



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Humanae Vitae
Part I: Modern Pressures



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 if I do not, the powers that be said they will find someone else who can. Anyway, to answer my questions and correct my pronunciation is why we have our panelists, 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.

Why Catholics Do The Things We Do:

Before we get into our discussion today, we are starting a new segment called, “Why Catholics Do the Things We Do.” Our inspiration for this segment came as the result of a number of discussions we have had over the years where we are aware of our traditions of faith, but over time, the people begin to forget the, “why,” behind the tradition. During a discussion at a parish

we were visiting, this subject raised its head several times, so, we thought, given the nature of our show, we can help share the, “why,” behind what we do. Sharon agreed to pick up this segment for us, so here's Sharon to help answer those questions about, “Why do we do those things we do.”

As we are growing up, we are taught to do things that we just do. Most of the time there is no explanation as to why we do these things. We just do it. A question we received several times involves the action of “Crossing Ourselves”. Why do we do it?

As a Cradle Catholic, I grew up doing this a few times a day and it was just what we did. When my mother-in-law asked one day, “When would it be OK to cross myself?” I realized that this was an important issue to her, but I was perplexed as it seemed like the normal thing. I had never really thought about it---it is just something we do. She, having grown up Christian but not Catholic, was fascinated by this action. I was soon to learn that she was really telling us that she wanted to become Catholic, but in her mind, this was the beginning of her journey. To her, “crossing herself” was part of being Catholic.

Making the sign of the cross is actually a blessing. It is a sacramental and symbol of our faith that began with the Apostles and continues to this very day. It is the easiest form of a blessing anyone can offer to themselves or to others. We start and end prayer with the sign of the cross.

During the Mass we make three small signs of the cross on our foreheads, our lips and our hearts before the Gospel is read. In doing this, we say, “may God's word be in our minds, on our lips and in your hearts. Parents often will bless their children by tracing the sign of the cross on their little ones foreheads, and sometimes you may see people cross themselves when passing a Catholic Church or even a cemetery.

When we trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads or those of others, we are to be reminded that this recalls the saving death and redemption that Jesus Christ gave to us. This very simple act is truly a blessing and holds a major place within the teachings of the Catholic Church. The blessings of the sign of the cross invoke not only the Father and the Son, but the Holy Spirit as well. In calling upon the Trinity, we are not only asking for their Blessings, but we are also asking to have evil removed from our very beings.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

(CCC: 1667)

Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. These are sacred signs that bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, especially of the spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church.

(CCC: 1671) Among the sacramentals, blessings (of persons, meals, objects, events and places) come first. Every blessing praises God and prays for His gifts. In Christ, Christians are blessed by God the Father “with every spiritual blessing” (Eph 1:3). This is why the Church imparts blessings by invoking the name of Jesus, usually while making the holy sign of the cross of Christ.

If you have questions about why Catholics do the things we do, please send us an email at armoroffaithradio@gmail.com.

Discussion:

Last time, we concluded our “Culture of Life” series. We hope you found it informative, especially in light of all the media disinformation about the efforts to defend life.

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 who God steered across our path. 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?

Today, we begin a new series of discussion as it relates to the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* [On Human Life]. The subject seemed to be a natural follow-on to our Culture of Life series, given the title, “On Human Life,” but as I began to research the encyclical, I thought to myself, “What did I get us into?” It is certainly a subject of political land mines, but again, we must remember, as we endeavor to learn what God asks of us, it is not about politics, it is about our relationship with God.

With the progression of knowledge and technology in society, the reasoning of man is influenced and changes, but as we mentioned before, it is not a matter of our reasoning, but our understanding of what God asks of us. During the course of our decision making, we must consider that our understanding and reasoning contain many errors, which we endeavor to correct from time to time – or make worse to satisfy selfish agendas, but due to the imperfection of our our analysis and reasoning, we can trick ourselves into believing our wisdom should prevail over that of God's. In other words, we allow our arrogance to separate us from what God asks of us, and therefore, we diminish our relationship with God.

Before we can fully comprehend to what we are guided in the examination of *Humanae Vitae*, we must consider the context surrounding the need for the Church to clarify teaching concerning marriage, family, procreation, and life.

As we examine the medical advances of science, we note an effort to enable us to enjoy the pleasures of the body without the consequences of procreation. The term, “birth control,” is often used to represent the range of alternatives to the control of the natural procreative process. We often think of “birth control” as the prevention of conception, but, for the most part, most

forms do not prevent natural conception, but often achieve their objective through ending a life conceived.

Part of the method of action for birth control pills, for example, is to prevent a life conceived from implanting and continuing to mature. In other words, the pill is abortifacient, which means its method of action is to abort a conceived child – or what some call a “silent abortion.” The bottom line is that a child conceived is flushed from the body and dies.

Up until the 20th Century, most Christian denominations, as well as secular society, opposed the use of contraceptives. It was considered to be the frustration of God's design similar to the story of Onan in Genesis 38:8-10 where Onan intentionally avoided his duty to continue his brother's line when he took his brother's widow into his home, as was the custom of the times.

During the course of the 20th Century, both secular society as well as Christian denominations began to accept the use of contraceptives, but the Catholic Church, as it examined the issue, raised concerns for society as well as continued to teach against the use of contraceptives and promotes instead, Natural Family Planning, which relies upon the natural cycles of God's design as a means to family planning consistent with the moral obligations of a man and woman who have freely accepted the vocation and sacrament of marriage.

To understand the meaning of *Humanae Vitae*, we must also consider the history of the times and the controversies faced by the magisterial responsibilities of the Catholic Church.

