



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Put On the Armor of Prayer
Part VII: Prayer in Fellowship



*Lord, you have been our refuge through all generations
(Psalm 90:1)
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 and mispronounce whatever I can. 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 and capture it for our prayer basket. 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.

If you haven't discovered, yet, you can also listen to Armor of Faith Radio on demand and on the go using your smartphone. In addition to wcatradio.com/armoroffaith, we are available through a number of streaming services, such as iHeart Radio, Spreaker, iTunes, and CastBox, among others. Simply search for “Armor of Faith Radio” and select the episode you desire. We will be happy to keep you company wherever you are and wherever you are waiting.

We would also like to ask for your assistance to help share our discussions. If you find an episode or series which caused you to take a moment and think and you would like to share with family or friends, you only need to copy the URL of the show to which you are listening and drop it into an email or share it through social media. Several of the streaming services through which we are available on demand also have share options, so please help us to spread the good news of our faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith Event Announcements:

We would like to remind you that 40 Days for Life has kicked off a new prayer rally campaign, yesterday, that will be conducted through 3 Nov 2019. If you would like more information about 40 Days for Life prayer vigils in your area, visit <https://www.40daysforlife.com/>. Look for the “Find a 40 Days for Life Vigil” button, and at the search page, enter your city or state. You can also sign up for prayer vigils near your location.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Things We Use for Mass – Sacred Vessels IV

Today let us continue our quest to understand sacred vessels that are used during the Mass. Again, these are not the shiny ones, rather, today's subjects are of the linen, glass, wax, wood, and metal nature. Let us look at the credence table, the cruets, the lavabo, the finger bowl and the manuterge, the candles and the candle lighter.

The Credence Table

According to New Advent, a Catholic encyclopedia, the credence table is the place to set the various vessels and utensils that are needed for the Eucharistic celebration. It is a small table set off to a side so as to not get in the way of movement of the priest or others who are assisting during the Liturgy. This is the place that the paten and chalice and veil are placed before Mass. The communion cups, acolyte candles, the corporal, the cruets, the finger bowl, the towel and the purificators all are set upon this table in preparation for the Liturgy. The word credence means truth or a mental belief. This would be appropriate as the items placed on it are there to aid in the Eucharistic celebration of which we believe is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The table can be made of metal or wood and covered with a linen cloth. It is not to be made of elaborate decoration and not an item that is to be focused on.

The Cruets

Cruet containers are small glass pitchers that hold the water and wine that are used during the Eucharistic celebration. During the preparation of the Eucharist, the cruets are presented to the priest or deacon so they may pour wine and water into the communion cups and chalice.

The Lavabo, the Finger Bowl and Manuterge

This trio of items are expressly for washing. During the Mass, the priest washes his hands before calling down the transubstantiation upon the gifts. The lavabo is the container that holds the water that is poured over the hands of the priest. The finger bowl is used to catch the water as it flows off of the hands. The manuterge is the towel that the priest dries his hands with. The manuterge is also used during Baptisms. The priest uses the manuterge to dry his hands after pouring the waters of Baptism over the person receiving the sacrament.

Candles

Candles are very important to the Liturgy in Catholic settings. When God was creating, he started with light.

(Genesis 1:3)

Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light.

Scripture tells us that Jesus is the light of the world and that we are not to hide our light.

(John 1:4-5)

[T]hrough him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; 5 the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

(John 8:12)

Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

So because we are instructed to follow the light, we bring this into the Mass. Candles are used on the Altar for the Mass. Candles are used to process into the church at the beginning and to process out at the end of Mass. Candles are used simply for decoration. We have already discussed some candles, but still worth the reminding, there are votive candles, the Pascal candle, Easter candles, sacramental candles, the tabernacle candle. Next time you go to church, check out how many candles there are.

The Candle Lighter

The candle lighter is another shiny object found on the sanctuary. This is a long armed contraption that has two uses. One side has the wick for lighting candles. Since Altar candles are often taller than the servers, it is important to have a lighter that will reach the candle wick.

The other use is the snuffer which looks like a bell that is placed on the candle to smother the light and extinguish it.

Next week we will continue with what is the Roman Missal.

If you would like to learn more about the Sacred Vessels used during the Mass, 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 113.

Discussion:

As you may remember from last time, I had to confess, I was the obstacle to prayer in my home, not that I didn't pray, but I didn't know how to pray with my family. I was the example of the spouse whose faith was not at the same level as the other. Fortunately, my wife conducted prayer time with our children and especially incorporated prayer during the years they home schooled. The bottom line, is that I missed out on an opportunity to share in the depths of faith with my family. I would encourage our listeners not to make the same mistake.

In my early years as a Catholic, I partially resisted or neglected the opportunities for prayer because I did not know the common prayers. Of course, that is why we have books of prayer, so you do not have to have them all memorized, so, my concern was really an excuse of vanity. Even during the days I started growing in my personal prayer life, I was still uncertain as to joining in prayer with others. I just didn't have the confidence. Of course, again, that is why we have prayer books or aids, so again, mine was an excuse of vanity.

