



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Humanae Vitae
Part VIII: Promoting Respect of God's Design



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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, well, someone has to do it, it might as well be me. 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.

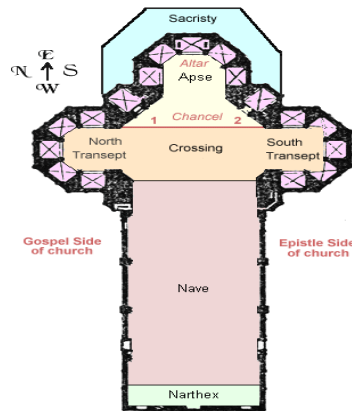
Dear Lord, we also lift up the prayers in our prayer basket. You know what is written on each one and you know the hearts of those who offer their thanks and praise and their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

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 as well as during this show.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

The Arrangement of Churches: The Crossing



(Fisheaters)

Last week I asked you to do some imagining. I asked you to see in your mind's eye, a cross. This simple form is what I would like for you to continue to keep in your thoughts as we continue our discussion of what Catholic Churches look like. When we enter a church we should know immediately that it is a Catholic Church just by the visual provided. If you enter a church and have to guess, then maybe you better ask someone before getting too comfortable.

We talked about the *Narthex* and the *Nave*. The Narthex is where we enter the church and meet and greet other parishioners. The Nave is where the pews are. Where we sit, stand and kneel to worship our Lord. Continue to imagine the shape of a cross. These two parts of the church make up the lower part of the cross. When looking at a Crucifix, we would see this as where Jesus' feet were nailed.

Next we come to the part called the *Crossing*. This space is where the nave, the chancel and the transept meet. Imagine the space between the front pew and that of the area where the Liturgies take place. As I picture the churches we have been to, I think of this as an open space for various movements of people that take place during Mass. Such as, the place where the Celebrant and other ministers move to in order to begin the Liturgy, or where people move to in order to receive Communion, or children gathering for a blessing at the end of Mass, or where Brides and Grooms proceed to exchange vows. This is the place where people come together for whatever the reason.

Now, place into your interior vision the image of your your rosary. The center piece is usually a medal that connects the two sides of the rosary decades and the beginning prayers and the Crucifix. That is what the crossing is. The connector. It connects the people and the celebrant.

The Crossing is the same width as the Nave. The extensions of the crossing are called the *Transept* and these spaces stretch beyond the walls of the Nave. Go back to your image of the Crucifix. The crossing and the transept make up the cross beam of the Crucifix.

According to the rubrics of the Mass, the Liturgy is to be celebrated *ad orientem*, which means facing East. Did you know that the Altar is supposed to be set on the East side of the church?

As a child I recall going to Mass and seeing other Altars besides the main one at the front. I did not know it then, but they were in the North and South Transepts so that Mass could be celebrated throughout the day. These are called Transept Altars or Side Altars. As a small child I remember seeing Priests saying Mass at these Altars and that is how I knew they were Altars.

These Side Altars are still found in churches that were built many decades or even centuries ago. Most Catholic Churches in the United States today, use the space for seating of the congregation and no longer have the Side Altars. This space today, is often used for what is commonly called Day Chapels. So I guess you could say that the Day Chapels are the modern Transept Altars. The only difference is that the old Altars were just in the open as part of the whole church not closed off as are Day Chapels.

Just past the Crossing, yet still before reaching the Liturgical space, is the **Chancel**. Chancel comes from the word “*cancelli*” and it means “lattice work”. The Chancel refers to the space where religious persons would sit to sing responses or to chant the Divine Office. The area was cordoned off by rails which often looked like lattice fencing. This space seemed to go away in churches for some time, as the choirs moved to loft areas and the Sanctuary moved forward toward the people. However its use has been revitalized since Vatican II. The documents of Vatican II called for choirs to be very much an important part of the Mass. It called for the choir to be part of the congregation as apposed to being hidden in a loft area. Since Vatican II, choirs are to be leaders and not entertainers in the Mass. They are also called to be part of the worshipers and they seem to have become the replacement of religious choirs.

Interesting to note also, when Communion Rails were used, this was the line that separated the Nave from the Sanctuary and the Choir (Chancel). This spot completely separated the worshipers and the Sanctuary. The space was treated as the Holy of Holies. There was special reverence for the Altar. Very similar to the treatment the Israelites gave to the Ark of the Covenant.

Today the Communion Rails have been removed and the congregation feels closer to the Altar and the worship. I do miss those Communion Rails though.

Next week we shall discuss the Sanctuary.

If you would like to learn more about the arrangement and ornamentation of churches for the celebration of the Eucharist, 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 105.

Discussion:

While our last two discussions 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 God has entrusted to us, especially 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:

(1 Peter 3:15-16)

“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.

Once more, 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, we are going to turn our discussion to what we may do to help promote acceptance of and the living of the design of God. If we look at our society and the many problems we face, one of the root causes of so many challenges is a disordered sense of self-interest, also known as selfishness. The design of God, though, calls us to concerns outside of self as a greater means of self-fulfillment than selfishness. It is a lesson which many of us struggle to comprehend.

