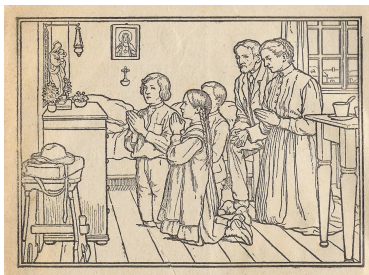




## *The Armor of Faith*

### Topic Summary: Faith, Family, and Social Issues *Part VII: Engaging Family in Ministry*



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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 that is the way we prime the pump of answers. 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 as well as their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

Dear Lord, we continue to pray for Carol, as well as Nadia, Geska, and the child Ben, who is battling cancer. We pray that Your healing hand will 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 will also 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](mailto: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](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 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:**

As we mentioned during our last episode, if you have been out and about on social media, you probably noticed headlines to the effect of “Four Exorcists Urge Day of Fasting, Prayer and Reparation Dec. 6.” (Dail) According to the *National Catholic Register*, the priests stated they are asking for this, “for the purpose of driving out any diabolic influence within the Church that has been gained as a result of recent events.” (Dail) While the statement specifically references the Amazon Synod controversies, we can probably pick from any number of recent events which are cause for concern of the faithful.

The priests also stated, “These events bring home the reality that we are in spiritual warfare, and that warfare is happening with the Church itself.” (Dail) The reality is that the church has been under attack and facing divisions from the moment Christ said to Peter, “*And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.*” (Matthew 16:18)

No matter where we may fall concerning our political perceptions, we must also remember to what we are called as we are reminded in 1 Peter 3:8-9, “*Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. 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.*”

As you may remember during our series, “Put on the Armor of Prayer,” (see episodes 107 through 115), we pointed out that a blessing is an invocation of God's power and care. (cf. CCC:

pg 868), so when we pray for a blessing upon the church and one another, we should take comfort that we are asking for God's power and care. Whether we ask a blessing for a loved one or someone who does not like us very much, a prayer for God's blessing always calls for a positive result.

As we face the divisions of our day, you have heard me mention before, it is not a matter of whether the right or left are right or wrong, it is a matter of whether we understand what God asks of us.

Towards this end, we invite you to participate in this First Friday prayer because we all need the help of our Lord to achieve to what we are called in 1 Peter 3:8-9, and we must also keep in mind the pleas of Our Blessed Mother as she calls us to the Sacred Heart of her Son, as well as prayer, fasting, and penance so we may receive the wonderful graces offered through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

If you would like to learn more about this call to prayer, fasting and reparation; you can find a link to the article in the Discussion References section of the topic summary for this show. You can access the topic summaries via <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides>. Remember to select episode 122.

If you happen to be listening to this episode via one of our on-demand channels, and the date of the event has already passed, it is not too late. We ask you to consider joining in prayer; seeking unity of all within His Holy Church so that together we may help one another accomplish what God asks of us. We should also remember prayers in reparation and penance for the ways we have offended God. You can join during the next First Friday, or if that is not possible, perhaps a First Saturday. No matter the day, time, or place; let us remember what we are told in CCC: 2691, "The choice of a favorable place is not a matter of indifference for true prayer." No matter our concern, we should all keep in prayer petitions for God's help towards building the unity of our Church along with our prayers of sorrow and penance for our sins.

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

Has Baptism been part of the history of God's people, or was it made new with John the Baptist?

Actually, the elements of Baptism which are *water and The Word*, have been around since creation. While it was not necessarily called Baptism in the Old Testament, the use of these elements did bring about new life, new beginnings, cleansing of sins and renewals.

The CCC gives explains:

(CCC: 1218)

Since the beginning of the world, water, so humble and wonderful a creature, has been the source of life and fruitfulness. Sacred Scripture sees it as "overshadowed" by the Spirit of God:

At the very dawn of creation  
your Spirit breathed on the waters,  
making them the wellspring of all holiness.

When God created, he made the land and then the waters to separate the lands. He made water to be a life sustaining element in the lives of all living creatures---animals and plants. And *The Word*? God spoke to his creation.

(CCC: 1219)

The Church has seen in Noah's ark a prefiguring of salvation by Baptism, for by it "a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water":

The waters of the great flood  
you made a sign of the waters of Baptism,  
that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.

By this time in history, Noah and the people had learned *The Word* by oral delivery. They knew the stories of Adam and Eve, and all that had happened up to that time. They ignored what God had taught and repeated the sins of their ancestors. So because of the sinfulness of the people, God slapped down His hand of justice and brought forth the floods---*the water* that would destroy the existing evil and bring about new life.

(CCC: 1220) If water springing up from the earth symbolizes life, the water of the sea is a symbol of death and so can represent the mystery of the cross. By this symbolism Baptism signifies communion with Christ's death.

