



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Faith, Family, and Social Issues
Part VIII: Family Traditions and Faith



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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 what they said is in my job description. 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.

Dear Lord, we continue to pray for Geska, Nadia, Sarah, and the child Ben as they continue their battles against cancer. We pray 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 shall 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. 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:

As everyone is aware, Advent began last Sunday. Also, as everyone knows, it is a time of preparation, not only for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, but also for the time of His return; of which we do not know the day or the hour. It is a time to prepare our souls through self-reflection, prayer, and the actions of our faith. It is a personal time, but it is also a family time. It is a time for family tradition and sharing in faith as we anticipate the celebration of our Savior's birth, as well as the anticipation of His return.

This is a great time for us to share the blessings of faith with our children. We encourage our listeners to take a moment and learn about Advent and the blessings we may share during this blessed season.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Last week we discussed the importance and history of Baptism according to the Old Testament and how it was brought into the New Testament days. We talked about how Baptism means to plunge or wash. Just as John the Baptist plunged people into the River Jordan to wash away sin and bring in new life, that practice continues to this very day. Water is the cleaner of the sin that we enter this world with because of the sin of Adam and Eve. Baptism removes that sin and makes us children of God.

(CCC1212)

The sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist - lay the *foundations* of every Christian life. "The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the

sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."

Can anyone be Baptized?

(CCC 1246)

Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is able to be baptized...

Baptism leaves a permanent mark upon our souls as it changes us and brings us into God's light. Nobody is ever too old or too young to be baptized.

Who has the authority to perform Baptisms?

Most often we recognize an ordained minister, a priest or a deacon, as the person who officiates over the Sacrament of Baptism. However, a lay person may also perform this task. In hospitals, nurses often perform this sacrament when they feel a person may be at death's door. Many babies are washed and cleansed in delivery rooms when there is a suspect that the baby will not live.

How does someone do this?

The most important element of Baptism is to use the Trinitarian Baptismal formula. This is to say the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." If water is available, it would be appropriate for some to be poured over the head of the person receiving this sacrament. That is what is needed for this sacrament, the Word and Water.

Why do Catholics Baptize children?

Baptism of children began with the Apostles and has continued as a tradition as well as a need ever since.

(John 3:5)

Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."

(CCC: 1252)

The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized, (Acts 16:15,33; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16).

Baptism washes away sin and makes us clean and fulfills this decree of Jesus. This has been a part of our history for during times of severe plagues, when people died at all ages, it was important for all people to be Baptized and able to go to Heaven. Jesus said, "no one," not just adults or anyone who has reached the age of accountability. For this reason, babies are Baptized

so that they may be cleansed, and ready for entering heaven should God decide to call them home.

Next week we will continue this topic to learn what is expected of someone who seeks to become a member of the Catholic Church.

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 the saying, “The family that prays together stays together,” is an opportunity for our reflection. I asked if we can imagine a slightly different take on this saying, perhaps in the realm of, “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 and faith 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.

With similar thoughts, we turn our discussion today to family traditions and faith. I know I said last time that we were going to talk about fathers and family, but as we progressed through

Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent, I thought it would be a good idea to insert this episode before we get to the discussion of the importance of fathers to the family.

We all have family traditions, and not all traditions are about faith, but we do live part of our faith through the traditions we share as families as well as friends. Especially as we consider the times of Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving, we share such traditions of celebration with both family and friends.

(Question 1: Of course, we all have a common understanding of the word tradition. **As we consider family traditions of faith, why are traditions importance to us?)**

Definition of *tradition*:

1a : **an inherited, established, or customary pattern** of thought, action, or behavior (such as a religious practice or a social custom)

b : a belief or story or a body of beliefs or stories relating to the past that are commonly accepted as historical though not verifiable ... the bulk of traditions attributed to the Prophet ...— J. L. Esposito

2 : **the handing down** of information, beliefs, and customs **by word of mouth** or **by example from one generation to another** **without written instruction**

3 : **cultural continuity** in social attitudes, customs, and institutions

4 : characteristic manner, method, or style

(Online Dictionary)

- Opportunity to bond
- Opportunity to build memories with family and friends
- Opportunity to share family history
- Opportunity to share the blessings of faith with family, friends, and maybe strangers