Jesus told us that the two greatest commandments are to love God with all our heart, our mind, and our soul; as well as to love one another as ourselves. (cf. Matthew 22:36-40) If we examine what that means, it means we are called to relationships of love. If we are to have positive relationships, then, we must also seek to learn the meaning of love.

Helen gave us a clue a few episodes back when she steered us to 1 Corinthians 13. It reads:

(1 Corinthians 13)

1 If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. 2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, 5 it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, 6 it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. 9 For we know partially and we prophesy partially, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. 12 At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. 13 So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

You heard me say before that our faith is as simple as the two greatest commandments, but the comprehension of what it means to live those commandments can be very complex. Even with the explanation of 1 Corinthians 13, we live our lives trying to understand what it means to love and the ways we are called to put it into action. The Holy Word of God provides us with many examples, but we must study, pray, and discern to fully comprehend what God asks of us,

especially when Jesus calls us to understand the words, *“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”* (cf. Hosea 6:6, Matthew 9:13, 12:7) We must also consider similar words which Samuel spoke to King Saul:

(1 Samuel 15:22)

*“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord’s command? **Obedience is better than sacrifice**, to listen, better than the fat of rams.”*

(Question 1: Something I noted while reviewing the Human Rights Campaign LGBTQ lesson plans targeted at elementary school children was the focus on the premise that if something makes someone happy, then, we should be accepting of what makes them happy. (Welcoming Schools; “Jacob’s New Dress;” pgs 3-4) Of course, if we love someone, we want to make them happy and we want them to do what makes them happy, but it is not that simple. What if our children express desires and perceptions that it will make them happy to play on four lane highways? In what ways should we accept that behavior? In what ways might we warn them such behavior may not be such a great idea? How might we encourage them to pursue happiness in a less dangerous place?)

- Just because behavior provides us some pleasure, doesn't make it benign
- We must help children understand consequences and dangers
- We must help children understand benefits of more appropriate behavior
- We must explain we do not want harm to come to them, so, we cannot always allow them to do what they think will make them happy

Certainly, we hope our listeners will help to promote the respect of God's design. We also hope that as they engage and encourage others, they will do so in the spirit of 1 Peter 3:15-16, which reads:

(1 Peter 3:15-16) *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.*

(Question 2: Before we engage to call out undesirable behavior and endeavor to promote the behavior which God asks of us, I recommend doing a self-reflection as to our own personal development along with our faults and failings along the way. Why might you think I would make such a recommendation?)

- It is a humbling experience
- It reminds us of the hurts and harms that many times we did not intend
- Our tribulations may make us empathetic to the tribulations of others
- It enhances the empathy we should have for others as they consider their choices
- It may remind us of reasons why we do not want others to make similar mistakes
- It will enable us to approach others with humility

- It will reduce the temptation to mount the high horse of moral superiority
 - It will mitigate the tendency to judge and condemn rather than to encourage what is right and just
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As we prepare to engage others for the purpose of promoting the design of God, we must remember what we are told in Matthew 7:1.

(Matthew 7:1)

Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.

(Question 3: If we are honest, anger has a tendency to motivate us to action. Our anger is often raised when we judge what we perceive to be an injustice or morally harmful. Angry words well up in our throat. The desire to, “give them a piece of my mind,” motivates us to aggressive postures. Why is it important that we reflect on Matthew 7:1 as well as 1 Peter 5:15-16 before we engage to counter those who counter the design of God?)

- When emotions run high, the quality of communication, analysis, problem solving, and coordination suffers
- We are not called to push Jesus out of the seat of judgment, rather, we are called to encourage others to what need not be judged (cf Galatians 5:22)

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- It does not mean we should not warn → is it love to remain silent when we see someone starting to step out in front of an oncoming bus? After all, some would say it is not ours to judge the desire of another to seek happiness on the other side of the street.
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When the people rejected God as their king and implored the prophet Samuel to anoint a human king for them because of what they perceived of what a human king would do for them, Saul did as instructed by God, but he also sought to warn them of the consequences. He said:

(1 Samuel 12:23)

As for me, far be it from me to sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you and to teach you the good and right way.

We also read in the book of Ezekiel:

(Ezekiel 33:8-9)

8 When I say to the wicked, “You wicked, you must die,” and you do not speak up to warn the wicked about their ways, they shall die in their sins, but I will hold you

responsible for their blood. 9 If, however, you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, but they do not, then they shall die in their sins, but you shall save your life.

(Question 4: In these two examples of scripture, we see reference to the accountability of one who does not warn of the consequences of iniquity. What does that mean to us? How should we consider what we are told in 1 Samuel 12:23, Ezekiel 33:8-9, Matthew 7:1, and 1 Peter 3:15-16?)

