



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Put On the Armor of Prayer**  
***Part II: Expressions of Prayer***



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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 questions open the door to answers. 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 pray especially today for the souls which are in purgatory. We pray for the members of our families. We pray for those we know, and we also pray for those who have no one to pray for them.

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

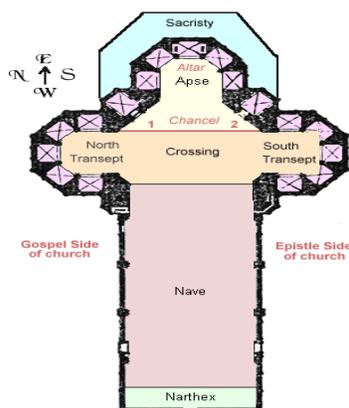
If you would like to add your prayers to our prayer basket, send us an email at [armoroffaithradio@gmail.com](mailto:armoroffaithradio@gmail.com). Please include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we will be sure to give it priority and get it into our prayer basket. Just so you know, Sharon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

### **Faith Event Announcements:**

If you happen to be in Denver on Saturday, 21 Sep 2019, EWTN is holding a Family Celebration conference from 8am to 7pm at the University of Denver - Magness Arena. The conference includes a number of high powered speakers as well as an opportunity to be part of a live, televised broadcast. To find out more information, and to register to attend, you can visit: <https://www.ewtn.com/familycelebration>.

### **Why Catholics Do What We Do:**

#### *The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches: The Altar*



(Fisheaters)

#### *The Altar and Its Appointments*

The Altar is the main piece of furniture on the sanctuary. This is the place where the Sacrifice of the Cross comes to life all over again. This is the table of the Lord. The faithful are gathered to participate in the Eucharist at this table.

The Altar Table is a sacred place for celebrating the Eucharist. The use of a cloth, a corporal, a cross and candles are required.

(1 Pt 2:4; cf. Eph 2:20)

*It is appropriate to have a fixed altar in every church, since it more clearly and permanently signifies Christ Jesus, the living stone.*

According to the general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal Chapter V article 299:

*The altar should be built apart from the wall, in such a way that it is possible to walk around it easily and that Mass can be celebrated at it facing the people, which is desirable wherever possible. The altar should, moreover, be so placed as to be truly the center toward which the attention of the whole congregation of the faithful naturally turns. The altar is usually fixed and is dedicated.*

Altar Tables can be “fixed” or “movable” but the latter is for the purposes of celebrating the Eucharist outside of the nave and sanctuary space. An example of this would be to celebrate the Eucharist in a day chapel or for teaching purposes in a classroom.

The Church's traditional practice is for altars to be made of stone, however, the dioceses of the United States of America have approved the use of wood. The wood is to be solid and well-crafted and the structure must be immobile.

There is an age old practice of placing relics of Saints under the altar. Of course the relics must be authenticated. If you did not know this, ask your Priest to show you the relic. This would certainly be an interesting thing for all parishioners to know.

We now know what the general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal has called for and intends for the altar set up. It is to be in the sanctuary, made of stone (US dioceses are allowed to use wood) and fixed in place, away from the wall so the Priest celebrant can walk around it and so that he may also face the faithful as he celebrates the Eucharistic Meal.

How may the altar be decorated? Again, the guidelines are to “keep it simple”. This in no way is to take away from adoring God. The simplicity is for the purpose of keeping a reverence and making it easier for the faithful to stay focused on Jesus.

The first item of decoration is always a white cloth which should be formed to the altar's size and shape. This is called a “*mensa*”. The dioceses of the United States has authorized the use of colored cloths for reasons of festiveness, seasons, or special occasions. These cloths are to be used in addition to the *mensa* cloth which must always be white.

The general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal Chapter V articles 306, 307, 308 tells very clearly and way better than I can, the other requirements for the altar.

(GIRM 306)

*Only what is required for the celebration of the Mass may be placed on the mensa of the altar: namely, from the beginning of the celebration until the proclamation of the Gospel, the Book of the Gospels; then from the Presentation of the Gifts until the purification of the vessels, the chalice with the paten, a ciborium, if necessary, and, finally, the corporal, the purificator, the pall, and the Missal.*

*In addition, microphones that may be needed to amplify the priest's voice should be arranged discreetly.*

(GIRM 307)

*The candles, which are required at every liturgical service out of reverence and on*

*account of the festiveness of the celebration, are to be appropriately placed either on or around the altar in a way suited to the design of the altar and the sanctuary so that the whole may be well balanced and not interfere with the faithful's clear view of what takes place at the altar or what is placed on it.*

(GIRM 308)

*There is also to be a cross, with the figure of Christ crucified upon it, either on the altar or near it, where it is clearly visible to the assembled congregation. It is appropriate that such a cross, which calls to mind for the faithful the saving Passion of the Lord, remain near the altar even outside of liturgical celebrations.*

Floral decorations are very popular in churches. Flowers are acceptable providing they do not interfere with the work of the celebrant or of the viability of the gathered faithful. Floral decorations must be tasteful and never placed on the *mensa*, rather may be placed around the altar table itself.

