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, 16 but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear; so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.*

We must keep this in mind as we engage one another if we are to encourage one another. Part of the purpose of this series is to discuss how we might encourage respect for life as we engage those who surround us. Towards that end, we must understand what God speaks to us.

The first instance in scripture related to death at the hand of a person is the story of Cain and Able.

(Genesis 4:1-2)

*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.*

**(Question 1:** In these two short verses, we observe life being brought into the world through Adam and Eve. **What might we observe from this narrative about life and purpose?)**

(Genesis 4:3-12)

*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! 11 Now you are banned from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 If you till the ground, it shall no longer give you its produce. You shall become a constant wanderer on the earth.*

**(Question 2:** This story obviously comes to us before God wrote the Ten Commandments in stone, but it does mention sin. **What does this story concerning Cain and Able reveal to us?)**

(Genesis 9:1-7)

*1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fertile and multiply and fill the earth. 2 Fear and dread of you shall come upon all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon all the creatures that move about on the ground and all the fishes of the sea; into your power they are delivered. 3 Any living creature that moves about shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did the green plants. 4 Only meat with its lifeblood still in it you shall not eat. 5 Indeed for your own lifeblood I will demand an accounting: from every animal I will demand it, and from a human being, each one for*

*the blood of another, I will demand an accounting for human life.*

*6 Anyone who sheds the blood of a human being,  
by a human being shall that one's blood be shed;*

*For in the image of God  
have human beings been made.*

*7 Be fertile, then, and multiply; abound on earth and subdue it.*

**(Question 3:** Again, this scripture appears before the Ten Commandments. It comes after the great flood which God used to destroy the wicked. What might we observe from what God said to Noah and his sons? What responsibility does God highlight?)

As we look at the Ten Commandments, the first three are related to our relationship with God. As we enter into the portion concerning our relationship with one another, we see these two:

(Exodus 20:12-13)

*12 Honor your father and your mother; that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

*13 You shall not kill.*

**(Question 4:** Of course, all the commandments are important to us and violation of any one separates us from what God asks of us and our relationship with Him. Still, the order of things can sometimes reveal importance or priorities. What might we note here concerning the order by which the commandments enter our relationship with one another and what do they tell us about the importance God places on life?)

(Jeremiah 1:5-7)

*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.*

*6 "Ah, Lord GOD!" I said,  
"I do not know how to speak. I am too young!"*

*7 But the LORD answered me,  
Do not say, "I am too young."  
To whomever I send you, you shall go;  
whatever I command you, you shall speak.*

**(Question 5:** Here, as we enter the book of the prophet Jeremiah, we see an interesting statement at the beginning of verse 5. What might this statement reveal to us? What does this passage tell us about the nature of our lives?)

(Isaiah 49:1)

*I Hear me, coastlands,  
listen, distant peoples.*

*Before birth the LORD called me,  
from my mother's womb he gave me my name.*

(Psalm 139:13-14)

13 *You formed my inmost being;*

*you knit me in my mother's womb.*

14 *I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;*

*wonderful are your works!*

*My very self you know.*

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(Matthew 5:21-22)

21 "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, '*You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.*' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, '*Raca,*' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, '*You fool,*' will be liable to fiery Gehenna.

**(Question 6:** As Jesus speaks to us, He brings up the fifth commandment, "You shall not kill." Where does Jesus take us in this discussion?)

(CCC: 2258)

"Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."

(CCC: 2268)

The fifth commandment forbids direct and intentional killing as gravely sinful. The murderer and those who cooperate voluntarily in murder commit a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance. Infanticide, fratricide, parricide, and the murder of a spouse are especially grave crimes by reason of the natural bonds which they break. Concern for eugenics or public health cannot justify any murder, even if commanded by public authority.

**(Question 7:** The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Human life is sacred." What is the justification it gives? What is said to God when an innocent life is taken by human hand?)

**(Question 8:** During the course of our discussion, we reviewed elements of scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. What dilemma do we face when we seek to encourage someone to respect life and that person is not Catholic? How might we seek to encourage them to respect life when we do not have the common foundation of faith?)

## Quotes:

– *Saint John Paul II (Evangelium Vitae)*

The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message. Lovingly received day after day by the Church, it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as "good news" to the people of every age and culture.

– *Saint John Paul II (Evangelium Vitae)*

Society as a whole must respect, defend and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person's life.

– *Saint John Paul II (Familiaris Consortio)*

The great task that has to be faced today for the renewal of society is that of recapturing the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values.

## **Final Thoughts:**

When we mention the sanctity of life in our politically charged environment, our first thought is likely to turn to abortion. While we will discuss, at some length, the subject of abortion during the course of this series, we will also discuss other areas of concern as we all travel the journey of life from conception until natural death.

God is the creator of life, and while He made us stewards of His creation, we must remember God is still the owner. This means that as stewards, we have a responsibility to do the will of the owner, God. If we are to do His will, we must endeavor to understand the meaning and purpose of what He asks of us. If we do not know our faith, we are then left at a disadvantage as we make our choices. We are also at a disadvantage when we are called to encourage one another within our collective effort to accomplish His will.

As we engage our responsibility, we must also remember how we are called to engage as we represent our faith. We must remember the words of 1 Peter 3:9, “*Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.*”

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin to discuss the culture of death within our current day.

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:** Culture of Life – Part II: The Culture of Death

## **References:**

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>