



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Faith, Family, and Social Issues *Part V: Guiding Our Youth to Healthy Life Styles*



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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 on the team, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because, well, they had to have something for me to do too. 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.

We are also joined today with special guest panelist Erika Higgins.

Erika is the Executive Director for Pure and Simple Truth for Youth, Inc. This not for profit organization offers peer-to-peer mentoring, Truth for Youth retreats, dynamic speakers, equipping parenting sessions, internet safety tips and tools, and classroom curricula resources designed to educate and empower youth to make positive choices, develop as whole persons, and form healthy relationships.

Erika, welcome to our panel.

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 for Geska and Nadia as they continue to battle cancer. We pray, dear Lord, for your healing hand to rest upon them, as well as Your hand of comfort; that You will guide the hearts and hands of their care givers, and that Your hand of comfort shall rest upon all who love and care 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. Please include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we will give it priority and include it in 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. Remember how at Easter Vigil, one candle is used to light another so that soon the whole room is filled with light.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Sacraments of Initiation - Introduction

Thought we might make a move to a new subject, for a change of pace. Let's spend a few weeks looking into the Sacraments of Initiation. What??? These sacraments are for Catholics on the road to becoming full members of God's family. These sacraments would be Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. These are the sacraments which are received as a result of what the Church and the Catechism call the Rites of Initiation.

When Jesus was teaching His Apostles, he instructed them on how to behave as His followers and on how to behave toward His followers. He did awesome stuff like explain more fully the history of the people of God before His arrival on planet Earth. He revealed truths about God the Father and heaven. While people did know, from oral tradition, about God the Creator, the Ten Commandments, and things like covenants between God and the people, Jesus also taught how to do a better job in adoring, and communicating with the Almighty.

He knew that His Church was to grow, to reach people in all corners of the Earth. It was very important for Him to do things like teach us how to treat each other. He gave us the Beatitudes so that we might better understand that if we behave in a certain way, we can expect a certain reward. (The Beatitudes are mentioned here, but will be left for another session of Why Catholics Do What We Do.)

Jesus, being smarter than all of us, and being the “teacher of teachers,” knew that he was imposing such a vast amount of knowledge upon his disciples that He truly had overwhelmed them. He gave so much instruction and knew that not all subjects would be remembered as clearly as others. Guess it is like us going to school---how much do we remember or use today? (Or better yet, how much were we required to learn and have never used since leaving the world of formal education?) The point is, there was much to learn and limited time to accomplish the task. So He promised to send the Advocate to remind. As the leader of his Christian/Catholic Church, He knew he had to provide the initial teaching, the means to grow and continue, and a source for recall.

As you know, Doug and I lost a daughter to brain cancer almost three years ago. When I stop to think about how I felt and reacted when our daughter passed, I cannot imagine how the Apostles felt after Christ's death. It surely must have been a horrible time of fear and uncertainty. Loss of a loved one is enormous emotionally and spiritually. But somehow these 12 men finally gathered it all together and set out to teach as they were instructed. They went in all directions to preach, teach, and to bring the people into the Church of Jesus Christ. This was now their job and they did not want to let down the One they loved.

When the Apostles arrived in a new tribe or settlement, they involved themselves in the community and stayed for periods of time so that their missions would be accomplished. During the time of their travels, teaching and writing, they also had to develop the processes by which the newly started Christian communities would be able to continue the work that had begun during the Apostle's visits.

Today, when we want to join some organization, we simply fill out a form and give all of our contact information. Back then, people did not always know how to read or write, so the process was a bit more difficult. In order to grow the Catholic Church, they called upon the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, to remind them of all that was taught about how to recruit membership. They taught. They welcomed. They loved. They Baptized.

This was only the beginning. Today, it is the beginning for all Catholics. And this will be our beginning in learning about what is required to become a Catholic. Next week we will begin with Baptism, its meaning, its roots, its importance.

Have a blessed week All. Remember, you are loved dearly by God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and yes, by us as well.

Discussion:

During the opening to our last discussion, I mentioned that I wished I had known in my youth that of which Kid Catholic, our last guest, speaks of at his young age of 14. Perhaps, such knowledge would have saved a lot of heartache and pain during the course of my relationships and endeavors, not to mention during the raising of my children.