If you would like to learn more about the altar within the arrangement of the church, 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 108.

## **Discussion:**

Last time, we discussed the importance and value of prayer. We also discussed it as armor for the soul. As we lead our lives, and through the freewill God has given us, we have the choice of being unruly and selfish children, or we can seek a relationship with our Creator and ask Him to guide us to the true purpose for which He created us. As we discussed, prayer, is the means by which we speak with Him and by which we may also listen for Him within our hearts.

Just as a child must learn to communicate with a parent, we must learn how we might communicate with God. Our first efforts may feel awkward. At first, we may not even perceive the blessings He brings or the many wonderful ways He works within our lives, but the more we spend time with Him in prayer, we will begin to recognize His "*light, silent sound,*" within our hearts. As we converse with Him each day, we will begin to see the ways He leads us and the paths to which He calls us.

As we concluded our last discussion, we mentioned that we must consider how we can allow prayer to take its proper place within our life and how we might turn our prayer life from a matter of circumstance or impromptu opportunity such that it becomes an intentional and valued part of our day. When we reflect upon the importance of our prayer life, let us consider what Jesus told us when He said, "*For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.*" (Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34) – we should let our prayer become one of our most precious treasures.

As we consider increasing the place of prayer in our day, we should also take a moment to consider the various expressions and forms of prayer we may incorporate into our prayer life.

Today, we will discuss the expressions of prayer as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The first expression described in the Catechism is “vocal prayer.” We know that Christ often withdrew in seclusion to pray to His Heavenly Father. We also know that His disciples ask Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1), to which Jesus responded with what we call the Lord's Prayer.

(CCC: 2702)

The need to involve the senses in interior prayer corresponds to a requirement of our human nature. We are body and spirit, and we experience the need to translate our feelings externally. We must pray with our whole being to give all power possible to our supplication.

**(Question 1:** We can pray quietly within our thoughts, but vocal prayer combines our thoughts with sound. What is the value of speaking our prayers, especially since God already knows our needs?)

- We gain the feeling of conversation; and through conversation, relationship
  - Composing and speaking our thoughts engages more of us
  - Enables us to join our prayer with others
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**(Question 2:** Of course, not everyone has the power of speech. If speech is not an option, what other expressions might be used in the same fashion as “vocal prayer?”)

- Writing or prayer journals
  - Gestures or sign language
  - Artistic expression
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(CCC: 2704) Because it is external and so thoroughly human, vocal prayer is the form of prayer most readily accessible to groups. Even interior prayer, however, cannot neglect vocal prayer. Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of him “to whom we speak.” Thus vocal prayer becomes an initial form of contemplative prayer.

**(Question 3:** As we consider this last statement, we turn to two other expressions of prayer, which are meditative and contemplative. We are often tempted to use these words somewhat interchangeably. What is the difference between meditative and contemplative prayer?)

- **Meditation:** Seeking understanding of what God asks of us and our relationship
  - **Contemplation:** Examination of relationship and meaning of that relationship
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(CCC: 2705) Meditation is above all a quest. The mind seeks to understand the why and how of the Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking. The required attentiveness is difficult to sustain. We are usually helped by books, and Christians do not want for them: the Sacred Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, holy icons, liturgical texts of the day or season, writings of the spiritual fathers, works of spirituality, the great book of creation, and that of history—the page on which the “today” of God is written.

**(Question 4:** Here, we see the expression of meditative prayer as a quest for understanding. What does this paragraph of the Catechism acknowledge about human focus and the value of the written word to the meditative process?)

- We are easily distracted and often struggle to focus
- The written word can be like a map to help guide our exploration
- The written word can speak to us literally and figuratively
- The art of words can stimulate and inspire our thought and comprehension
- Writing also conveys history which helps us consider examples
- Our own writing, as part of our meditation, can give us building blocks from which to periodically examine the growth of our understanding and relationship

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(CCC: 2706) To meditate on what we read helps us to make it our own by confronting it with ourselves. Here, another book is opened: the book of life. We pass from thoughts to reality. To the extent that we are humble and faithful, we discover in meditation the movements that stir the heart and we are able to discern them. It is a question of acting truthfully in order to come into the light: “Lord, what do you want me to do?”

**(Question 5:** There is a lot contained in this simple paragraph of the Catechism. Let's break it down a little. What does it reveal to us about the objectives and value of meditative prayer?)