- We have a responsibility to engage and warn
 - In the process we are called not to judge or condemn
 - We are called to approach one another with humility, gentleness, and reverence
 - Our warning should be in the spirit of love and with the objective of helping
 - If we are ignored, God will see what is in our hearts and those who spurn His ways
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(Question 5: Of course, we have the blessing of the Bible and the wisdom which is contained within it. If we converse with someone who also believes, we can share what scripture tells us and hopefully, in the process, discern and encourage one another as to what God asks of us. What do we do when we engage someone who does not believe in God or His Word and uses “Political Correctness” as their moral compass? What kind of compass is “Political Correctness?”)

- We may not be able to quote scripture, but we may still draw from its wisdom
 - If we correctly discern His Word, we can draw attention to natural law
 - The power of questions can help reveal the harm of rejecting the design of God
 - We must also be prepared to respond to questions redirected at us
 - We must pray, study, and learn if we are to effectively expose the deceptions of “Political Correctness”
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(Question 6: There are many Catholics who suffer from turning away from God's design, whether it is sex outside of the sacrament of marriage between a man and a woman, divorce, or abortion. Because such behavior is not accepted by the Church, those who suffer in the wake often feel rejected. Some come seeking reconciliation and forgiveness. Some may turn and condemn the faithful because we appear to be judgmental. Others may seek the absolution of “Political Correctness” and condemn the Church as judgmental and “behind-the-times,” subscribing to the practices of the “dark ages.” What should our response be to those who are hurting and suffering from their rejection of God's design?)

- Jesus wants us to come to Him
- Jesus wants to offer His mercy to contrite hearts
- Jesus poured out His love for us from the cross so we may be forgiven our sins
- Jesus calls us to reject the sin, but not the person
- We are called to minister to those who suffer, including those who suffer from sin

- Jesus came to heal the sinners, not the righteous
- Jesus does not wish to condemn us, but neither does He desire for us to continue in sin
- The faithful are here to minister to healing, not to be enablers of illness
- None of us are without sin, but we are on the same journey, so let us encourage one another with gentleness and reverence to what is right and just

(Genesis 4:7)

[The Lord said to Cain] *If you act rightly, you will be accepted; but if not, sin lies in wait at the door: its urge is for you, yet you can rule over it.*

Quotes:

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

[A] position held in common is the need to educate children and young people to respect every person in their particularity and difference, so that no one should suffer bullying, violence, insults or unjust discrimination based on their specific characteristics (such as special needs, race, religion, sexual tendencies, etc.). Essentially, this involves educating for active and responsible citizenship, which is marked by the ability to welcome all legitimate expressions of human personhood with respect.

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

[E]ducation on sexuality and affectivity must involve each person in a process of learning “with perseverance and consistency, the meaning of his or her body” in the full original truth of masculinity and femininity. It means “learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning [...] Also, valuing one’s own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different [...] and find mutual enrichment.”

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

Reason tells us that two fundamental rights, which stem from the very nature of the family, must always be guaranteed and protected. Firstly, the family’s right to be recognized as the primary pedagogical environment for the educational formation of children. This “primary right” finds its most concrete expression in the “most grave duty” of parents to take responsibility for the “well-rounded personal and social education of their children”, including their sexual and affective education, “within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving”. This is at once an educational right and responsibility that is “essential, since it is connected with the transmission of human life...

Final Thoughts:

If you remember, when we began this series concerning the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, I had to ask myself, “What had I gotten us into?” The reason for my concern is the growing rejection of God's design and the increasing vitriol raised towards those who endeavor to encourage others to live according to that design. I, too, once stood on the wrong side of this question until I

began to see the consequences, not just to our physical being, but also our relationship with our Creator.

The moral compass of “Political Correctness” has left many scarred souls and perhaps many blind one's as well. What I mean by that is that when we reject the design of God, it is often because we do not see or comprehend His purpose. If we understand the purpose God intended through His design, then, we are likely to seek the blessings He offers. If, instead, we are disciples of “Political Correctness,” we may very well find ourselves asking the question, “Where are we going and why are we in this hand-basket?”

“Male and female He made them.” (Genesis 1:27) We are told this from the very first chapter. *“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.”* (Genesis 2:24) When asked, Jesus reinforced what we were told from the beginning. *“He said in reply, ‘Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate.”* (Matthew 19:4-6)

No, relationships are not easy. Yes, they require a lot of work. Do we make bad choices? We all have. That is why we are called sinners. If we have made bad choices, can we repent and accept the blessings of God's design? Yes, because God does not want to condemn the world, for that is the reason He sent His only begotten Son, so that we might be saved and receive His mercy and forgiveness. (cf. John 3:16-21)

Let us, then, pray to understand the words, *“I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”* (Matthew 9:13, 12:7) Let us engage to encourage one another to live according to the design of God, whether we respond to the vocation of single life, the priesthood, religious life, or married life. Let us turn away from the arrogance of the world and instead, ask God to guide our hearts so that we may share all the blessings He offers through living the fullness of our faith.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end and this also brings us to the end of our series concerning *Humanae Vitae*. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we begin a new series, “Put on the Armor of Prayer.”

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: Put on the Armor of Prayer – Part I: The Importance of Prayer

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