



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Faith, Family, and Social Issues *Part III: Assisting Acceptance 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 questions open the path to answers, whatever that means. 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.

Also joining us today is, Hudson Byblow, who we brought back to discuss more of his story about “Coming out Catholic.”

Hudson is a well-known speaker and author who discusses his experiences while growing-up along with some of the most difficult topics which face today's Catholic youth as they navigate their personal development and faith formation. Hudson has spoken at conferences world wide and serves organizations such as Catholic Answers, Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO), Life Teen, school boards, college missionary groups, Catholic University centers and dioceses across North America.

Hudson, we are very happy to have you back on our panel again.

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.

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.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Things We Use for Mass – More on Clerical Attire

We have covered the history and purpose of Liturgical Vestments. Now let us examine the various pieces of clothing that a priest puts on in preparation for a sacred event.

According to the Sacristan's Manual For the Extra Ordinary Form “In Sacristy and Sanctuary,” a document written in 1932, the items to be worn by a priest for Mass are: the amice, the alb, the cincture, the stole, the maniple and the chasuble. In addition, there are two more pieces of clothing that are not seen or used as often as the others, the cope and the humeral veil.

Since Vatican II, the requirements have changed. The amice is no longer required nor is the maniple. But since we brought them up, let us find out what they are and why they went away. The amice is a white cloth worn under the alb by the priest celebrating the Eucharist. The maniple is a narrow band of silk fabric that is worn over the left forearm. These two items were considered to be extra frills. They held no real purpose and added to the weight of the vestments. Another reason they are no longer in use is that priests who reside in areas that are hot weather wise, become extremely hot while in full vestment attire. These two articles do not weigh much, but in the over all scheme of things, it was felt that a little comfort for the priest was desirable.

The Alb

The alb is a gown and the first piece of clothing that the priest puts on over his street clothes, but under all of the other vestments. The alb is long and white. The term alb simply means,

white garment. The reason for it being white is because white signifies purity. The priest who is going to celebrate the Eucharist must be pure in body and soul for this sacred event. As the priest dresses himself for Mass, he has prayers he says asking God to keep him pure and clean that he may act as the hands and voice of God during the Liturgy.

The Cincture

The cincture is the name of the corded belt that is the next piece of the vestments. The cincture is wrapped around the body, over the alb, and is tied in a knot to keep the alb held closely to the body. It is made of braided fabric and is normally white in color.

The Stole

The stole is next. It is a vestment that is worn on the shoulders and hangs down the front of the alb. This particular vestment piece is worn during the Mass but is also used during other sacred functions. The stole was once a cloak, but over the years has been made smaller until today it is a long narrow vestment. The Church adopted the stole as a means of showing the authority given to its ministers.

The Chasuble

The last article of this ensemble is the chasuble. Chasuble is taken from the Latin word *casula*. This means little house and was given this name as the chasuble is a shelter for the priest. You may not recall ever seeing any of the other pieces of these vestments, because they are all underneath the chasuble. But this piece is one you will recall. It is the largest piece of the ensemble. It is draped over the shoulders and hangs down in front and back. Usually there is some ornamentation on one or both sides. The color of the chasuble changes with the Liturgical season of the Church.

The Cope

The word cope is from the Latin word *cappa* which means cape. This garment was once a cloak or a poncho with a hood and was used for outside activity. It was a protection from rain. Today there does not seem to be a need for this item, however, some priests still prefer to use this as an outdoor protector during processional ceremonies.

The Humeral Veil

The humeral veil is a long, wide vestment. It is draped over the shoulders of the priest and it hangs down in front. The two sides are held together with a clip so that it won't fall off his shoulders as he moves. This vestment piece is used during times when the Holy Eucharist is being exposed, such as benediction, and when the Holy Eucharist is being used to bless the people or during a processional.

Next time we will continue this exploration of vestments by looking into what the deacon and the bishop wear.

If you would like to learn more about clerical attire and liturgical vestments 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 118.

Discussion:

Before we begin our discussion today, I should point out that we may talk about issues that are not suitable for young ears. If you are listening with young children around, we recommend you find a time where you can listen without little ears listening so that you can process our discussion and consider its meaning in relation to what you want to teach your children and when you believe the topic is appropriate for them. You can always listen on demand. Just remember to look for episode 118.

