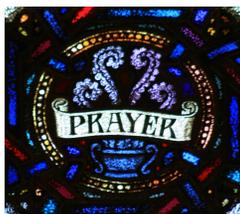




The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Put On the Armor of Prayer
Part II: Forms of Prayer



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]

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 didn't, then, what would our panel do for the next hour? 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 pray today, dear Lord, for the conversion of souls and those who have wandered away from the Catholic faith. We pray You will guide us in how we may help to bring them home.

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 capture it first. 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.

Faith Event Announcements:

We invite you to save 12 Oct 2019 on your calendar and encourage you to look for opportunities to participate in the 2019 Public Square Rosary Rallies being coordinated across the nation by America Needs Fatima and local parish volunteers. Our Lady said to Saint Dominic, “The Rosary will be a very powerful armor against hell; it will destroy vice, deliver from sin and dispel heresy.” The Public Square Rosary Rallies are an opportunity for communities to come together and share the blessings of this prayer as it leads us to reflect on the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior and the sacrifice made for the salvation of our souls. If your parish is not aware of this opportunity, you can find information to share by visiting <https://americaneedsfatima.org/>

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches: Baptismal Font

The last piece of furniture we will discuss in relation to what is required by Church teachings concerning the arrangement and ornamentation of churches is the Baptismal Font. This was once a stationary item on the sanctuary and was normally only used to Baptize babies. Today however, the font is often found in the entrance of the church or in a day chapel. In any case, there must be a font in any Catholic Church for initiating the sacrament of Baptism.

I found this from the USCCB web site. The information comes from the Christian Initiation, General Introduction, no. 25, the Constitution on the Liturgy and the Ceremonial of Bishops.

Of all the liturgical books, the Book of Blessing, number 1085 provides the most comprehensive description of a baptismal font:

"The baptismal font, particularly one in a baptistery, should be stationary, gracefully constructed out of suitable material, of splendid beauty and spotless cleanliness; it should permit baptism by immersion, whenever this is the usage. In order to enhance its force as a sign, the font should be designed in such a way that it functions as a fountain of running water; where the climate requires, provision should be made for heating the water."

The Constitution on the Liturgy itself directs that the baptistery must be practical and dignified and the Ceremonial of Bishops echoes this legislation.

As a child, I recall seeing the font as a large bowl atop a stand worthy of the weight and responsibility it held. Today as new churches are being built, a whole new concept of baptismal fonts is being used. The newer fonts now have the traditional “bowl on a stand” and attached to this is what looks like a small pool of water at one side. This allows for the priest or deacon to

baptize infants by pouring water over their tiny heads over the bowl. The pool is for those being baptized who are not babies.

Vatican II called for greater efforts in religious education for adults and as a result, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) was born. Recalling the beginning of Baptisms as being of total submersion in the River Jordan, many new adult Catholic Candidates have enjoyed the experience of Baptism by immersion. This means that the candidate steps into the small pool of water and the priest pours water over the head of the candidate as he says the words of Baptism. In this situation, the candidate ends up very wet all over. The “pool”, then, acts as the water catcher and keeps the rest of the church dry – well, for the most part. I have not yet participated in immersion Baptisms where the floor did not need a good mopping afterwards.

The font should be designed with re-circulating water so as to symbolize Jesus Christ, the everlasting spring and living water. This is also for the command of cleanliness. Running water will not become stagnant and collect germs as standing water does. We might call this new font, a Baptismal Fountain.

By having the Baptismal Font at the entrance of the church, we are reminded of our own Baptisms and that through Baptism we are made new and become the children of God. It is to symbolize the forgiveness of sin. What an awesome way to enter the Church, by recalling that we are children of God and that we are forgiven.

Now that we have finished the required components of church furnishings, next week we will begin to examine all those “shiny things” we see in the sanctuary and of which the priest and deacon use during the celebration of Mass.

If you would like to learn more about the Baptismal Font 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 109.

Discussion:

During the course of our last 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 God 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.

Prayer provides us an opportunity to listen within our hearts for His “*light, silent sound.*” In the process, we may also sense His love for us. Prayer also provides us with the opportunity to greet our Lord with love and experience His comfort within our heart as we also seek to sense the direction He desires for us and the purpose for which He created us.

Today, we are going to turn our discussion to the forms of prayer outlined within the Catechism of the Catholic Church. One of the first forms of prayer addressed in the Catechism is “Blessing and Adoration.”

