



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Put On the Armor of Prayer**  
***Part IX: Engaging The Battle 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 always mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our token cradle Catholic on the team, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because, well, I drew the short straw. 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 along with their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

We pray especially for our good shepherds, for they are so few and we are in such desperate need of them. We pray, dear Lord, that You will increase their number, that You will protect them, and that You will grant them the wisdom, courage, strength, and good health by which to bring Your Holy Truth to the people so that Your flock may hear Your voice through them, so that Your flock may come to You, so You may bring Your flock to Your Heavenly Father.

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 know to 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](http://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 also have a special plea. Armor of Faith Radio is produced by Halo Haven Ministries, which is a ministry with a lot of heart, but few resources. While we could ask for your financial support through which we could develop an advertising budget that will help us spread the good news of the Gospel, we thought for a moment and decided to ask for your help in a more direct way. Instead of asking you to send us \$25.00 or \$50.00 to help finance an advertising campaign, we thought we would ask you to participate in that campaign directly by asking you to share Armor of Faith Radio with family members and friends.

If you find an episode, 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. You may never know, that simple action of evangelization, through sharing a link, may open the heart of another. It is an opportunity to share the blessings of faith, and as we mentioned during this series, a blessing is an invocation of God's power and care.

### **Faith Event Announcements:**

We would like to remind everyone that the 40 Days for Life prayer rally campaign is in progress and will continue 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 Art***

We have discussed many of the items we see weekly in church. In no way have we covered all of the needs and requirements that our church contains. Hopefully, you will find something you are interested in and will decide to learn about it on your own. Please feel free to share your findings with me and I will be happy to include your research and thoughts on future shows.

Today we are going to begin to look at Sacred Art. I cannot give you better definitions or explanations than those who are experts on this, so for the most part I will be give you quotes from very reliable sources. Since this is such an important subject to the Church, we will do this in two sessions.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2502 states:

(CCC: 2502)

Sacred art is true and beautiful when its form corresponds to its particular vocation: evoking and glorifying, in faith and adoration, the transcendent mystery of God—the surpassing invisible beauty of truth and love visible in Christ, who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature," in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." This spiritual beauty of God is reflected in the most holy Virgin Mother of God, the angels, and saints. Genuine sacred art draws man to adoration, to prayer, and to the love of God, Creator and Savior, the Holy One and Sanctifier.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops explains:

### **Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship**

In every church building, art and architecture become the joint work of the Holy Spirit and the local community, in preparing a place to receive God's Word and to enter more fully into communion with him. In these guidelines, approved in 2000, the bishops of the United States offer instruction on how to design places of worship that are dignified, beautiful, and "suited to sacred celebrations."

Ok, so now we know how the church feels about art. Right? Sacred art is special. It is story telling, it is thought provoking, it is history, it is us in the here and now. Our Church has a long history that we today can enjoy and appreciate. We decorate the churches with statues, pictures, linen and stained glass. We also decorate and teach with the designs we use for the altar table, the candle holders, the processional crucifix, the baptismal fount, the colors and even the pews.

As children, we do not worry ourselves with the reasons for the things we see. Well, as adults, we most often do not worry about these things either. However, we do see all that which surrounds us and can be often times brought to a space of meditating on these items. As a child, I remember looking at stained glass windows and wondering what the woman reading a book to a child was all about. Later I learned that was Saint Anne teaching Our Blessed Mother. I saw in the windows, an angel waving a sword and later learned that was Saint Michael. I also saw three people, a man, a woman and a child and learned that was the Holy Family. There were also scenes of other people I did not know but later learned that they were saints, apostles, popes.

During different times of the year we see banners appear on walls with felt pictures of saints, of wheat and grapes, of angels, of Divine Mercy. Also during various times we see Advent wreaths, Pascal Candles, flowers, trees, candles, a nativity, and a cross with a purple cloth draped over the arms. We see the vestments of the clergy change, we hear more bells ring, and the singing of the choir changes too.

And then there are the statues. Statues that represent persons familiar to us. Perhaps a patron saint from our church or our Diocese. Perhaps someone from the church had a particular devotion and donated a statue. Whatever the reason, we have a very full richness of our sacred art.

The Catholic Church takes very seriously the sacred art that we use. This is after all the legacy of our faith.

If you would like to learn more about Sacred Art and its importance to the celebration of our faith, 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 115.

### **Discussion:**

Last time, I mentioned that if we truly understood the blessings of adoration, we might wonder, why are there not throngs of people coming to worship Christ in the Eucharist? Perhaps that is part of the issue, so many simply do not know.