Last time, I mentioned that whether we recognize it or not, we are in a constant state of the formation of self. Who we are is influenced by a vast number of variables, many over which we have no control, but we must also recognize the role of our personal choices as well. The ultimate question, though, is will we discover who God made us to be and the purpose for which He created us, or will we fall victim to the values of the world and what we perceive to be our personal desires?

As adults, we must maintain awareness of the influences upon us as well as what God asks of us. Children, however, begin their perceptions of the world as blank slates. They are like sponges with many lessons to learn as they navigate the environment which surrounds them. During our formative years, there is a considerable amount we do not comprehend because the foundations of what defines us are in the process of maturation.

The perception of our personal identity is partially influenced by our physical being, but it is also influenced by the perceptions and values of those who surround us, the feedback we receive to our interactions, our formal education through various institutions, and our informal education through family, friends, as well as strangers. And there, with His “*light, silent sound,*” is God, asking us to accept His design and the purpose for which He created us. Just as Our Blessed Mother gave her “yes,” God desires us to give our “yes” as well.

To give our choice meaning, our Creator gave us freewill. The challenge before each of us, then, is will we discover the real identity which God desires for us or will we fall victim to the many ways the evil one endeavors to confuse, distract, and separate us from what God asks of us as well as the purpose to which He dedicated us; a dedication He made even before He allowed our formation in the womb? (cf. Jeremiah 1:5)

Today, we will discuss this question as well as assess the justification that some present, which is, “God made me this way.”

(Question 1: So, let's begin with the assertion which some make, that the desires with which they identify is a result of the fact God made them that way. It is certainly true, God wrote the

code which is our DNA, but He also gave us freewill to accept or reject His design. What is the difference between the way God made us and the path we choose on our own? Is there a consequence when we reject His design?)

(CCC: 2358) The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

According to our friends Merriam-Webster, disordered is defined as: "not functioning in a normal orderly healthy way." (Online Dictionary)

(CCC: 37) In the historical conditions in which he finds himself, however, man experiences many difficulties in coming to know God by the light of reason alone:

Though human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God, who watches over and controls the world by his providence, and of the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator; yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. For the truths that concern the relations between God and man wholly transcend the visible order of things, and, if they are translated into human action and influence it, they call for self-surrender and abnegation [self-denial for a greater good]. The human mind, in its turn, is hampered in the attaining of such truths, not only by the impact of the senses and the imagination, but also by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin. So it happens that men in such matters easily persuade themselves that what they would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful.

- We may observe the natural order, but do we comprehend it?
- There is the purpose for which God made us, but do we comprehend it?
- Do we recognize the disorder which influences us?
- Do we recognize where disordered influences confuse our perceptions?
- Do we recognize where our confusions influence our desires and values?
- Do we recognize where our desires and values influence our choices?
- Do we recognize how our choices influence our actions?
- Do we recognize the consequences of our perceptions, desires, values, choices, and actions?
- Do we recognize the ways by which we reject God's design?
- When we reject the design of God, what are we saying and what are we doing?

(CCC: 339) Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection. For each one of the works of the "six days" it is said: "And God saw that it was good." "By the very nature of creation, material being is endowed with its own stability, truth, and

excellence, **its own order and laws.**” Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, **reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness.** Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to **avoid any disordered use of things which would be in contempt of the Creator** and would bring disastrous consequences for human beings and their environment.

(Question 2: Hudson, during your talk, you mentioned that you have a loving family and you also commented on the importance of a father's blessing. Can you tell us how this enabled you as you navigated the formation of and your personal perceptions of your identity?)

(Question 3: During your talk, you mentioned the importance of a faith community which has loving arms rather than judgmental mouths (my paraphrasing, not yours). You also mentioned that you initially thought that the Church was rejecting you, but you later came to understand that the Church was simply teaching truth which you were rejecting. Can you explain the role of your faith community towards understanding what God asks of us and the purpose to which He calls us as well as how you came to realize that God was not rejecting you?)

