



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Humanae Vitae
Part VII: Values Grooming of Our Children



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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]

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 we do not have questions, how are we to learn? 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.

Dear Lord, we also lift up the prayers in our prayer basket. You know what is written on each one and you know the hearts of those who offer their thanks and praise and their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy. We especially join our prayers with the sick and afflicted who ask for Your hand of healing. We also lift up our prayers for those who are preparing to take their vows of religious life. May you guide them to do what is right and just and to encourage others in all which is right and just so hearts may be opened to You and Your will may be done.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

If you would like to add your prayers to our prayer basket, send us an email at armoroffaithradio@gmail.com. Please include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we will give it priority. Just so you know, Sharon and I lift up our prayers with those in the Armor of Faith Radio prayer basket during our daily prayers.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Sacred Music

Music is an integral and most important piece of Liturgical settings. Those who have taken on the task of organizing the format for Mass included the use of music. The reasons for including music are as Scripturally based as all the other parts of the Liturgy.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

(Colossians 3:16)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

(Ephesians 5:19)

Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord with all your heart.

(Psalm 95:1-2)

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD; cry out to the rock of our salvation. 2Let us come before him with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms.

And while this is not in Scripture, it is a familiar quote to all musicians. Saint Augustine is known to have said, “He who sings prays twice.”

A Priest friend of ours says often that the reason for the entrance song is to get the people ready. He could walk up the aisle and be ready, but the people need to be invited to the celebration. In the Vatican Council Documents on *Sacrosanctum-concilium*, chapter 5 paragraphs 112-121 music is addressed. You can go visit the documents, but here we will highlight some of the directives.

For all Liturgical gatherings, the celebrant is to take great care to make sure there are musicians who can lead music that is within the abilities of the congregation. Priests and Bishops are tasked to promote choirs and musicians. The congregants should participate in the singing as it is important for all to be alive in worshipping our Lord. The singing parts of the Mass are just as important as the spoken responses and need to be understood as such.

The Church holds Gregorian Chant as the prime form of music to be used for Liturgy. However, other forms are also accepted and encouraged. Since the Church recognizes that the size of the buildings for celebrations varies, it is encouraged that the musicians keep this in mind as they

plan for such issues as, the song selections, volume and space. Example: Basilicas and Cathedrals are large buildings. The choirs for these places need to be made up of many people, they must project loudly to fill the space so that the people will follow along. Due to their large numbers, they will be mindful of adequate space for members and instruments. A small country church on the other hand will not have the physical space for more than a few choir members. This will then cause the affect of softer volume. Then there is the issue of musical content. Musicians are to be fully aware of the abilities of the congregation and to lead accordingly.

What are acceptable instruments? Of course the pipe organ is the all time favorite of the Church. This instrument is most assuredly prominent in Cathedrals and other large churches. By today's standards, pianos have most often replaced the huge organs of days gone by. Other instruments are also acceptable but do need the approval of the local celebrant.

Where should the choir be in relation to the congregation? In ancient times, the choir held a very special place in a choir loft. This was the normal position of the choir. Since Vatican II, the trend is for the choir to be part of the congregation. More and more we see the choir space located on the same level as the congregation, and close to the Altar. The choir is to be in a place where they can be able to participate as leaders of the celebration and as members of the congregation as well. Choir lofts are still accepted as some church settings are just too small for removing pews to give space for the choir members and instruments.

Yes, singing is very important to the Liturgy and needs to be used by all members and with joy and love. God loves to hear us worship in song.

If you would like to learn more about the importance of music to the Liturgy, we invite you to follow the links in the reference section of the topic summary for this show. You can obtain the topic summary by visiting <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/> and look for episode 104.

Discussion:

Last time, we discussed our call to live the design of God. As we mentioned, there are those who would tell us that when the world raises proclivities within us to wander from that design, it really is not our responsibility, because God made us that way, along with the desires which drive us. We are tempted to tell ourselves, our behavior is beyond our control.

It is true, God created each of us unique with a certain set of gifts and talents, but the choices of our behavior He left to us. He works within our lives to guide us to the purpose He intended for us and the gifts and talents He placed within us, but to give that purpose meaning, God granted us free will. The responsibility for our choices, then, is ours – and as Genesis 9:5 reveals, there will be an accounting of our choices.

Before us are the lifestyles of the world and the design of God. He gave us the capability to rule over our behavior, but the evil one waits for any opportunity he can use to deceive us, sow doubt, trip us up, and snare us. Many deceptions are presented to us, just like the moment of which we are told in Genesis 3:4 where Eve is told by the serpent that if she transgresses the

instruction of God, she “*certainly will not die.*” Of course, we know the rest of that story. Anyways, the question for all is how will we prepare ourselves so we might see through those deceptions as well as appreciate the blessings we may share by living the design of God?

I know there are many like me who grew up without any real exposure to understanding the design of God or why we should endeavor to live according to that design. My values, and those who influenced my value system, were set largely by a secular society, along with the confusion which it sows. As I look back upon how my values were groomed, I wonder how much heartache I could have spared others and myself had I better understood and accepted what God asks of us? Even after becoming Catholic, the value system which influenced my choices was slow to change; partially because of continued ignorance and partially by the enticements of the world. Truly, I wish I knew then what I am still learning now. I might have been a better person.