I also had to confess, the first time I heard about adoration, I thought it was something for people far more holy than I; and I also had this mistaken belief that I didn't really have any right to join in because of my sinfulness. I truly did not understand it and, yes, I also had that tried and true excuse, I don't need to go spend time with Jesus in His house cause I can spend time with Him wherever and whenever within His creation. Yep, that priceless gem was still hanging around in my head from my earlier years. Again, I did not understand the meaning of the time or what I was missing by not spending this time of reverence, listening, and love with Him.

Yes, it is a time of reverence. It is a quiet time, an opportunity for relative silence so we might listen for His "*light, silent sound.*" (cf. 1 Kings 19:12) It is an opportunity to allow our Lord and Savior to bring peace to our heart. Yes, the world will still be out there, but we can come to our Lord and Savior to take a breather, to allow Him to fill our heart, to allow Him to recharge us so we shall have more strength by which to face the world as well as mature in our faith.

When we reflect upon the sacrifice Jesus made for us and what He asks of us, we might wonder, how is it He is not our priority? How is it we are not drawn to receive His love? More importantly, how is it we do not bring our children to experience Him and share in the blessings of His love?

The first time I spent time in adoration before the Eucharist, I wasn't sure what I was expecting. There was no epiphany in my heart. I was simply quiet. I had to learn to talk with Jesus. I had to learn to listen for how He was working to guide my heart. I had to come to the understanding that He can lead me to water, but I have to make the choice to drink.

Time in adoration before the Eucharist, time in this special place with our Lord and Savior, is there for us all. Let us consider the opportunity and enjoy all the grace and splendor of His love as we give thanks and lift up our love to our Lord.

Today, as we conclude this series, “Put on the Armor of God,” we are going to turn our discussion to “the battle of prayer.”

**(Question 1:** As I mentioned last time, that phrase, “the battle of prayer,” sounded pretty ominous. Of what do we think when we hear that word, “battle,” and what relationship might that have concerning our prayer life?)

- The battle within ourselves concerning our approach to prayer
- The battle in which we engage our prayers
- The battle within ourselves of hearing or observing answers to our prayer
- The battle within ourselves to determine the priority which we give to prayer
- The battle of knowing where to begin
  - ➔ The battle of learning about prayer (a beginning we offer through this series)
  - ➔ The battle of increasing the presence of prayer within our life
  - ➔ The battle of faith in trusting our prayers are heard and answered
- The battle of encouraging one another in prayer
- The battle of spiritual warfare
- The battle for our souls
- The battle within ourselves to put on the armor of prayer and just do it

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(CCC: 2725) Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The “spiritual battle” of the Christian’s new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.

**(Question 2:** So, let's take a moment to analyze to what this paragraph draws our attention concerning the battle of prayer. What do we see here concerning prayer and our journey of life?)

- Prayer as a gift and grace
- Prayer requires a determined response from us
- Prayer is a battle against ourselves
- Prayer is a battle against the one who would tempt us away from God
- Prayer is a reflection of and influence upon how we live
- Prayer habits (or lack thereof) reflect our relationship with Christ
- The battle of prayer is intertwined with the spiritual battle for our soul

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(CCC: 2726) In the battle of prayer, we must face in ourselves and around us erroneous notions of prayer. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as

an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they “don’t have the time.” Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone.

(Romans 8:26-27)

26 In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. 27 And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.

**(Question 3:** In this paragraph from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it speaks of the erroneous notions of prayer. What might some of those erroneous notions be?)

- The notion we do not have time
- The notion prayer is not productive
- The notion that reason and science tells us there is no power or purpose to prayer
- The notion that prayer is simply an attempt to escape from reality
- The notion that we are not heard

**(Question 4:** The Catechism of the Catholic Church also points to the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer. What is the nature of this role and why is this important to us?)

***The Holy Spirit as intercessor:***

- Lifts up what is in our heart
- Influences our heart
- Brings us closer to God
- Guides us in truth → will we listen for Him in our heart?

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(CCC: 2729) The habitual difficulty in prayer is distraction. It can affect words and their meaning in vocal prayer; it can concern, more profoundly, him to whom we are praying, in vocal prayer (liturgical or personal), meditation, and contemplative prayer. To set about hunting down distractions would be to fall into their trap, when all that is necessary is to turn back to our heart: for a distraction reveals to us what we are attached to, and this humble awareness before the Lord should awaken our preferential love for him and lead us resolutely to offer him our heart to be purified. Therein lies the battle, the choice of which master to serve.

**(Question 5:** This paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses “distraction.” What are some of the forms of distraction we face and how might we approach dealing with distraction?)

