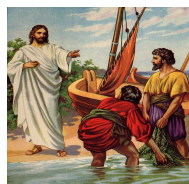




The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Culture of Life
Part VIII: Call to Action



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 someone put that in my job description. To answer my questions and correct my pronunciation of the names I mangle 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, Matt Niedzielski, Julie Bailey, Connie Pratt and Joel Patchen.

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.

Julie describes herself as a relatively recent convert to the pro-life cause, having been at it fewer than 10 years. She says she is doing her best to make up for lost time. She currently serves as the Vice President of Pikes Peak Citizens for Life, the Program Coordinator for Sidewalk Advocates for Life in Colorado Springs, and the Director of the Respect Life Apostolate of the Diocese of Colorado Springs. Julie writes and speaks on pro-life topics at every opportunity.

Connie, has made a number of presentations on the topic of physician assisted suicide and is a past president of Colorado Springs Right to Life as well as Colorado Citizens for Life.

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.

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 mentioned last time, the political lines concerning the defense of life across the entire spectrum of life is not drawn in the same fashion as we observe with abortion. The forces for euthanasia, for example, are not as clear and identifiable as the forces advocating for abortion, but all the more reason for us to be wary as the push continues to enable death solutions in more and more countries and states. Something we once thought was unthinkable, physician assisted suicide, for example, is now considered politically acceptable.

As we also discussed, while the compassion argument is frequently the foundation of the argument for proponents of solutions such as physician assisted suicide, what we discover when we look at the main reasons expressed by those who pursue the option is fear of a diminished quality of life. The debate does not appear to be about alternatives or the quality of palliative care, rather, society is being manipulated to apply a death solution without clear examination of the life options available to enable quality of life as well as manage the pain of affliction and illness.

We might be tempted to look at this as an issue as something distant to us, as today, it does not rest at our doorstep. Without warning, though, it can rear its head in ways we never expected. We must also remember, the battle concerning what is right and just is fought across the generations. As one generation becomes numb to what is right and just, it leaves the next vulnerable to the ravages of injustice. As the line moves, those who preached in years past justifications such as that the elderly or terminally afflicted have a duty to die, could be extended to any one of us as the right to life is diminished.

We are often tempted to believe that we cannot make a difference in the battle for life in our day. The messages we receive from the politically powerful and the mainstream media is that solutions such as abortion and physician assisted suicide are good, but those who defend life are somehow evil. Let us remember the exasperation of the prophet Isaiah as good is taught as evil and evil as good, he said:

(Isaiah 5:20-21)

*20 Ah! Those who call evil good, and good evil,
who change darkness to light, and light into darkness,
who change bitter to sweet, and sweet into bitter!*

*21 Ah! Those who are wise in their own eyes,
prudent in their own view!*

We have heard it said in various ways, but it goes without saying, if we do nothing, evil shall have its way. Let us remember, evil charges ahead when good people do not engage, but expect someone else to speak up to defend and promote what is right and just. If the voices for life do not speak, then, only the voices for death shall be heard.

So, today, we want to encourage our listeners to put their faith into action. Of course, we all do not have the same gifts or talents by which we may act, so, we ask you, after you listen to our discussion today, to take this moment to prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in how you can engage in the battle to defend life.

(Question 1: Of course, as I just mentioned, we all do not not have the same gifts or talents by which we may act, so we must go through some discernment as to the best use of what God has created within us and entrusted to us. So, let's start our discussion today with, **how might we discern our call to defend life?**)

- Prayers – ask the Holy Spirit to help us recognize our talents and to guide us to our opportunities
- Observe what God brings across our path
- Observe requests for help → it comes to our ears for a reason
- Observe the needs which surround us
- Ask those working in life organizations or ministries what help is needed

(Question 2: When we see the news reports or review the discourse on social media, the temptation is to believe that only those with some form of notoriety can make a difference or only those willing to march with banners or signs. The reality is there are a number of opportunities where we can engage in the defense of life. **What are some of the ways we can help to defend life?**)

- Donations to organizations working to defend life
- Volunteer – every skill or talent can be put to use
- Support events which raise awareness of life issues
- Support defense of life fund raisers
- Prayer – both public (on the side walk or prayer vigils) and private

Part of the challenge we face includes conversation with family, friends, co-workers, or even strangers. If we are to effectively promote life, we must also make ourselves aware of the efforts to promote death solutions over life solutions along with the range of issues under debate. If we are to advocate effectively for life, we must not only educate ourselves in what God asks of us,

but we must also make ourselves aware of the arguments and justifications we will face in opposition. In the process, we must also remember the Christian conduct to which we are called in 1 Peter 3:9-11, 15-16) where we are told:

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.

15 ...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.

