



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Culture of Life
Part VII: Parental Support Counseling



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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, Paulina Gutierrez and LaNita Cox.

Paulina is the family development specialist of Marisol Health in Denver. She is an advocate for women in need and appears in several Marisol Health videos. For more information about Marisol Health, you can visit <https://marisolhealth.com/>.

LaNita Cox has a M.A. Inter-Personal Communication, and is currently working on her Doctorate in Christian Counseling. She has been on staff at Her Choice Birmingham Women's Center as a client advocate for 3 years, and provides clients with life affirming education and counseling. You can learn more about Her Choice Birmingham Women's Center at <https://herchoicebirmingham.org/>.

Paulina, LaNita, 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:

Last time, during our show concerning post abortion ministry, we mentioned that with all the political rage concerning abortion, 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 mentioned that 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 those involved in the decision 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 while 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.

Today, though, we want to talk on a more positive note and discuss the counseling available through Pregnancy Resource Centers for those who are about to take on the challenge of parenthood. Especially with an unplanned pregnancy, there are many concerns about what it means to become a parent. There can be many complicating factors, such as demands of job or school, financial issues, child care, and the emotional uncertainty of how to be a good parent.

(Question 1: As a young woman or couple work to navigate through all the uncertainties, there is free counseling available through Pregnancy Resource Centers that can help prepare parents to face and address the coming challenges. So let me ask our guests, **what is the nature of parental support counseling and who is eligible to receive it?**)

- Navigating Healthcare (pre/post natal) and assistance available such as Medicaid
- Navigating available financial support
- Navigating child care options
- Parenting Tips and Mentoring Programs
- Parenting Support Groups/workshops

➤ Crisis Counseling

(Question 2: Unfortunately, not everyone who can benefit from this counseling receives it. What are the likely obstacles which prevent parents from receiving parental support counseling and how can these obstacles be overcome?)

- Lack of awareness of free support available
- Political and media disinformation
- View pro-life organizations through the lens of pro-abortion advocates
- Fear of judgmentalism
- Time (balancing school/career demands)
- Social norms that we must cope on our own, else we are weak
- Lack of emotional support by significant others
- Depression or feeling of being overwhelmed by events

(Question 3: There is criticism of Pregnancy Resource Centers that it is about religion and imposing religion on those emotionally vulnerable. In more than one pro-abortion article, I observed reference to the narrative that women enter a Pregnancy Resource Center for help and all they get handed is a Bible. 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 to help parents or prospective parents to navigate challenges
- Help is available regardless of faith or preference
- Not all people are anti-faith and may find comfort receiving counseling with faith connections
- Faith based programs/workshops are available, if desired

(Question 4: One of the criticisms of those who believe in the sanctity of life is that we are really just pro-birth, that we really do not care about the family after birth. What will someone seeking parental support counseling experience during the process and does support end with the birth of the child?)

- Compassion, empathy, and confidentiality
- Getting to know the person, their concerns, and their needs
- Information pamphlets/videos
- Confidential one-on-one counseling
- Support groups
- Retreat/workshop options
- Crisis coping and healing
- Prenatal counseling
- Postnatal counseling and follow-up support
- Baby support items

(Question 5: We might hope that both father and mother are able to attend parental support counseling together, but any number of factors may prevent that. **What if both parents do not want or are unable to take advantage of the counseling?)**

(Question 6: Another criticism of Pregnancy Resource Centers is that they are staffed with untrained personnel. **What training and experience are required of parental support counselors?)**

- Parental Counselor training requirements varies by program
- Difference between Pregnancy Counselors and Parental Support Counselors

(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 concern is finding a good program. **How can parents go about finding quality parental support counseling near where they live?)**

- Care Net - <https://www.care-net.org/find-a-pregnancy-center>
- Option Line - <https://optionline.org/center-locator/>
- Heartbeat International - <https://www.heartbeatinternational.org/worldwide-directory>

(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 parental support 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:

– *Saint John Paul II*

You are called to stand up for life! To respect and defend the mystery of life always and everywhere, including the lives of unborn babies, giving real help and encouragement to mothers in difficult situations. You are called to work and pray against abortion.

– *Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

That special power of loving that belongs to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women... Yet we can destroy this gift of motherhood, especially by the evil of abortion...

Final Thoughts:

As we discussed earlier, one of the criticisms directed at those who believe in the sanctity of life is that we are not really pro-life, we are just pro-birth. We simply want the child to be born, then, we wash our hands of the situation. That would be sad if it were true, but as we have discussed, there is help and assistance for parents beyond the day of birth.

This help is available in a variety of ways, but mothers and fathers are often unaware of the support available to them. Perhaps one of the most important services which Pregnancy Resource Centers provide is information through which parents can navigate the road from pregnancy to raising a child.

We often refer to children as bundles of joy, but we also know they can be bundles of challenges. I know this as a result of my own experience of being both a child and a parent. The thought of all the challenges ahead can be quite overwhelming and the stress can impact our emotions and the quality of our decision making.

Pregnancy counselors and Parental Support Counselors can help parents to navigate the stress and emotions of the unknowns before them as well as enable them to take on the challenging role of parent. It goes without saying, that for any parent, there will be times of hard work, there will be times of great stress, but there will also be times of great joy and love. Let us all remember in our prayers the child, the parents, the extended family as well as those who stand ready to help parents to raise and help prepare the future of our society.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we discuss a different segment of the spectrum of life, which is the push for physician assisted suicide. We hope you will be able to join us as we discuss the issues, the potential for abuse, and what we can do to stop the advance of the promotion of death solutions.

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 VIII: Physician Assisted Suicide

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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