It was not until the final months of my daughter that I began to understand what could have been ours if I knew in the early years of my children what I know now. Still, I was fortunate to have a spouse who taught and encouraged our children in prayer.

Before our daughter received her last surgery, I asked her to accompany me to a side chapel so we could pray. She was carrying her infant daughter. We knelt together, both lifting our hearts in prayer. Her daughter was too little to know or understand, but still, she was there with us as we prayed. I hope one day that her daughter will be able to sit or kneel with me to pray. I know her mother will be there in that moment, as well as our Lord and Savior.

As I mentioned last time, the hardest part of the memories of our daughter's last days was the pain she was in from the medication they were using to contain the inflammation of her brain tumor. The affect of the drug kept her in great pain and caused a foggy brain condition which made it difficult for her to communicate'.

My daughter wanted to go to daily Mass. It was a blessing, because during the Mass, despite the side effects of the drugs she was prescribed, my daughter was at peace. Though she struggled to communicate with us outside the Mass, during the Mass she clearly said the prayers and sang the hymns with her beautiful voice; all blessings of her mother's teaching. As my daughter was

at peace, so was I. I thank God for those moments with my daughter. The sad thing is, if I had only understood earlier, I could have had so many more such moments.

As people reflect on their lives during their last days, what is on their mind is the time they could have had with family and loved ones. Parents never lament, “If I could only have had more time at work.” What they lament is, “If I had spent more time with my family.”

If I have any advice to parents from my experience, it is this. Spend some time with your family in prayer. It may seem awkward at first, but encourage your children with blessings. Help them to understand that when you pray a blessing upon them, you are asking for God's power and care for them. Maybe you start with only a couple of minutes at an opportune time of day, but as your children grow, so will the value of this time together.

Remember, as you gather together, Christ will be in your midst. It is a time to lift up your love to Him, but it is also a time where He will walk with your family and nourish your souls. Allow Him to bring peace into your midst. Allow Him to help build the bond of love, not only within your family, but also for the blessing of all who cross your path.

Today, we are going to look beyond the family and discuss our opportunities to pray in fellowship. As you may remember from last time, we began our discussion with Matthew 18:20.

(Matthew 18:20)

“20 For *where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*”

But wait, isn't there scripture which advises us to pray in secret?

(Matthew 6:6)

*But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and **pray to your Father in secret.** And your Father who sees in secret will repay you.*

(Question 1: We might be tempted to think there is a mixed message here. **Are we being told we can only pray alone and in secret where no one else may even know that we pray?)**

(Matthew 6:5)

[Jesus said], “*When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners **so that others may see them.** Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.*”

(Question 2: As we gather together for various events, we have the opportunity for communal prayer together. **What are some of the typical times we gather in communal prayer and what is the typical nature of this prayer?)**

Common Opportunities for Communal Prayer

- Prayer before meals or pot blessing events
- Prayer before and after religious formation or Bible study
- Prayer before and after ministry events
- Prayer before and after faith events
- Prayer opening, during, and closing retreats
- Prayer to open and close any gathering or meeting
- Prayer before or after Mass to say the Rosary
- Prayers during Mass or Word and Communion services
- Prayers, such as the Rosary, during Adoration
- Prayer on the sidewalk
- Prayer chains
- Prayer wherever two or more are gathered

Typical Nature of Communal Prayer

- Often incorporates common prayers, but spontaneous prayers may also be lifted
- The question may be offered, “For what shall we pray?”
- Duration may vary from a short prayer offered together to more lengthy scriptural Rosaries, chaplets, or litanies
- Communal prayer can also include personal prayer, such as at Adoration

As we can see from our discussion or simply the observation of practice surrounding us, there are a number of opportunities for communal prayer and prayer in fellowship. The duration and nature of prayer may vary as a result of circumstance. The structure may be formal or informal. The common thread of communal prayer is that we are lifting our prayers as a community. The blessing of prayer in fellowship is that we are also using the opportunity of a common conversation with God to share in fellowship with one another.

(CCC: 2655) In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation, which is continued in the heart that prays. The spiritual writers sometimes compare the heart to an altar. Prayer internalizes and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration. Even when it is lived out “in secret,” prayer is always prayer of the Church; it is a communion with the Holy Trinity.

(Question 3: The Catechism of the Catholic Church discusses personal and communal prayer, and while it mentions our fellowship with Christ and as His Church, it is somewhat subtle as it discusses prayer in fellowship. Is there a difference between communal prayer and prayer in fellowship?)

- Communal prayer is lifting up our prayer in communion with the Church, which can also be done as part of personal prayer (CCC: 2655)

- Prayer in fellowship is communal prayer, but also engages prayer as an opportunity for joining in fellowship
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(Question 4: When we come together in fellowship, two or more can gather in His name and He will be in our midst. What are some of the blessings of prayer in fellowship?)