Hope is not lost for those of us who have wandered in confusion, made bad choices, or even for those who once consciously rejected the design of God. Because of His great mercy and willingness to forgive our transgressions, we have the opportunity to turn from the wandering paths of the world, and with a penitent and contrite heart, walk the better path.

As God told Cain, (cf. Genesis 4:7), if we act rightly, we will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait for us. Our Lord warns, its urge is for us, but He also tells us we can rule over the sin which tempts us. The choice is ours, perhaps not always as easily said as done, but the choice remains ours none-the-less.

The urge to choose rightly or wrongly is before us. Let us, then, encourage and enable one another, with humility, civility, dignity, and respect to live according to God's design so we may all share the blessings He offers through living in the fullness of faith. It may not seem so at first, but our life becomes less complicated and far happier when our choices align with the expectations God has that we should keep His commandments and live by the design and the purpose to which He leads us.

As we continue our discussion of *Humanae Vitae* and subjects related to the sacrament of marriage and pro-creation, we may talk about issues that may not be suitable for young ears. If you are listening with young children around, we recommend you find a time where you can listen without little ears listening so that you can process our discussion and consider its meaning in relation to what you want to teach your children and when you believe the topic is appropriate for them. You can listen on demand. Just remember to look for episode 104.

Again, because of the politically charged nature of our discussion, I thought I should issue the following disclaimer.

Disclaimer: The opinions presented by me on this show are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the panel, WCAT Radio, or any affiliate show or organization. I admit that I lack the academic expertise of political theologians, therefore I cannot challenge them in the debate of the nuances of word choices of languages I do not understand, so in full disclosure, I must relate that my opinions are formed through the discernment of scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as well as the writings of the Popes, Doctors of the Church, and Saints as such writings are translated into English by the Magisterial authorities of the Catholic Church.

If you would like to know how I approach scripture, I invite you to listen to our series, “The Study and Discernment of Scripture,” which is available on demand and can be found at episodes 39 – 45.

There is also a question about what I mean by “political theologians.” I define political theologians as those who study theology in great depth and view what they learn through the lens of their politics, attempting to use the Word of God as a means to support political ideologies to which they subscribe. I know that sounds snarky, but it does raise a point of which we should all be concerned. Of course, one might make the case that we are all “political theologians” to a certain degree, but to what we all should aspire is to not view our faith through the lens of our politics, rather, to view our politics through the lens of what God asks of us. That is not always an easy task when politics overwhelm a conversation or contests for our values.

Today, our discussion turns to the subject of what I call, “values grooming.” Our focus will be upon influences molding our children and the potential impacts to the formation of their values system.

I mentioned the concept of values grooming during our series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” episodes 57 – 68, as well as during our series, “The Battle for Our Children,” episodes 69 – 76. Our values system is developed through our learning, observations, experience, emotions and what we believe others expect of us. Values grooming is the process by which an individual or group endeavors to influence the development of the value system of another.

You could say that values grooming is part of our daily lives. This radio show, for example, is a form of values grooming in that we hope to influence our listeners to learn and apply the values aligned with what God asks of us.

(Question 1: As we consider the formation of the values system of our children, we should also consider the environment in which their values are formed. **What are some of the sources from which our children develop their beliefs and values?)**

- Parents
- Siblings
- Extended family
- Friends and personal relationships (playgrounds and the street)
- Church and faith formation classes
- Schools and education
- Sports and teams
- Media and Entertainment media of all forms
- Hobby and life skills organizations
- Religious organizations
- Political organizations
- Business marketing
- Significant Emotional Others, Events, and Experiences; etc

(Question 2: So, we see there are a variety of sources which may potentially influence the values development of our children. **What concerns might parents have concerning the values development of their children?)**

- Awareness (who are the influencers)
 - Observation (what is contained in content and actions)
 - Objectives of influencers
 - What our children comprehend, understand, and adopt
-

I noticed that one of the hooks used to justify bringing LGBTQ education into elementary schools is the need to stop bullying. The following is from guidance promoted by the National Education Administration and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

It doesn't matter if it is a first grader **who might not know what the word "gay" means**, a sixth grader trying to sound cool, or a tenth grader "teasing" a friend. **All of these scenarios have the potential of creating an unsafe classroom or school environment** and must be addressed. (Welcoming Schools; What Do You Say?)

So, we agree, bullying is bad and we must work to end it in all its forms. We must recognize that children often resort to ridicule those who are not like them for purposes of their own affirmation and self-esteem, or to manipulate them or others. The problem of bullying is wide and complex and is not confined to issues of gender or sexual orientation, especially when we are talking about the formative minds of elementary schools students. Still, in the process of steering our children away from the harm of teasing and bullying, we must endeavor to protect the innocence of our children, for once it is lost, the consequences ripple through lives.