Prayer of Blessing and Adoration:

(CCC: 2626) Blessing expresses the basic movement of Christian prayer: it is an encounter between God and man. In blessing, God’s gift and man’s acceptance of it are united in dialogue with each other. The prayer of blessing is man’s response to God’s gifts: because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing.

Earlier in the Catechism, we are told:

(CCC: 1082) In the Church’s liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source and the end of all the blessings of creation and salvation. In his Word who became incarnate, died, and rose for us, he fills us with his blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit.

As I reflected upon these two paragraphs, I thought to myself a moment, “Ya know, we talk about blessings all the time, but do I really know what a blessing is? Fortunately, the Catechism of the Catholic Church has a glossary, so I decided to look and see what it might reveal. It reads:

BLESSING: A blessing or benediction is a prayer invoking God’s power and care upon some person, place, thing, or undertaking. The prayer of benediction acknowledges God as the source of all blessing. Some blessings confer a permanent status: consecration of persons to God, or setting things apart for liturgical usage. (CCC, pg 868)

This definition refers us to paragraphs 2626, which I just read a moment ago, and 1671, which reads:

(CCC: 1671) Among sacramentals blessings (of persons, meals, objects, 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.” This is why the Church imparts blessings by invoking the name of Jesus, usually while making the holy sign of the cross of Christ.

(Question 1: So, let’s follow the threads here. What do these explanations reveal to us about a prayer of blessing and our communication with God?)

- Prayer invoking God’s power and care
- Prayer which acknowledges God as the source of all blessing
- Prayer which is man’s response to God’s gifts
- Prayer which praises God and prays for his gifts

(Luke 6:27-28)

27 “But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 *ble**ss those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.***

(1 Peter 3:9)

*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.***

(Question 2: So, as we read the definition of “blessing” in the glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we see it defined as “a prayer invoking God’s power and care.” **How does this influence our understanding of these passages of scripture?**)

Aligned with the prayer of blessing is “adoration.”

ADORATION: The **acknowledgment of God as God**, Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists. **Through worship and prayer, the Church and individual persons give to God the adoration which is the first act of the virtue of religion.** The first commandment of the law obliges us to adore God. (CCC, pg 65)

(CCC: 1083) The dual dimension of the **Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love** to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and “in the Holy Spirit,” **blesses the Father “for his inexpressible gift”** in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God’s plan, **the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts** and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ the Priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life “to the praise of his glorious grace.”

(CCC: 2096) **Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. To adore God is to acknowledge him as God**, as the Creator and Savior, the Lord and Master of everything that exists, as infinite and merciful Love. “**You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve,**” says Jesus, citing Deuteronomy.

(CCC: 2628) **Adoration is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator.** It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is **homage of the spirit to the “King of Glory,”** respectful silence in the presence of the **“ever greater” God.** Adoration

of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications. (Supplications are our prayers to God)

(Question 3: So, let's follow the threads again. What do these explanations reveal to us about a prayer in adoration and our communication with God?)

- Acknowledgment of God as God
- Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion
- Acknowledgment that we are a creature before our Creator
- Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love blesses the Father “for his inexpressible gift” in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving
- *The Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts* and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering
- Blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications

Prayer of Petition:

(CCC: 2629) The vocabulary of supplication in the New Testament is rich in shades of meaning: ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out, even “struggle in prayer.” Its most usual form, because the most spontaneous, is petition: by prayer of petition we express awareness of our relationship with God. We are creatures who are not our own beginning, not the masters of adversity, not our own last end. We are sinners who as Christians know that we have turned away from our Father. Our petition is already a turning back to him.

(CCC: 2632) Christian petition is centered on the desire and search for the Kingdom to come, in keeping with the teaching of Christ. There is a hierarchy in these petitions: we pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming. This collaboration with the mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which is now that of the Church, is the object of the prayer of the apostolic community. ...By prayer every baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom.

(Question 4: We often think of petition in the form of asking for our needs, which is often confused with our desires. In this paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we see that our petitions should be focused upon the coming kingdom. How might we compose our petitions such that they align with the coming of the Kingdom where love is shared by all?)

- “Pray first for the Kingdom”
- Then for “what is necessary to welcome it”
- “And cooperate with its coming” → Our behavior and stewardship (As we work to bring the qualities of heaven to earth, we make our transition from this life to the next easier)

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

Prayer of Intercession:

(CCC: 2635) Since Abraham, intercession—**asking on behalf of another**—has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God’s mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ’s, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, **he who prays looks “not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others,”** even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.