***Forms of distraction:***

- Insignificant things which divert us from time for prayer

- Erroneous notions of prayer (which we discussed earlier)
- Thoughts or preoccupations of the day

***Dealing with distraction:***

- Set priorities
- Manage time → what is filling our day → what are our choices?
- Let prayer become our go-to when idle or waiting
- Employ prayer aids
  - ➔ Scripture
  - ➔ Devotionals
  - ➔ Prayer cards
  - ➔ Prayer journal
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help us focus
- Engage a prayer buddy or group

(CCC: 2734) Filial trust is tested—it proves itself—in tribulation. The principal difficulty concerns the prayer of petition, for oneself or for others in intercession. Some even stop praying because they think their petition is not heard. Here two questions should be asked: Why do we think our petition has not been heard? How is our prayer heard, how is it “efficacious”?

**(Question 6:** If we trust in prayer, it becomes a priority for us. What might tempt us to distrust that we are heard and that God answers? Why should we trust our prayers are heard and answered?)

***Temptations to distrust:***

- Our own awkwardness – how do I pray?
- The answer does not appear within our time expectations
- The result is not according to our expectations (our will, not His)

***Why we should trust:***

- God sees across all heaven and earth as well as all the actions and consequences across the generations
- What God allows is always for a greater good to come
- His overarching concern is for our eternal salvation
- We only need look to the cross to observe His commitment to our salvation

We must be observant if we are to comprehend the fullness of His answers.

**Quotes:**

(Jonah 4:1-11)

*1 But this [God accepting the penance of Nineveh] greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said while I was still in my own*

country? This is why I fled at first toward Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, repenting of punishment. 3 So now, LORD, please take my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.” 4 But the LORD asked, “Are you right to be angry?”

5 Jonah then left the city for a place to the east of it, where he built himself a hut and waited under it in the shade, to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the LORD God provided a gourd plant. And when it grew up over Jonah’s head, giving shade that relieved him of any discomfort, **Jonah was greatly delighted** with the plant. 7 But the next morning at dawn God provided a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 And when the sun arose, God provided a scorching east wind; and the sun beat upon Jonah’s head till he became faint. Then he wished for death, saying, “**It is better for me to die than to live.**”

9 **But God said to Jonah, “Do you have a right to be angry over the gourd plant?”** Jonah answered, “I have a right to be angry—angry enough to die.” 10 Then the LORD said, “**You are concerned over the gourd plant** which cost you no effort and which you did not grow; it came up in one night and in one night it perished. 11 **And should I not be concerned over the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons** who cannot know their right hand from their left, not to mention all the animals?”

## Final Thoughts:

During the course of this series, we discussed many forms and opportunities for prayer; an opportunity to grow within our relationship with God. As we discussed today, the evil one is not happy when we take the time to converse with our Lord, because the one of darkness does not want us to have a strong relationship with our Creator. The evil one knows that if he can silence our prayer, it will weaken our relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Satan does not care how we miss or neglect our relationship with God, only that we do. If we truly love God with all our heart, all our mind, and all our soul; then, we should take the opportunity of prayer to tell Him. We should also tell Him by how we live our lives.

As children of His creation, it is natural for us to ask for His assistance, but we must also keep our expectations in perspective as the Lord reminded the prophet Jonah. We have our expectations, but we must trust that the answer of God is what is best for our opportunity to walk forever within His kingdom, where love is shared by all. Whatever we may gain in this world has no equal to that.

As we are reminded in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Filial trust is tested—it proves itself—in tribulation.” (CCC: 2734) It is in tribulation we are drawn to ask for His help, but do we turn to Him so He will satisfy our desires, or do we turn to Him because of our love for Him as a child of His creation? He knows what is in our heart, but the question is, do we?

If there is but one message we might offer as a result of this series, it is, “just do it.” We might feel awkward at first, or as in my case, unworthy, so I felt I should just hang back in the shadows; but God desires that we come to Him so that we might know Him and the love He has for us.

At first, we might be tempted to believe we are simply talking to thin air, but if we learn to observe, if we search our heart, we will begin to observe all the blessings He brings and the many wonderful ways He works within our lives. Let us, then, as the children of His creation, talk with Him, listen for Him, but most importantly, let us allow in prayer for our love to rise up to Him.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we begin a new series concerning faith, family, and social issues.

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, Family, and Social Issues – Part I: The Call to Defend Life

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

USCCB; (accessed 10 Oct 2019); “Sacred Art;” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacred-art-and-music/sacred-art/index.cfm>

#### **Discussion References:**

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>

USCCB; (May 2016); Catechism of the Catholic Church; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html>