(CCC: 1221) But above all, the crossing of the Red Sea, literally the liberation of Israel from the slavery of Egypt, announces the liberation wrought by Baptism:

You freed the children of Abraham from the slavery of Pharaoh,  
bringing them dry-shod through the waters of the Red Sea,  
to be an image of the people set free in Baptism.

*The Word*---the people did know the stories of the days that were before them. God desired to free the Israeli people from slavery. As the newly freed Israeli people departed from Egypt, they were followed by Pharaoh's army with the intend of bringing them back into slavery. Once again, God used *water* to protect His chosen children and thus destroyed Pharaoh's army. This event, using *The Word and water*, brought about the end of slavery (evil, sin) and gave new life the the children of Israel.

These are some examples in the Old Testament that tell of cleansing of sin and renewal of life. Baptism is a life giving sacrament of which we all need. Next week we will explore what the New Testament says about Baptism.

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:

As we concluded our last discussion, I mentioned that we have all heard the cliché, “knowledge is power.” I pointed out that the reason for this is that knowledge enables our understanding as well as our ability to make good choices. The opposite, of course, is that what we do not know can hurt us. How many times have we regretted a decision because of something we did not know or of which we were not aware? We must remember, our choices are not just about living in this world, but also preparing for what comes after. It is for this reason that I often comment that those who do not know their faith leave themselves vulnerable to the one who would take it from them – and we know who is working 24/7 towards taking us away from our faith in God.

We should reflect upon this very heavily as we consider the education and faith formation of our children. They have much to learn in the world, not only so they may assume their role in adulthood, but also in preparation for the eternity after. At first, we are there to walk with them and to help to defend them, but we must also prepare them for the day they will have to make decisions on their own. If we prepare them with a proper understanding of our faith and what God asks of us, they will make better decisions as opposed to approaching the world, as well as eternity, in ignorance.

Some would tell us that to respect each child's individuality, parents must allow their children to decide what they want for themselves. The question, though, is how do they do that if they are unaware of their faith and all the blessings and graces which God offers through living the fullness of our Catholic faith?

Of course, as we reflect upon Genesis 3:4, the serpent endeavored to separate Eve from her Creator through the enticements of deception. If we know our faith, and we help our children develop the same knowledge, we make it harder for the evil one or his minions to deceive us. If we know our faith, we enable ourselves to live to its fullness, to receive its blessings, and to accomplish what God asks of us.

Let us reflect upon this as to its meaning to our children. As we help our children to learn about their faith, we also enable them to put on its armor as a blessing of their soul. We enable them to make good decisions which also enables good relationships, not just with one another, but most importantly, their relationship with God.

Towards this end, we will turn our discussion today to engaging family in ministry. As we mentioned last time, play time is also a time for our children to learn and grow. We may learn through observing and listening, but studies have shown, over and over, that we are more likely to retain what we learn as we do what we learn. Engaging our children in ministry provides such an opportunity; and it can also be an opportunity for some fun.

**(Question 1:** Especially as we approach the fall, we hear pleas and calls for volunteers to help staff parish ministries. I'm sure a good portion of people reflect on such pleas from an individual perspective, but we may want to also consider opportunities where we might engage the whole family. What are some of the blessings we might think we could experience by participating as a family in ministry?)

- Satisfaction of action → helping others
  - Learning opportunities for faith, action, and social skills
  - Building relationships
  - Building family bonds – doing together can help bring families together
  - Living as a family that which God asks of us
- 

When we attended the Mid-West Catholic Family Conference conducted last August in Wichita, Kansas, we were treated to a concert by a family band that goes by the name MJM7. This family employs their musical talent as a means to give glory to God and encourage others to prayer and the worship of our Lord.

Towards this end, they established a 501c(3) non-profit for the purposes of performing as a ministry of faith. According to their web site, “Over the past 5 years, the Mette family has traveled to 44 of the 50 states and played over 350 events.” (Mette)

On the “About” page of their web site, they state that their concerts:

[C]reates a bridge from the ordinary to the extraordinary, building on the richness of the Catholic faith. The Mette's gifts of music, joy, & family life offer the boldness and innocence of youth with the wisdom and depth of lived experiences. The concert empowers all ages to pray more fully and worship more freely. The events fall somewhere between a rock concert and a parish mission, with vibrant lights, powerful music, faith sharing, and an invitation to prayer. The music is uplifting without being preachy, creating an environment that is engaging without being confrontational. Your church will feel the difference!

If you want to learn more about the MJM7 band, you can visit their website at: <https://mjm7.band/>.

Of course, to become a performing band requires not only a message, but a lot of work, such as the need for practice, event coordination, rehearsals, equipment maintenance, and travel. All of that is a learning opportunity for the family as well as an opportunity to live God's Word as a family.

**(Question 2:** Of course, not every family is musically inclined or has the time and resources to establish and maintain a 501c(3) or to conduct extensive travel. So, what might be some other opportunities for families to join together and share the blessings of volunteering and ministry work?)