I also encouraged parents to reflect deeply upon the responsibility you have for the education of your children. It is so important for you to be engaged and to help guide your children in their learning. It is a very tough and challenging job, but one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is a good education from which they will make future life choices, especially choices concerning their eternal life.

Of course, as we work to enable our children to prosper within the modern world, we are at a disadvantage because we do not know everything. When we recognize this, we usually look for assistance from those who surround us. Towards this end, one of the objectives of this series, “Faith, Family, and Social Issues;” is to help parents and those engaged in educating our youth, to become aware of resources which enable our youth to learn about God's design and His call to healthy relationships and life styles.

I must relate that I met Erika at the time we were just finishing our series concerning *Humanae Vitae*. During that series, I mentioned the “values grooming” of our children which is often conducted outside the sight of parents and presented through a variety of institutions. These institutions are sending very confusing messages to our children. Parents often find they need help as they guide and participate in the education of their children so they may arm the children with the reason and purpose of God's design and what God asks of us.

(Question 1: Erika, it is encouraging to me to observe organizations, such as yours, working to help families navigate the processes of maturity as children learn to become responsible adults. What do you see are the main competitors for the hearts, minds, and souls of our children as they progress towards adulthood?)

- Politically influenced schools and institutions
- Entertainment Media
- News Media
- Peer Pressure
- The ever shifting winds and rules of Political Correctness

(Question 2: Ironically, one of the challenges of parenthood is the fact that during our education towards becoming adults, we really don't get a whole lot of education about the responsibilities which fall upon us should we become parents or the means by which we may execute those responsibilities. What resources does Pure and Simple Truth for Youth provide to help parents teach their children about what God asks of us in our relationships and how might parents access these resources?)

(Question 3: Helping our children to navigate the process by which they form their personal identity, develop their value system, and how to form and maintain healthy relationships, is really an ongoing task, and many times a task of opportunity, or what some call, “teachable moments.” What recommendations do you have for parents as they navigate the challenges of educating their children in matters of personal identity, positive choices, and forming healthy relationships?)

(Question 4: Of course, as we mentioned earlier, parents do not always have assistance towards educating their children, rather, they have a number of politically motivated competitors who are not aligned with the the purpose and meaning of God's design and what God asks of us as we live our relationships. What advice do you have for parents as parents endeavor to prepare their children to live their faith within a secular world?)

(Question 5: Our youth often find themselves navigating a world of peers and adults as they are maturing in their understanding of God's creation. They have various teachers and mentors outside of their parents, and as we discussed earlier, they must also navigate the oceans of peer pressure. What advice do you have for youth who must navigate relationships within a secular world?)

(Question 6: Of course, non-profits require resources if they are to accomplish their mission. How can people who want to help, help you?)

www.pureandsimpletruthforyouth.org

Quotes:

(CCC, 1653)

Parents are the principal and first educators of their children. In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life .

(CCC, 1657)

The home is the first school of Christian life and “a school for human enrichment.” Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous — even repeated — forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life.

(CCC, 2207)

The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. Family life is an initiation into life in society .

(CCC, 2210)

The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority

should consider it a grave duty “to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity” .

Final Thoughts:

The education and encouragement of our youth is what enables them to make a better world. Parents have the primary responsibility for providing that for our children, but it is a task which can be quite overwhelming, especially with all of the distractions of the world. While some parents may have the resources to vet and select the institution which will assist them, most must rely upon secular institutions which are motivated more by political agendas rather than what is best, right, and just for the souls of our children. Parents are the first line of defense for those souls and they must be aware and learn themselves if they are to so teach their children and supervise what their children receive through other channels.

The art is imprecise and will require many adjustments along the way to adapt to the uniqueness of each child and their experiences in the world. Parents are also left with the difficult task of vetting the assistance available and helping their children comprehend light and truth within a sea of competing values and nuances of politics. This task has become even more difficult in the politically charged world of our day.

The first and most important step in caring for the gift God has given us through our children is love and communication of that love. If we endeavor to understand the meaning and purpose of God's design and ask God to help us in carrying out the responsibilities we have for the raising of our youth, then, we may be better prepared when He asks us, “What did you do with the gifts I gave you?”

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 resources which may assist with domestic catechesis.

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 VI: Resources for Domestic Catechesis

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>