So, in the name of stopping bullying, we declare we must encourage a positive education environment for our children. So, what does that look like? According to the Human Rights Campaign guidance, which is also promoted by the National Education Association, we must develop gender inclusive schools. They state:

Creating schools that nurture academic achievement, provide physical and emotional safety and welcome all students are common goals for all educators. As educators, one can create **gender-expansive environments** that **affirm all children by reducing gender role stereotyping** and **allowing them to express their interests** and find confidence in their strengths. (Welcoming Schools; Developing a Gender Inclusive School)

How is this implemented? The article specifies the need for policies and regulations which enforce the following:

- **Ensure anti-bullying policies** are enumerated and **specifically name groups that are more frequently targeted for harassment**. Make sure these policies **include actual or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation**. Naming it, helps stop it.

- Provide access to gender neutral restroom/facilities with options for privacy that do not stigmatize any students.
 - Allow children to use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity.
 - Have policies in place regarding gender inclusion.
 - Have policies and procedures in place regarding challenges to books or curricula.
 - Reframe dress codes to describe what the school considers appropriate clothing without assigning clothing options to particular genders.
- (Welcoming Schools; Developing a Gender Inclusive School)

(Question 3: We agree that we all are called to approach one another with humility, civility, dignity, and respect and that we should not disparage one another concerning our differences. We also know that children compete, tease, and bully one another over gender as they explore the social boundaries of gender. The question we should have concerning matters of childhood education is why is there such a push to focus on only LGBTQ association, especially at the elementary school level? What might be another objective hidden within this education beyond just stopping bullying? In what ways might we approach anti-bullying without opening doors to gender confusion?)

Hidden objectives:

- Opens the door to gender confusion – what are the boundaries of my behavior?
- Opens door for children's curiosity as to the meaning of LGBTQ
- Opens the door to the question, “Should I identify as LGBTQ even though I do not know what it really means? (What attention will I get by identifying as LGBTQ?)” (**Note:** Our identity is partially formed by what other expect of us.)
- Normalizes or even elevates status of LGBTQ behavior without consideration of God's design or lifestyle consequences (Only one side of the story)
- Behavior and behavior choices are assumed normal or even desirable without understanding physical or spiritual consequences

Alternatives:

- Focus on the positive behavior we should expect from one another → humility, civility, dignity, and respect
- Discuss that we must not disparage others and call names, especially when we do not even understand what those names mean
- Bullying diminishes the bully and harms the bullied
- We should encourage one another rather than judge, condemn, or disparage
- We do not need to justify lifestyles to help children understand it is wrong to judge and disparage another because they appear different from us
- There are boundaries to behavior (do no harm) and there are appropriate times and places for behavior (a time to work, a time to play, a time to rest, a time to pray) (**Note:** We took prayer out of schools, but we can still help our children pray at home, pray with us, and pray with family, friends, and others)

Quotes:

(Proverbs 22:6)

Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it.

– *Congregation For Catholic Education - “Male and Female He Created Them”*

It is becoming increasingly clear that we are now facing with what might accurately be called an educational crisis, especially in the field of affectivity and sexuality. In many places, curricula are being planned and implemented which “allegedly convey a neutral conception of the person and of life, yet in fact reflect an anthropology opposed to faith and to right reason” The disorientation regarding anthropology which is a widespread feature of our cultural landscape has undoubtedly helped to destabilize the family as an institution, bringing with it a tendency to cancel out the differences between men and women, presenting them instead as merely the product of historical and cultural conditioning.

– *Congregation For Catholic Education - “Male and Female He Created Them”*

The context in which the mission of education is carried out is characterized by challenges emerging from varying forms of an ideology that is given the general name ‘gender theory’, which “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time.

– *Congregation For Catholic Education - “Educational Guidance In Human Love”*

Sexuality characterizes man and woman not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual, making its mark on each of their expressions. Such diversity, linked to the complementarity of the two sexes, allows thorough response to the design of God according to the vocation to which each one is called.

Final Thoughts:

While today's discussion focused mostly on efforts to values groom our children within our schools, we must recognize that the values systems of our children are constantly developing and therefore, constantly influenced by a variety of sources. Some of the influence will occur by accident, but we must also be observant for those who are in a tug-of-war with us; not just the values of our children, but potentially their souls.

Our children are a gift to us from God, a special gift entrusted to us, not only to love, but also to protect, cherish, and to prepare them for the vocations and purpose to which God calls them; whether it is to single life, religious life, the priesthood, or married life. Jesus tells us in Matthew 18:6, “*Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*” The question for us, then, is what are we doing with the gifts He has entrusted to us; the innocent souls of our children? How are we preparing our children to face down the corruptions of the world and live God's design, the true design of love?

The issues before us are complex, but we will not resolve them with vitriol and anger. We must remember to what we are called in 1 Peter 3:15-16 where we are told, “*Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, 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.*”

We must be vigilant if we are to protect our children, for their innocence is under attack from many directions. We must also engage them with love if we are to enable them to do what is right and just as well as prepare them to face the world in the manner outlined in 1 Peter 3. Next time, we will discuss ways we might engage to help those who surround us to see and live the blessings of God's design.

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 how we may encourage respect of God's design.

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 VIII: More on Values Grooming of our Children

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