(Question 3: As we engage others, we must remember, our objective is not to win a debate, but to keep doors of conversations open by which hearts might be influenced. Knowledge of what is true is essential to effective discussion and problem solving. **How might we prepare ourselves to effectively converse on the issues of life?)**

- Listen to the news, but look under the surface
 - ➔ Pull keywords from articles and use a search engine to find more
 - ➔ Identify and bookmark sites which contain life news and information
 - ➔ Take note of word tone, what is said and not said
 - ➔ Attend training and events where life issues are discussed
- Converse with those who are already engaged – what might they share?
- Listen for motivations, justifications, and emotions
- Observe where the political money flows

(Question 4: As we talk about the process for our learning, one of the challenges is to find organizations which can help our understanding as to how we might advocate for life. **How do we find organizations which can provide us more information?)**

- Use key words in a search engine
- Follow links embedded in articles
- Bookmark news sections or blogs of right to life sites
- Sign-up for news letters – (recommendation, create an email account dedicated to newsletters – this avoids clutter in your personal email account)
- Some recommended sites:

<https://americanrtl.org/rtl-education>

<http://www.sidewalkadvocates.org>

<http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/secretariat-of-pro-life-activities-subscriptions.cfm>

<https://www.cocatholicconference.org/>

<http://www.coloradoaction.org/new/>

<https://40daysforlife.com/>

<https://www.ppcitizensforlife.org/>

<https://www.lifechain.net/>
<https://www.diocs.org/Respect-Life>
<https://respectlifedenver.org/>
<http://www.co4kids.org/partners/catholic-charities-diocese-pueblo>

(Question 5: After we learn, then, we must ask ourselves, how might I act? How can I help to be the hands and feet of the body of Christ? Where can I help? So, how might we go about finding organizations to which we may provide assistance?)

- Use similar key word approach as when seeking information
- Look for volunteer or donation menu options
- Check with parish ministry coordinators

(Question 6: Our laws reflect our national values and culture. If we are to influence the conversation, we must be aware of what is in motion while we still have the opportunity to comment. Once anti-life positions become codified into law, it becomes far more difficult to reverse the course. How can we learn about and raise awareness of life/anti-life related legislation?)

- Use life legislation key words plus name of city or state
- National Right to Life legislation page: <http://www.nrlc.org/statelegislation/>

Political organizations employ divisive tactics and propaganda to appeal to emotions as a means to sway public opinion. Talking points and memes flow through the news media, social media, entertainment media, and our education systems to influence perceptions and as a means to swell political support. The primary reason political organizations seek to appeal to our emotions is that when emotions run high, the quality of reasoning, analysis, and problem solving suffers.

The mantras of Political Correctness are employed to encourage group think in favor of a given issue. The owners of political correctness are not necessarily known, but we certainly see how the talking points flow through all forms of media.

Given all the pundits and personalities of notoriety, we might be tempted to believe we do not have a voice in the conversation. While we may not command the attention of large audiences, we do have an impact upon the opinions and considerations of those who surround us.

(Question 7: Towards this end, we should be prepared to engage the discussion, but we must also endeavor to do so in accordance with the Christian conduct to which we are called. How can we be a positive influence concerning the social discussion on life related issues?)

- Stay current on legislation and political debates (research from all sides)
- Stay current on Church positions and underlying reasoning
- Do not insult or disparage, rather encourage (1 Peter 3:9)

- Do not assume common understanding of faith or commitment to what God asks of us (some can be unwittingly manipulated against their faith)
- Do not lead with scripture, but be prepared to provide full context of scripture
- Don't engage to win a debate, but to encourage a conversation

(Question 8: The first objective of a politician is to get re-elected. Towards that end, they track public opinion. If we remain silent, our representatives will not know we care or what we support. **How might we engage our representatives and encourage their support for life?)**

- https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm
- <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- <https://www.congress.gov/state-legislature-websites>
- Use key words “Find my legislators” and “state”
- Consult local right to life legislation announcements
- Time sensitive, call – email carries less weight
- Letters can convey more supporting information, but be concise
- If calling speak from a prepared statement, but speak naturally, keep it short
- Do not be rude or threaten
- I am writing to ask your support for....to vote against.....to oppose....
- Identify legislation by name and number and the desire to vote for or against
- Briefly state reason and support with reliable facts – be concise
- Avoid slogans, talking points, or form letters – make it your own
- Use proper grammar and spelling
- Thank your representative for protecting life
- Include your contact information: address, phone, email

Quotes:

– *Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.

– *Saint John Paul II*

The inclination to give is rooted in the depths of the human heart: every person is conscious of a desire to interact with others and everyone finds fulfillment in a free gift of self to others.

– *St. Francis of Assisi*

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

Final Thoughts:

During the course of our Culture of Life series, we discussed a number of issues related to the sanctity of life. We mentioned that to be pro-life, we must consider the entire spectrum of life and we must maintain our awareness of issues as they impact the spectrum from conception

until natural death. Most importantly, if we are to defend life, we must ask ourselves, in what ways are we called to action by the author of life, our Creator? We must always keep in mind that as the politics rage around us, our engagement is not about politics, it is about life.

Our faith calls us to act, because what is faith if it does not bring action? What are we telling God if we choose to sit it all out in the corner? We do not need to be the one who solves the problem for the whole world, but we must consider, we may be the one, in a moment unknown to us, who helps someone in need. The question is, will we consider what God has enabled us to do? Will we consider how we can step up? Are we willing to be part of a team to help enable life? Will we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us?

We hope you will take a moment to do some research and continue to learn about opportunities to enable the culture of life. If you would like to browse the links and references from our discussion today or any we have used during our culture of life series, you can go to <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/>. The Culture of Life series starts with episode 89 and concludes with today's episode, 97.

We also hope you will take a moment to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in how you may help to defend life.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin an examination of the encyclical, *Humane Vitae* [Human Life] as it relates to our current day and modern pressures.

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: Humane Vitae - Part I: Modern Pressures

References:

Patchen, Joel; (2019) "Anna's Choice;" <http://www.annaschoice.org/>

USCCB; (May 2016); Catechism of the Catholic Church; 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>