(Question 5: Catholics are often criticized over intercessory prayer when we ask Mary, the angels, and saints to pray for us. We are told it is useless to Mary or a saint when only God can answer our prayer. **What is the benefit of us praying for another and asking others to pray for us?)**

- Acknowledges God's power, not ours (of course He still asks us to do our part)
 - God hears our most quiet cry, but as we join hearts in prayer, we raise up the crescendo of our love, adoration, praise, thanks, resolve in faith, and our plea to Him for His compassion and mercy
 - Our care for others reveals what is in our hearts → reflects the two greatest commandments (cf Matthew 22:36-40)
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Prayer of Thanksgiving:

(CCC: 2638) As in the prayer of petition, **every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving.** The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: **“Give thanks in all circumstances;** for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”; “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”

(Question 6: Chances are, if we counted our prayers, our most common prayers are one of petition. **How might we go about changing that ratio?)**

- Reflect on the petitions we have lifted up
 - Reflect on the changes observed in relation to those petitions
 - Reflect on the meaning of God's answer and what we should learn
 - As this reflection flows through us, let us give thanks for His answer and blessings
 - A simple prayer: Dear Lord, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for all the blessings You bring and the many wonderful ways You work within our lives
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Prayer of Praise:

(CCC: 2639) Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because he is. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God, testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we glorify the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the “one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist.”

(Question 7: We often hear that phrase, “Let us lift up our hearts in thanks and praise to the Lord.” In what ways may we give praise?)

- Praise by acknowledging God as God
- Praise for His love of the children of His creation
- Praise for the wisdom of His Holy Word
- Praise for the sacrifice made by His only begotten for our salvation
- Praise for His grace and mercy
- Praise for His creation and all He provides
- Praise as we participate in the Holy Mass
- Praise through hymn and prayer
- Praise as we participate in ministry
- Praise as we teach our children
- Praise through our love for Him
- Praise through our choices and behavior → Our actions, aligned with what He asks of us, give meaning to our words (cf 1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

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.

Quotes:

– *Saint Basil*

We should not accept in silence the benefactions of God, but return thanks for them.

– *St. Benedict of Nursia*

He who labors as he prays lifts his heart to God with his hands.

– *St. Louis de Montfort*

Pray with great confidence, with confidence based upon the goodness and infinite generosity of

God and upon the promises of Jesus Christ. God is a spring of living water which flows unceasingly into the hearts of those who pray.

– *St. Jean Marie Baptiste Vianney*

'My little children, your hearts, are small, but prayer stretches them and makes them capable of loving God. Through prayer we receive a foretaste of heaven and something of paradise comes down upon us. Prayer never leaves us without sweetness. It is honey that flows into the soul and makes all things sweet.

Final Thoughts:

As we reflect on the forms of prayer, it is an opportunity to ask ourselves, do we engage in the fullness of its meaning and its blessings? Its meaning is derived from what is in our hearts and how we allow prayer to guide our choices and our actions. Its blessings are derived from what is in our hearts and how we may fulfill His commandments of love.

As we discussed, perhaps the most common form of prayer in which we engage is our prayers of petition. We ask for His help, but what do we tell Him if we only ask, but do not listen? What do we tell Him if we ask, but do not seek to participate in His answer? What do we tell Him if we only ask, but do not give thanks and praise for His answer?

As we consider the forms of prayer available to us, let us also consider their balance within our prayer life. When we are asked, “For what do we pray,” let us also consider prayers such as, “That the Lord our God will accept our thanks and praise for His great mercy, compassion, and grace.” In this short prayer, we acknowledge our God as God as we lift up our thanks and praise for His great glory.

As we reflect upon our prayer, we will notice that a short prayer may include more than one form of prayer. We do not pray for the purpose of achieving a formula, but as we reflect upon the balance of our prayers, let us remember prayers of blessing and adoration, thanks, praise, and our intercessions for others so that we do not appear before Him as the child who only says gimme, but does not listen or give.

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 the Rosary and its meaning to our prayer life.

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 IV: The Rosary

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

USCCB; (2019); “New Baptismal Font;” USCCB; <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacred-art-and-music/architecture-and-environment/new-baptismal-font.cfm>

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>