(Question 1: Pope Paul the VI issued *Humanae Vitae* on 25 Jul 1968. **What was our society experiencing in the 1960's?)**

- Baby Boomer generation transitioning into adulthood
- Changing work force environment
- Technological advances
- Anti-war movement
- Free love movement
- Advancing drug culture
- Social concerns growing concerning world over population
- Steady decline of Mass attendance since 1955
- Increase of Government versus role of faith in guiding morals
- Soviet Union Active Measures (KGB Front Organizations disrupt the West)
- Vatican II

(Question 2: As we enter the 20th Century, we should note that discussion of eugenics were swirling in political circles. **What are some of the objectives of eugenics?)**

- Improve the genetic base of the human race through selective breeding
- Sterilization of undesirables to prevent spread of undesirable genes
- Birth control and abortion encouraged to achieve eugenics objectives
- Objectives spawned organizations such as Planned Parenthood (Carter)

(Question 3: Eugenics fell out of favor during World War II as the horrors of the methods of Nazi Germany's efforts at eugenics began to emerge. Still, another political area began to increase after World War II, which was the Population Control movement. **What are the concerns of the population control advocates and some of their solutions?)**

- Too many people consuming too few resources
- People cause environmental issues
- Medical technology (birth control, abortion, and sterilization) can stem the tide

(Question 4: During World War II, as men were called to battle, women were called into the workforce. Remember “Rosie the Riveter?” **What was the impact as the war came to a close? What did we see happening in the 1960's?)**

- Changing social view of women in the workforce
- Goals of women changed from family to career
- Family economics encouraged two worker families
- With both parents working, elements of child raising were outsourced

(Question 5: As we observe changing social norms and economic pressures on families, we observe changes in the family structure. **In what ways were families being impacted?)**

- Both parents away from children for more than a third of the day
- Children see their parents after they have consumed their energy for the day
- Parents become detached from education of their children
- Parents trade off faith activities for extra-curricular activities for their children

(Question 6: As mentioned earlier, we have seen a continued decline of families attending Mass since 1955. **What impact does this have on our participation in society?)**

- If we do not go to Mass, we miss the Christian teaching of the Word
- If we do not attend Mass, we are likely not to pursue religious formation
- Without religious formation, Catholics reduce access to what enables them to understand the blessings of living the fullness of their faith

(Question 7: If the Catholic Church reaches fewer and fewer people, and fewer Catholics are aware of the blessings open to them through the fullness of our faith, there is an impact to our moral compass. **If we do not have religious education, who guides our values and what is the likely impact?)**

- Institutional laws
- Political organizations
- The fickle winds of ideologies
- Manipulation at the hands of the ruling class and power elite
- Morality becomes what the powerful deem it

- We leave ourselves vulnerable to the one who would take our faith from us
- Separation from what God asks of us
- Society in decline

Quotes:

– *Pope Paul VI – Humanae Vitae*

Responsible men can become more deeply convinced of the truth of the doctrine laid down by the Church on this issue if they reflect on the consequences of methods and plans for artificial birth control. Let them first consider how easily this course of action could open wide the way for marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards.

– *Pope Paul VI – Humanae Vitae*

Not much experience is needed to be fully aware of human weakness and to understand that human beings—and especially the young, who are so exposed to temptation—need incentives to keep the moral law, and it is an evil thing to make it easy for them to break that law.

– *Pope Paul VI – Humanae Vitae*

[C]areful consideration should be given to the danger of this power passing into the hands of those public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law. Who will blame a government which in its attempt to resolve the problems affecting an entire country resorts to the same measures as are regarded as lawful by married people in the solution of a particular family difficulty? Who will prevent public authorities from favoring those contraceptive methods which they consider more effective? Should they regard this as necessary, they may even impose their use on everyone. It could well happen, therefore, that when people, either individually or in family or social life, experience the inherent difficulties of the divine law and are determined to avoid them, they may give into the hands of public authorities the power to intervene in the most personal and intimate responsibility of husband and wife.

Final Thoughts:

Paul Harvey, who worked in radio from the 1950s through the 1990s, gave a warning to America in 1965, which began, “If I were the prince of darkness...” In his essay, he outlined how the devil would seek to take over “the ripest plum on the tree,” the United States. In this radio essay, he included the following tactics of the evil one:

I’d subvert the churches first, and I would begin with a campaign of whispers.

With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: ‘Do as you please.’”

“I’d convince the young that marriage is old-fashioned, that swinging is more fun and that what you see on television is the way to be.

And thus, I could undress you in public and lure you into bed with diseases for which there are no cures. (Editor, ChurchPop)

Paul Harvey observed the signs of the times and their potential consequences. If we examine what has transpired since 1965, we might consider his words rather prescient or prophetic, but Paul Harvey was no psychic. He simply deduced the consequences from his observations of events.

Pope Paul VI made his own predictions within *Humanae Vitae* as to what would happen should society fail to observe the natural law of God. These included the prediction of marriage infidelity and decline of moral standards, an adverse impact on relationships between men and women, governmental abuse of power on families, and rejection of God's design.

Next time we will begin to discuss the predictions of Pope Paul VI, what some call the four prophecies of Pope Paul VI, and assess the direction of society in relation to these prophecies. We will also continue to discuss what history reveals to us and the importance of learning about both history and faith.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we continue our discussion concerning *Humanae Vitae* and the consequences of its rejection.

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: *Humanae Vitae* – Part II: Prophecies of Rejection

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