



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Culture of Life**  
***Part V: Cultural Pressures***



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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 if someone doesn't ask a question, what will the people with answers do? Anyway, to answer my questions and correct my pronunciation of Latin and biblical names is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

We are also joined today with some special guests, Joel Joel Patchen and Matt Niedzielski.

Joel is the founder of Anna's Choice, LLC, a ministry that seeks to restore the dignity of life to the church and our culture. He is the author of four books, including *Love is for Eternity*, a daily devotional examining the biblical view of the sanctity of human life, and *Who Am I?*, a group Bible study designed to engage and equip the body of Christ for action in the arena of life issues.

Matt, is president of Pikes Peak Citizens for Life. Matt has been involved in pro-life ministries for thirty years including pro-life advertising, sidewalk ministry, pro-life presentations and booths at various events, testifying on life-relevant bills at the Colorado state capitol, and working to integrate the efforts of multiple pro-life organizations

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 I mentioned that while the politics of life and death rages around us all in the media and social media, the reality is when a mother becomes pregnant, we are discussing issues of life. No matter what happens, the life of a mother will forever be changed by the life maturing within her. The concerns and burdens an expectant family carries varies by any number of variables. I say an expectant family in that there is mother, father, and child; but the mother and father of a child are also children of their parents and relatives to others. This new life will present many challenges, but it will also present many blessings as well.

A mother facing so many unknowns can feel overwhelmed. Pregnancy Resource Centers, staffed with hearts which care and in many cases by those who have already walked the path in various ways, want to help. Despite what is shouted by activist media, these centers are not there to deny women real healthcare, but I should point out that real healthcare tends to life, not death.

There are many critics of Pregnancy Resource Centers, but they do not offer their criticism with an earnest desire to improve compassionate services, rather, they demonize to distract people for purposes of political agendas. We must remember, for the mother and child in the middle, it is not about politics, it is about life.

While there are those pushing political agendas, we must also consider the cultural pressures which encourage people to death solutions. What I mean by “death solutions,” is that for whatever problem a person faces, they consider death as a solution.

**(Question 1:** So, let's start with the beginning of life, the child maturing within their mother's womb. What are some of the cultural pressures mothers face which may cause them to consider ending the life of their child before the child is born?)

- Financial – how can I afford to raise this child?
- School/Career – my goals will suffer if I have a child – I will never be CEO
- What will others think of this unplanned event?
- Population Control – I already have children
- Perceptions of health risks
- Fitness as parent – I'm not cut out to raise a child

- Not in a loving relationship
- The father does not want the baby or may be unfit as a father
- The child is not the right gender – I wanted a child of the other gender
- The child is at risk of affliction – better the child should die than suffer
- My family and friends believe I will ruin my future
- My family, friends, parish community will judge me for being pregnant
- The child is not a child, a parasite, an uninvited intruder to my body

**(Question 2:** The term “Pro-Choice,” is a euphemism for pro-abortion. The “choice” they promote is abortion and they demonize the choice of life. They give lip service to “choice,” by saying, “If you don't want to have an abortion, don't have one, but don't deny my right to abortion.” Why is this statement concerning?)

- What right to life does the child have?
- What choice does the child have?
- What if it is our life in the “choice” seat?
- If we do not have a right to live, it becomes the weak over the strong, is that just?

What if we removed the euphemism of abortion? “If you don't want to kill your child, don't kill them, but don't deny my right to kill my child.”

**(Question 3:** According to the Center for Disease Control, suicide rates rose each year from 1999 to 2016. The causes are varied, but what are some of the cultural pressures which drive people to consider suicide?)

- Self esteem – negative self perception
- Perceptions of cultural rejection
  - ➔ Political
  - ➔ Religious
  - ➔ Academic
  - ➔ Political bullying
  - ➔ Social bullying
- Stress
  - ➔ Relationships
  - ➔ Financial
    - Employment
    - Housing
    - Medical/health bills
  - ➔ Political
  - ➔ Legal
  - ➔ Political
- Afflictions/physical pain
- Substance Abuse (intentional/unintentional suicide)

- Depression/Grief/PTSD
- Perception of being a burden to others
- No perception of hope

**(Question 4:** Unless we are talking physician-assisted suicide, which we will talk about in a moment, we do not have business and political organizations actively promoting and encouraging people to commit suicide (well, at least to the degree we experience with Planned Parenthood), but as we discussed, there are similar pressures to suicide as there are to consideration of abortion. **What are some of the challenges we face towards reducing the cultural pressures which encourage suicide?)**

- Recognize the cry for help
- Gain a conversation
- Listen – what is the concern/fear (symptoms/cause are not always on the surface)
- Discourage bullying and the bullying social/political culture
- Remove stigma/judgmentalism
- Promoting confidential, non-judgmental, trained counseling