- A communal conversation with Christ
 - An opportunity to encourage and support one another
 - An opportunity to live the greatest commandments (Matthew 22:36-40)
 - An opportunity to learn from one another as we share in fellowship
 - An opportunity to share in faith between individuals and families
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(Question 5: As we discussed, there are many opportunities for prayer in fellowship which range from spontaneous to planned, scheduled, and organized. How might we go about engaging organized opportunities for prayer in fellowship?)

- Participate in a parish prayer group
- Form a fellowship prayer group at school or work
- Form a Prayer Home Ministry
- Gather friends and families together for prayer and study

(CCC: 2596)

The Psalms constitute the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament. They present two inseparable qualities: the personal, and the communal. They extend to all dimensions of history, recalling God's promises already fulfilled and looking for the coming of the Messiah.

(Question 6: As we discussed, when a group decides to come together for the purposes of prayer in fellowship, we really do not have rubrics as we do for the Liturgy. What structure might we use for prayer in fellowship?)

- Begin with prayers which acknowledge God as God
- Allow the Holy Spirit to guide the form and flow (blend of common prayers and spontaneous prayers)
- Consider the incorporation of common prayers to inspire and lend structure
- Consider the opportunity for everyone to add their intentions (publicly and personally)
- Consider using the Rosary and/or Divine Mercy Chaplet as a foundation
- Consider incorporating scripture (i.e., daily readings) inspirational reflections, or lives of the saints as a means to listen for and discuss what God teaches
- Consider incorporating the Liturgy of the Hours or Christian Prayer

- Consider incorporating readings from a devotional or devotional periodicals (and if one is not handy, there are several free apps for that)
- Consider incorporating group reflections on the scripture or other readings used
- Remember prayers of praise, thanks, and which lift up the glory of God

Quotes:

(CCC: 2664)

There is **no other way of Christian prayer than Christ**. Whether our prayer is communal or personal, vocal or interior, it has access to the Father **only if we pray “in the name” of Jesus**. The sacred humanity of Jesus is therefore the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father.

– *Saint Josemaria Escriva*

The holy Rosary is a powerful weapon. Use it with confidence and you will be amazed at the results.

– *St. John Vianney*

Prayer is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself."

– *Saint Teresa of Avila*

A beginner must look on himself as one setting out to make a garden for his Lord's pleasure, on most unfruitful soil which abounds in weeds. His majesty roots up the weeds and will put in good plants instead. Let us reckon that this is already done when the soul decides to practice prayer and has begun to do so.

Final Thoughts:

During the course of our discussion so far, we mentioned personal prayer, prayer with family, communal prayer, and prayer conducted in fellowship. As I look back, I realize that because of my vain resistance, I was my own obstacle to receiving the blessings of prayer. When I engaged in prayer in fellowship, it was incidental to social events, ministry, or religious formation, but it was not an intentional portion of my prayer life. Just as I had missed out with the opportunities I had to pray with my family, I also failed to avail myself of opportunities to experience prayer in fellowship.

Yes, at first, it can seem awkward as we take our first steps in prayer, but so was learning to walk, riding a bike, or to drive – and we did not learn how to do those things in one moment or over night – it took both determination and practice.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to allowing our prayer life to grow is self-consciousness. We might be concerned that we won't say or do something right or that somehow we are under the scrutiny of others present. Maybe we might be concerned about what the “Politically Correct” culture will think of us.

In other cases, with busy schedules of career or school, raising children, extracurricular activities, watching TV, watching sports, spending time on social media, playing video games – I mean, with so many things to do, where are we to find the time to fit in something like prayer in fellowship or Adoration?

In other cases, we might be tempted to think that the employment of prayer such as the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, or litanies are simply “vain repetition.” What is the good of reciting prayers, we might ask? If all we are doing is reciting, then, yes, it is like mumbling to ourselves. If, however, we learn how to meditate on the mysteries or scripture, we allow common prayers to seed our thoughts so that they may open both our hearts and minds to God; occasions for prayer will begin to take on a whole new meaning and priority for us, but we do not get there if we do not avail ourselves of the many opportunities.

Many of our listeners already have a robust prayer life and I know that we are preaching to the choir when we speak of the importance of prayer. You, then, are the fertile ground through which others may learn; not like a teacher to a student, but a friend sharing blessings. [Remember, a blessing is an invocation of “God's power and care.” (CCC, pg 868)] The question is, will we afford others the opportunity to put on the armor of prayer? The opportunity for a prayer group, prayer in fellowship, often awaits someone to suggest it.

Our Lady continually invites us to personal and communal prayer. Will we help her to provide the faith environment in which souls are nourished? If your parish does not have a prayer group, you have the opportunity to suggest one. Of course, the power to suggest and organize does not remain with those experienced in prayer. If you are a beginner, so to speak, or in the infancy of your prayer life, or simply looking for support, you too, can suggest and help to organize a prayer group or prayer home ministry.

If you would like ideas concerning the beginning of a prayer group or prayer home ministry, send us an email at armoroffaithradio@gmail.com. We would also like to hear from you as to your experiences with prayer groups and prayer in fellowship.

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 a prayer opportunity to which too few turn, and that is prayer in Adoration.

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 VIII: Prayer in Adoration

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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