(Question 4: You commented that we must shift from a behavior focus to a virtue focus. Can you expound on the difference between these two focuses and why our understanding and pursuit of virtue enables us, not only in our relationship with God, but also with one another?)

(CCC: 2359) **Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom,** at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

(Question 5: You mentioned that we exist in a culture hostile to our beliefs in what God asks of us. Can you comment on means by which we may engage and influence that culture in a positive manner?)

- Engage with humility, civility, dignity, and respect
- Engage with love and encouragement, not judgment
- Study in faith to prepare our ability to give reason for our hope (cf. 1 Peter 3:15)
- The more we know our faith, the easier we see through individual, organizational, and political efforts to manipulate us
- Recognize our faith is not a single revelation, but a journey of learning, knowledge, understanding, comprehension, and acceptance

(Matthew 7:1-5)

*1 “Stop judging, that you may not be judged. 2 For **as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you.** 3 Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? 4 **How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove that splinter from your eye,’ while the wooden beam is in your eye?** 5 You hypocrite, **remove the wooden beam***

from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.

(1 Peter 3:8-9)

8 Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. 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.

(1 Peter 3:15-17)

[S]anctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, 16 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. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.

(Question 6: The reality is, we all have some weakness, some cross to bear. When we recognize that we have fallen in some way, how do we begin the journey back and how can we help others as they navigate this same journey?)

Beginning the journey home

- Prayer → reflect on and contemplate God's design and natural law
- Self-examination → what is under my stewardship and responsibility?
- Sacrament of Reconciliation

Assisting others

- Invite and engage with *agape* (Love is an overloaded word in the English language, which is why we too often confuse lust with love)
- Empathy, not enablement
- Listen
- Power of open ended questions
- Listen (did we mention this?)
- Be ready to give reason for your hope (cf. 1 Peter 3:15) – know our faith
- We often do not have the answers needed in the moment, but we might be a bridge to another who can help
- The objective is not to win an argument, but the opportunity to continue a conversation leading to truth

Quotes:

(1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

12 Therefore, whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall. 13 No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it.

– *Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.

– *Saint Augustine*

The flesh does not by its own virtue purify, but is purified by virtue of the Word by which it was assumed, when 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (Jn. 1:14).

– *Saint Augustine*

The good man, though a slave, is free; the wicked, though he reigns, is a slave, and not the slave of a single man, but- what is worse - the slave of as many masters as he has vices.

– *Saint Dominic*

A man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either command them or be enslaved to them. It is better to be a hammer than an anvil.

Final Thoughts:

You have heard me say before, it is not a matter of whether Liberals or Conservatives are right or wrong, it is a matter of whether we understand what God asks of us. There is a battle which has raged over the generations, and indeed is in progress this very moment, which is for the hearts and souls of our children and the generations to come.

Growing up is difficult enough as we attempt to navigate the means by which we learn and endeavor to connect the building blocks of knowledge, emotion, desire, and behavior; but when we allow the innocence of our children to be taken at younger and younger ages, then, we must expect this battle will become ever more difficult and challenging.

Our Lady told Sister Lucia of Fatima, that the final battlefield between the Lord and Satan will be the family. In a letter to Cardinal Carlo Caffarra of Bologna, Sister Lucia wrote that Our Lady told her, “[T]he final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan will be about marriage and the family. Don’t be afraid, because anyone who operates for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be contended and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue.” At the conclusion of her letter, Sister Lucia wrote, “however, Our Lady has already crushed its head.”

While it may console us that we already know the outcome of the battle; “Our Lady has already crushed its head,” we must still have a concern. The concern is that we do not become a casualty before the victory. If we know our faith, we enable our ability to engage the battle and defend our souls. If we do not know our faith, we leave ourselves vulnerable to the one who would take it from us. When we lose our faith or we allow it to become disordered, our relationships suffer; not only our relationships with one another, but more importantly, our relationship with God.

We have neither the power or strength to fight this battle on our own, but, if we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, if we ask for God's power and care, God will not abandon us and we will be there on the day Our Blessed Mother, with the power of God, crushes its head.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we turn our discussion to bringing truth to our youth.

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: Faith, Faith, and Social Issues - Part IV: Bringing Truth to Our Youth

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