- Join a choir
- Serve at fellowship after Mass or parish events
- Nursery volunteers
- Sponsor parish game nights or fellowship potlucks
- Help with food banks/food pantries

- Help with meals for the homeless and shut-ins
  - Parish maintenance – event clean-up
  - Cleaning altar linens
  - Assistance to pregnancy centers
  - Support for ministry fund raising events
  - Form a prayer home ministry
  - What ministry is missing in your parish?
- 

**(Question 3:** Of course, it helps to be engaged in a ministry which aligns with the talents and interests of the family. **How might families go about selecting a ministry they can support as a family?)**

- Consider the age and talent of children → as children grow, so do their abilities
  - Consider ministries where children can take some ownership of effort
  - Consider ministries which provide learning opportunities
  - Consider ministries where children can feel a sense of accomplishment
  - Consider ministries where the family can make friends
  - Consider ministries where families can partner for at least a portion of the work
  - Consider seasonal ministries
  - Monitor ministries of interest
  - Experiment and talk as a family
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**(Question 4:** When we reflect upon the opportunity to engage our families in ministry, we might be tempted to turn away from the thought because we perceive obstacles. **What are some of the likely obstacles which may inhibit us from engaging the family in ministry and how might we overcome those obstacles?)**

- Career or school demands → time management
  - Some ministries are not suited for young children → start with small efforts
  - Extracurricular activities → ministry is too, set seasons of focus
  - Ministry turf protection → don't take over, just offer help
  - Perceived peer pressure, ministry ain't cool → encouragement and sense of accomplishment
  - Children do not always behave → practice and encouragement make perfect
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**(Question 5:** From our discussion so far, we might give the appearance that engaging family in ministry requires the family to be together the whole time. The available ministries or those sorely in need, may not need the services of the entire family. **Why should we still consider ministries which may only be a partial fit for the family?)**

- Benefits of mix and match time → One parent and one or two children

- Come together, work apart, come together and share stories and blessings of accomplishment
  - Children may be better suited for different ministries at different times
- 

**(Question 6:** Families who engage the family in ministry experience challenges, but they also experience blessings. Now the hard question. **How can we encourage more families to turn their attention to engaging family in ministry?)**

- Establish relationships and invite
- Listen to families for needs and invite
- Look for little ways families can engage and invite
- Complain less, encourage more and invite
- Have a good time and invite
- Discuss the blessings of ministry and invite
- Look for seasonal opportunities and invite

### Quotes:

– *Saint John Paul II*

Do not be afraid, open wide the doors to Christ!

– *Mother Angelica*

Love is Not a feeling; it's a decision.

– *G.K. Chesterton*

A dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it.

– *St Francis of Assisi*

For it is in giving that we receive.

– *Father Patrick Peyton*

The family that prays together stays together.

### Final Thoughts:

This last quote I shared, “The family that prays together stays together,” is an opportunity for our reflection. Can we imagine a slightly different take on this saying? Think about the family that performs ministry together.

As I mentioned during our discussion, when I look back at the things we did as a family, there were many special moments as we engaged in parish activities. Of course, I must give most of the credit to my wife, because my attention was often devoted to my military duties, but Sharon helped me maintain a work life balance. I am so thankful to her for that, as well as for the time I had with my children. In the moment, we might find ourselves tired or frustrated, but as parents,



we must always remember the time is short. As children, we must remember the same. The day will come where our parents will be called away from this world.

What we do together as a family matters. We should also reflect that ministry is an opportunity for the generations and even extended family to come together as well.

The society of our day promotes individualism along with any number of distractions which appear to be designed to separate families from one another. As we destroy the relationships of family, we also destroy the fundamental foundation of society.

Our careers demand us and individual pursuits entice us, but there is a reason why God made us so that a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife so that the two shall become one flesh. (cf. Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6) It is not just a means of procreation, but the foundation through which children are raised to assume the vocations which God has laid out before us. It is through those vocations by which society is formed and becomes healthy. The family forges the child which subsequently becomes the foundation for generations to come. What families do together, then, matters not just to the family, but also those who cross their path.

As we discussed, families performing in ministry not only offer blessings to others, but they receive many blessings in return. Some of my most cherished moments are the moments where my wife and children worked with me for the blessings of others. I thank God for every moment and I pray more families will discover the blessings of sharing in ministry.

P.S. If, after examining the list of parish ministries, there appears to be nothing left, there is always the ministry of prayer. Perhaps that brings us back to that quote, “The family that prays together stays together.”

**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 fathers and family.

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 VIII: Fathers and Family

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

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a1.htm); (15 Aug 1997); “The Sacrament Of Baptism;” Vatican;  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a1.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a1.htm)

## **Discussion References:**

Mette, Michael James; (access 22 Nov 2019); “Looking for a way to bring families together at your CHURCH?”; MJM7 Band; <https://mjm7.band/>

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>