



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Culture of Life**  
***Part VI: Post-abortion Ministry***



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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 questions open the doors to answers. To answer those questions is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

We are also joined today with special guest panelists Jeanne Lafser and Susan Hyatt.

Jeanne has worked for Thrive St Louis for 8 years as a Patient Care Coordinator. She also oversees Thrive’s Parent University Program in St Louis City as well as teaches classes there. Thrive is a faith-based women’s medical clinic - providing life affirming solutions to abortion-minded women. Jeanne, we should also mention, has just released a new book, *HALLELUJAH ANYWAY, a True Story*, which is listed on Amazon. The book is her personal story about her abortion and the forgiveness she found in Christ.

Susan is a licensed professional counselor for St. Raphael Counseling, a ministry of Catholic Charities of Denver. Susan counsels clients who are post abortive. Details about counseling services available through St. Raphael at [www.straphaelcounseling.com](http://www.straphaelcounseling.com).

Susan, Jeanne, we are very happy to have you with us today.

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:**

Before we get started with today's discussion, I would like to mention the upcoming Walk For Life, which will be conducted at Memorial Park in Colorado Springs, CO on Saturday June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. The Walk for Life is a 2-mile walk or a 5K fun run that is conducted as a fund raiser for Life Network which operates two pregnancy centers in Colorado Springs as well as other services in support of life. If you would like more detail as to how you can be a participant, sponsor, or volunteer, you can visit: [www.walkforlife.com](http://www.walkforlife.com).

On behalf of the Armor of Faith Radio Team, we would like to encourage our listeners to support events such as this or other fund raisers for life in their local areas. Even if we have no desire to walk or run, there are a variety of ways to support and help, even if we are only there to cheer on the walkers and runners. The crowds which form around such events gives visibility to the support for life.

Last time, I mentioned that 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 that the issues of life are well beyond one person to solve, 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.

Today, we are going to discuss post-abortion ministry.

**(Question 1:** So let's turn to our panel guests. There are a number of side effects which may come days or even years after an abortion. **Can you tell us a little about Post-Abortion Counseling and who it benefits?)**

- Helping women and men recover from the emotional wounds of abortion
  - ➔ Depression
  - ➔ Grief
  - ➔ Anxiety
  - ➔ Stress
  - ➔ Sorrow
  - ➔ Anger
  - ➔ Relationship and trust issues
  - ➔ Substance abuse (numbing the pain)
  - ➔ Recognizing and coping with triggers
- Physical side of emotions – physical side of stress, anxiety, grief, and depression
- Negative versus positive means of coping

**(Question 2:** Given the antagonism of pro-abortion groups against pro-life groups, we might be tempted to view those who have gone through abortion as if they are in the camp of the opposition. **Why do pro-life organizations want to help women recover from the emotions of having had an abortion?)**

- Pro-life is not only about promoting life, but enabling quality of life
- Many abortions are forced, coerced, or the result of decisions made without full information which may add to emotions about what happened - Pro-life is not about judgment, it is about encouragement to live and share blessings
- Enabling healing is pro-life
- Enabling healing enables turning in positive directions and helping others
- Enabling healing enables hope
- Enabling healing helps fulfill the commandment to love (John 13:34-35)

**(Question 3:** It is nearly impossible for someone to bootstrap healing from depression, grief, and/or sorrow. Trying to go it alone can lead to unhealthy coping methods and even a downward spiral. The first step, though, for someone who suffers from post-abortion stress or depression is to reach out for help. **What are likely obstacles which prevent women from receiving post-abortion counseling and how can these obstacles be overcome?)**

- Common stages of grief (note: various models of grief list similar stages – but we must recognize they are not necessarily sequential and that those who suffer may experience more than one stage at a time)
  - ➔ Denial
  - ➔ Anger
  - ➔ Pain
  - ➔ Depression
  - ➔ Stress
  - ➔ Acceptance
  - ➔ Coping (or not)
- Fear of judgment (suffering shame or guilt)
- View pro-life organizations through the lens of pro-abortion advocates
- Seeking help seen as admitting fault
- Social norms that we must cope on our own, else we are weak
  
- Do not pressure
- Do not presume we know what a friend or loved one is feeling
- Empathetic listening
- Express compassion
- Encourage counseling with empathy – its about healing
- Be aware of sources which offer reliable post-abortion counseling
- Hold a hand – emotional support

**(Question 4:** There is criticism of Pregnancy Resource Centers that it is about religion and imposing religion on those emotionally vulnerable. What role does religion play in the counseling process and what if someone in need does not have a religion or does not have the same religious preference as the organization providing assistance?)