**(Question 5:** As we move to the other end of the spectrum, there is an increasing acceptance within our society concerning euthanasia. Some states, such as Colorado have legalized physician-assisted suicide. **What are some of the cultural pressures which encourage physician-assisted suicide, which is a form of euthanasia?)**

- Compassion – no one should have to live in physical or emotional pain
- Financial
  - ➔ Consuming the inheritance → elder abuse
  - ➔ Mounting medical bills
- Quality of life
- Inconvenient → who will take care of me?
- Don't want to be a burden

**(Question 6:** Pikes Peak Citizens for Life is an example of an organization which works to promote the sanctity of life across the spectrum of life – and of course, there is a lot more to the spectrum than we have time to discuss here in an hour. **Matt, can you tell us about how Pikes Peak Citizens for Life engages the issues? Are there similar organizations in other areas of the country? If so, how might our listeners learn about them?)**

We are a non-profit, non-denominational organization of men and women who believe in the unique value of each human being. From this perspective, we view the denial of any person's right to life as a threat to every person's right to life. Thus, we are actively pro-life in our opposition to abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and physician-assisted suicide. We affirm our life-promoting position by stressing the humanity of the baby in the womb and the value of every human life, regardless of age or condition of dependency. (Pikes Peak Citizens for Life)

- Pikes Peak Citizens for Life: <https://www.ppcitizensforlife.org/>
- National Right to Life: <https://www.nrlc.org/education/>
- Pro-life Healthcare Alliance:  
<https://www.prolifehealthcare.org/resources/pro-life-organizations/>

**Quotes:** We normally try to include inspiring quotes at the end of our shows, but today, perhaps we should look at one which should be concerning to anyone who supports the culture of life.

– *Planned Parenthood*

If you're thinking about having an abortion, you're so not alone. Millions of people face unplanned pregnancies every year, and about 4 out of 10 of them decide to get an abortion... Overall, 1 in 4 women in the U.S. will have an abortion by the time they're 45 years old.

– *Dignity of Dying*

Though polls now show that Americans support physician-assisted dying legislation regardless of what terms are used to describe it, words do matter in accurately describing the issue. It is imperative that reporters, editors, bloggers, students, healthcare professionals, and the general public use accurate terminology when describing a terminally ill patient's choice to shorten a dying process that the patient finds unbearable—and it is incumbent upon us to ensure they do so.

– *Dignity of Dying*

Medical, health policy, and mental health professionals recognize that the terms “suicide” and “assisted suicide” are inaccurate, biased and pejorative in this context. Increasingly, mainstream medical, mental health and health policy organizations have adopted the terms “aid in dying” or “physician-assisted dying” to refer to this choice.

**Final Thoughts:**

As we engage the battle for the sanctity of life, it is important that we educate ourselves to the issues. If we are to be successful in the effort, we must know our enemy, know ourselves, know our environment, as well as maintain awareness of our surroundings. In some cases, the enemy is highly visible, but in others, the enemy is rather subtle and difficult to see.

When I use the term, “enemy” here, I am not talking about people, rather, I am talking about the motivations which enable the culture of death. We cannot counter them if we are not aware of the issues and tactics of the opposition. People may succumb to these tactics and motivations, but we must also remember, stoking animosities will not help us in this battle, for our battle is one of the heart.

Some of our listeners might recognize the success enablers I just mentioned as coming from Sun Tzu's Art of War and his famous statement about knowing your enemy and yourself. Of course, war is known to yield death, so am I sending conflicting message here? Not at all. The success principles I just mentioned are just as critical to the battle for the heart as they may be on the physical battlefield – our objective, though, is not to take the life of the enemy as it is to encourage hearts to turn away from the culture of death and death solutions.

We can observe just from the limits of today's discussion, that the issues of life are well beyond one person, but we all know the cliché, “Many hands make light work.” As we continue our discussion concerning the culture of life, we will discuss how we may join the battle for life, how we may learn more about the issues, and how we can discern how we can use the gifts and talents God has placed within us so we might help to defend life. We must also consider the hearts of those who are dealing with the aftermath of death solutions.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we discuss post-abortion ministry and the help which is available through such programs.

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 VI: Post-abortion Ministry

### **References:**

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Pregnancy Help: 1-800-712-HELP: <https://optionline.org/>

Healing From Abortion: <http://hopeafterabortion.com/>

Suicide Prevention: <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

National Right to Life: <https://www.nrlc.org/education/>

Pro-life Healthcare Alliance: <https://www.prolifehealthcare.org/resources/pro-life-organizations/>

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