- “Confronting it with ourselves” → enables examination of:
  - ➔ Our understanding and purpose of what God asks of us
  - ➔ The nature, results, and consequences of our choices
  - ➔ How our choices respond to God and His purpose for us
- “Another book is opened: the book of life” and “thoughts to reality” → enables examination of:
  - ➔ Our past before we sought a relationship with Christ
  - ➔ Our progression as our knowledge of our faith grows
  - ➔ The growth of our relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
  - ➔ The meaning of our relationship as to how we lead our lives
- “Humble and faithful” and “discern” → enables examination of:
  - ➔ Our will versus His will
  - ➔ Consideration of what He sees versus what we see
  - ➔ Our image in His likeness

- “Acting truthfully” → enables examination of:
  - ➔ Our acceptance of the fullness of what He asks of us
  - ➔ How His ways influence the blessings we share
  - ➔ The truth of our disobedience; the false means by which we justify sin
- “Lord, what do You want me to do?” → enables examination of:
  - ➔ What does God asks of us?
  - ➔ To where is God leading us?
  - ➔ To what vocation is God calling us?
  - ➔ In what ways do we fit in the body of Christ?
  - ➔ The blessings of our obedience to His will

(CCC: 2709)

What is contemplative prayer? St. Teresa answers: “Contemplative prayer [oración mental] in my opinion is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.”<sup>6</sup> Contemplative prayer seeks him “whom my soul loves.”<sup>7</sup> It is Jesus, and in him, the Father. We seek him, because to desire him is always the beginning of love, and we seek him in that pure faith which causes us to be born of him and to live in him. In this inner prayer we can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself.

**(Question 6:** Again, there is a lot in this short paragraph. What does it reveal to us about the objectives and value of contemplative prayer?)

- “A close sharing between friends” → enables a sharing of love
  - ➔ A conversation
  - ➔ Our joys
  - ➔ Our worries
  - ➔ Our appreciation
  - ➔ Expression of our love
- Taking time frequently to be alone with Him who loves us → the more frequent, the closer the bond, the stronger the relationship and its blessings
- “Seeks Him,” “It is Jesus, and in Him the Father” → One in being with the Father: (John 14:20-21) “20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”
- “We can still meditate, but our attention is fixed on the Lord himself → The transition from understanding purpose to applying purpose to life

## Quotes:

– St. Margaret Mary Alocoque

Until we have acquired genuine prayer, we are like people teaching children to begin to walk.

– *St. Teresa of Avila*

Before prayer, endeavor to realize whose Presence you are approaching, and to whom you are about to speak. We can never fully understand how we ought to behave towards God, before whom the angels tremble.

– *St. Ignatius of Loyola*

After you have made a decision that is pleasing to God, the Devil may try to make you have second thoughts. Intensify your prayer time, meditation, and good deeds. For if Satan's temptations merely cause you to increase your efforts to grow in holiness, he'll have an incentive to leave you alone.

– *St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*

He who does not meditate acts as one who never looks into the mirror and so does not bother to put himself in order, since he can be dirty without knowing it. The person who meditates and turns his thoughts to God who is the mirror of the soul, seeks to know his defects and tries to correct them, moderates himself in his impulses and puts his conscience in order.

– *St. Josemaria Escriva*

You don't know how to pray? Put yourself in the presence of God, and as soon as you have said, "Lord, I don't know how to pray!" you can be sure you have already begun.

## **Final Thoughts:**

During the course of today's discussion, concerning the expression of prayer, we hopefully gained a deeper appreciation as to the value of prayer, not just to our daily life and our choices, but to the relationship "with Him who we know loves us." (CCC: 2709) We know He is in heaven, but as we seek Him with our hearts, He will reside there with us, fulfilling what Jesus told His disciples, "*I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.*" (John 14:20)

Through the expressions of prayer, we have an opportunity to not only communicate with God, but also to learn and grow as we reflect upon His Holy Word as well as listen and sense within our hearts to where He desires to lead us. As we look to ways we might increase and enhance our prayer life and experience its various expressions and forms, there is much for us to discover. As we allow our prayer life to grow, we will discover many blessings from the time we spend with Him.

Let us, then, listen within our hearts for His "*light, silent sound.*" Let us sense His love for us. Let us seek time to spend with Him, the One who loves us as the children of His creation. Let us greet Him with love and experience His comfort within our heart. Let us listen and sense the direction He desires for us and the purpose for which He created us.

**Wrap Up:** Well, once more our hour has evaporated. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we turn our discussion to the different forms of prayer in which we may engage.

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 III: Forms of Prayer

**Why Catholics Do What We Do References:**

Fish Eaters; (accessed 24 Jul 2019); “Inside Your Church;” <https://www.fisheaters.com/churchbuilding.html>

Holy See; (19 Mar 2003); General Instruction of the Roman Missal; (CHAPTER V The Arrangement and Furnishing of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist; 288-318;) USCCB; [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccdds\\_doc\\_20030317\\_ordinamento-messale\\_en.html#CHAPTER\\_V](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20030317_ordinamento-messale_en.html#CHAPTER_V)

**Discussion References:**

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>