- The goal is a path to healing
- Faith programs are available, if desired
- Help is available regardless of faith or preference

**(Question 5:** Just as pro-abortion organizations try to portray pregnancy resource centers as “fake clinics,” they also try to portray post-abortion counseling as “fake” or unnecessary counseling designed to harass women who have had an abortion. What will someone seeking post-abortion counseling experience during the process?)

- One-on-one counseling
- Support groups
- Retreat options
- Every individual's story is different
- Empathy and compassion
- Coping and healing

**(Question 6:** Of course, anyone who seeks help is also concerned about the credentials of the program and counselors. **What training and experience are required of post-abortion counselors?)**

- Counselor training requirements varies by program
- Project Rachel ministry teams include:
  - ➔ Priest
  - ➔ Licensed professional counselors
  - ➔ Volunteers who are post-abortive

**(Question 7:** For our listeners who may desire counseling or who may have a friend or loved one who may be in need, part of the challenge is finding a good program. **How can women go about finding quality post-abortion counseling near where they live?)**

- Pregnancy Resource Centers/Crisis Pregnancy Centers
- Project Rachel: [http://hopeafterabortion.com/?page\\_id=88](http://hopeafterabortion.com/?page_id=88)

**(Question 8:** Of course, we encourage our listeners to support the culture of life, but as we discussed during previous episodes in this series, there is a broad spectrum to the support of life from conception to natural death. **If someone has an interest in supporting or assisting post-abortion ministry, where might they seek more information about the different options for helping?)**

- Check with local parish/church ministry coordinators
- Pregnancy Resource Centers/Crisis Pregnancy Centers

## Quotes:

– *Father Frank Pavone – Priest for Life*

Abortion has many victims beyond the child... Were all the abortions to stop tomorrow, the Church's work of healing these other victims will have only begun.

– *Barry – Silent No More Testimony*

Some people say this is a women's issue. I say when men abdicate their role of supporting, respecting, and caring for women, there will be issues! I've come to realize the importance of a father's support in a crisis pregnancy, in any pregnancy! It can be the difference between life and death. That's why I am Silent No More!

– *Penny – Silent No More Testimony*

I was told when I went in for consultation that a baby wasn't a baby until it was born, so this state of mind got me through three guilt-free abortions, or so I thought...To my Dear Children in Heaven, I am so sorry for what I have done. I know you have forgiven me, the Lord has forgiven me, and I have forgiven myself. In your memories, I pledge to tell my story to as many mothers contemplating abortion and share the importance of virginity until marriage. Pray for your family down here...With all my love, Mom

## Final Thoughts:

With all the political rage, we must remember the issue is not politics, but lives. As Father Frank Pavone of Priest for Life points out, “Abortion has many victims beyond the child...” As we consider the spectrum of life, we must also consider the lives left behind after abortion. Our compassion and empathy must consider these lives as well. It is not ours to assume culpability or blame a mother who has endured an abortion, for we do not know by what factors decisions were made; whether they were forced, coerced, misinformed, or simply did not understand the ramifications.

Pro-abortion activists will cite studies which indicate women feel no trauma or even a sense of relief after an abortion, but as Father Pavone points out, seven to ten years down the road, what was once relief can transform itself into suffering. (Pavone) We must also remember that post-abortive mothers are not the only ones impacted, for as the political shouting matches rage, we often forget fathers and extended family members.

Each story is different. We often do not see the triggers of grief, depression, anxiety, or stress coming, but when they hit, they can be quite painful and disruptive to our lives. To be pro-life, we must tend to the needs of the spectrum of life, which includes those who remain after a life is lost.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we turn our discussion to parental support counseling.

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:** Topic

## References:

Pavone, Father Frank; (accessed 15 May 2019); “Shepherding the Flock After Abortion;” Priests for Life; <https://www.priestsforlife.org/postabortion/shepherdingtheflock.htm>

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