(Question 2: As we come together to share traditions of our faith, there are also those who endeavor to attack tradition. **What happens when we give up or neglect our traditions?)**

- Give up special time together
- Memories of the tradition fade and are eventually lost
- Family history begins to fade and becomes lost
- Faith traditions begin to slip away to other distractions
- As the bonds of family tradition weaken, so do the bonds of the family
- As the bonds of family faith weaken, so does the family

I must confess, one of the reasons why I recommend we address this subject this week is because of some things I observed from social and news media during the run up to the Thanksgiving holiday. It was about how to discuss politics at the dinner table. It reminded me of

media encouragement during past years to bring subjects such as Obama Care and Climate Change to the Thanksgiving gathering. Basically, these promotions offered talking points concerning how to defend political positions at the dinner table. Other articles, though, offered tips as to how to avoid destructive and divisive political conversations during the holidays.

(Question 3: Of course, politics can be a divisive. **Should we avoid politics at the dinner table of gatherings of family and friends?)**

- Sometimes hard to avoid
- May not be an issue when all appear to be like minded
- If it sows divisions, best not to pick up the rope
- Remember 1 Peter 3:9 and 15-16

1 Peter 3:9

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 3:15-16

....Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, 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.

(Question 4: While we enjoy various faith holidays, I have noticed that various political entities seem to be doing whatever they can to discredit traditional family holidays. Thanksgiving, for example, is presented as a celebration of oppressive colonialism, and of course, there are also the efforts to secularize Christmas. **Why have our religious holidays become so controversial?)**

- Division sows doubt
- Divide the family, divide the society
- Destroy the family, destroy the fabric of society
- Destroy the family and cultures collapse
- Destroy the family, then, how is faith passed to the generations?

(Question 5: One of the recommendations for traditional gatherings is to avoid religion. **Should we avoid discussion of our faith at the holiday dinner table?)**

- Religion should not be a matter of division, but it can be if mishandled
- Especially for religious holidays, sharing in faith is the point
- We should share why we celebrate
- We should share why we are blessed to celebrate
- We should share why we should be joyful
- If family or friends are not of the faith, we should be a good example

(Question 6: Of course our faith traditions are a means to teach our children and prepare them for the time they will lead family faith traditions. **How do we enable our children to carry on the traditions of our faith?)**

- Engage children in the activities of the day
- Remind them of the reason for the celebration
- Gather together to read scripture associated with the holiday
- Let older children read aloud sections of scripture
- Give a special role to younger children so they participate in the tradition
- Share stories of past celebrations
- Attend Mass as part of the holiday celebration
- Share and enjoy the excitement

Quotes:

– *St. Athanasius, Doctor of the Church, died 373 A. D.*

You are fortunate, you have remained in the Church through your faith. You held fast to the foundations of the faith which has come down to you from Apostolic Tradition. . . .In the present crisis, it is they who have broken away from it.

– Ben Sira 8:9

Do not reject the tradition of the elders which they have heard from their ancestors; For from it you will learn how to answer when the need arises.

– 2 Thessalonians 2:15

Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.

– Saint John Paul II

As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.

Final Thoughts:

The words of Moses remain in my ears,

(Deuteronomy 4:9)

“However, be on your guard and be very careful not to forget the things your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live, but make them known to your children and to your children’s children.”

I wish they had registered with me before I had children, and perhaps, I may have done a better job as a father. Of course, we had family traditions passed to us from our parents, but as Sharon and I formed our family, we also formed our own, but still, they were rooted in traditions passed to us through our faith.

Now, as we prepare for Christmas to come, we reflect upon our traditions of faith. No two years are exactly the same, but our memories live on. Sharon and I are blessed to have shared family traditions with our children and we cherish those moments.

There are many efforts in play to disrupt and destroy the traditions of family and faith. Societies which allow this to happen have paid a heavy price. As we prepare for our holidays, let us encourage our families to come together, to share the blessings of faith and the excitement of the season. Let us remember to give thanks to our Lord for the opportunities to come together as family and friends. Let us also remember, that as we share the blessings of love with one another during the holidays, as well as every day, we fulfill the greatest commandments where we are called to love God and one another as ourselves. (Matthew 22:36-40)

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 IX: Fathers and Family

Discussion References:

“Online Dictionary;” (2015); Merriam-Webster, Incorporated; <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

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](http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/index.html>