



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Faith, Family, and Social Issues
Part X: Twilight of Our Years



Tend My Sheep
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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 my aptitude test revealed that I might be able to do. 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 panelists Ed and Nan Weber, who are the founders of the Holy Family Ministry Center.

Nan has a BA in Education and is a Licensed Vocational Nurse. Ed has a BS in Engineering and is a Certified Nursing Assistant. They are the parents of 10 daughters and have 43 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. Currently, Ed and Nan minister to families and their loved one's at the end of life through the Loreto on the Plains Personal Care Home which is an outreach of the Holy Family Ministry Center to those who are sick and terminally ill. Loreto on the Plains Personal Care Home is a Respect Life Care Home for the sick and terminally ill where the sanctity of every human life is respected and protected.

Nan and Ed, we are very happy to have you with us today, and 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 today for Rick as he recovers from back surgery as well as Phyllis as she battles medical conditions. 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 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.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Are you thinking about becoming a Catholic? Today is your lucky day. We are going to discuss the process by which you may enter the Church.

As I stated last week, the first step is to visit with a priest. Tell him where you are on your journey and just what it is you seek. He will be the best person to guide you as to how to begin.

Some things to consider before going to visit with the priest.

Have you been baptized? It need not be in the Catholic Church. We believe in the concept of only one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. If you have been baptized, there is one road to venture and if you have not been baptized, there is a slightly different road to venture.

Where would your baptism have taken place? This is important as not all churches follow the same formula for baptism. If you have this information, this will help the priest connect you with the right person to help you in your formation. You will need to obtain a copy of your Baptismal certificate as proof of this having happened.

Other information that will be asked of you is about other sacraments you may have received. Of course there will be questions about your marital status—are you married? Have you ever been married? If you are married, is your spouse a Catholic? If you are divorced, have you looked into an annulment?

This of course goes into the category of paper work. So once this is done, you are ready to begin what we call “formation”.

During the time of Vatican II, it was decided that there needed to be far more catechism classes available. One area that was pointed out specifically was for adults who desire to become Catholic. From this recognized need, came RCIA, The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. This is the class you would be enrolled in for the formation process.

Formation is classes that teach you about the beliefs of the faith. It is intended to guide you through a process of learning the truths of the Catholic Church. In my experience, these classes are fun and informative. There are people in the class who, like you, are seeking to learn about this church.

Others in the class would be catechists. Catechists are people who have studied to be knowledgeable of the truths so they don't unintentionally teach heresies. They will answer all your questions to the best of their ability and if they don't know an answer, they will check it out and let you know at a future class. One other group of people who will be in the class are sponsors. Sponsors are folks who volunteer time to spend with you, the candidate, on your journey of faith. Each candidate will have their own sponsor. The instructors try to match up candidates and sponsors so that they will become friends and share time learning together. Most often, these become life long friendships to be cherished.

This class is unique in that there is no firm time lines, no commitments and no tests. Throughout the sessions, those who are the facilitators will get to know you just as you are getting to know them. They will talk with you about how you are feeling about this process. You will be asked from time to time if you want to continue. You will never be forced to become Catholic. This is your time to learn and to grow in this faith we love. There will never be any pressure for you to move beyond what you are comfortable with.

RCIA classes begin in August and meet on a weekly basis until Easter time. As Lent approaches, the instructors will ask questions of you and your sponsor to find out where you are in your thought process. If you are ready and wanting to move on, the instructors will begin doing their paper work so that you can participate in the various rites which the church provides for your growth. During Lent you will find yourself being very busy with lots of stuff to do in preparation for Easter. Don't make a lot of plans for Holy Week. You will be on a roller coaster of events and you won't want to miss any part of the ride.

On Holy Saturday night, you will be a very significant part of the Mass. Depending on your situation, you may or may not be baptized, you will be confirmed and you will receive First Holy Communion. Three sacraments during one Mass!!!! You will be a fully initiated Catholic!! This is the most awesome Mass and one you will never forget.

But the journey does not end there. After Easter, you will have a few more classes so that you can share your feelings and experience of Easter Vigil and learn about how you can be more involved in activities, ministries, and other classes in the church. The learning does not end with Easter, rather this is just the beginning for you to continue your growth.

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:

Last time, I mentioned that as I was growing up, my father encouraged me according to three priorities; education, music and art, and sports. He looked at education as the most important, for knowledge enables us to make a living and provide for our families. He looked at music and art, not only to exercise the mind, but also to enable creativity and relaxation. Finally, he saw sports as a means to exercise the body, but also as a means to learn about competition and teamwork.

I believe my father worked hard to prepare me for adulthood, but looking back, there was an area which I now realize was lacking, and that was matters of faith. Indeed, I would not take away from my father's priorities, but at the top of the list, I would put, "faith in God."

Of course, my father could not pass on what he himself did not know. I cannot blame him, for he could not receive what his father did not pass on to him. In hind sight, I learned about the importance of faith awful late in the ballgame. Looking back, there is so much more I should have done for my children. Still, they were lucky to have a mother who did comprehend the importance of faith and taught them what I could not. She prayed with them while I failed to understand the importance and blessing of prayer.

Yes, I took my children to Mass, but I could have been a much better father had I understood the faith as I understand it now. I could have spent more time talking with them about their own understanding. I could have prayed with them. I could have done more with them in the traditions of the faith, especially during the periods of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Indeed, not only could I have been a much better father for them, in the process, I could have been a much better person. It brings sorrow to my heart that I was not.

I say this, not that I can change the past for myself, but perhaps so someone else will not make the mistakes I made through not only my ignorance of what God asks of us and the responsibilities to which God calls us, but the times of blessing not only lost to me, but also to my children.

I pray that anyone who hears these words will take a moment and ask themselves: Could I know my faith better? Could I teach my faith to my children better? Could I live my faith better? Could I be a better example to my children as God calls me to be? Whether we do anything about the answers is a decision of the heart. And if you are someone like me who lost so much time to the secular world, we cannot undo our past, but we still have our future. Each day, we have the opportunity to ask ourselves, “What gifts and talents has God given me and to what purpose does He desire that they shall be put?” As we discern the answer, we have the opportunity to turn to a more excellent way in the same fashion, to which we are encouraged in 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 as we are instructed as to the gifts of the Spirit and the blessings of love.

Today, we are going to turn our discussion to the twilight years, but this discussion is not just for the elderly, it is also for all who love and care for them. As we talk, it is also an opportunity for our listeners to reflect on that question I just mentioned, “What gifts and talents has God given me and to what purpose does He desire that they shall be put?” Our guests today are an example of reflection on that question and acting on the answer.

(Question 1: Ed and Nan, as I learned about you, it is clear you have done a lot in ministry over the years, but you have now turned your efforts to assist the chronically and terminally ill. **Can you tell us a little about the focus and objective of your ministry?)**

(Question 2: When any of us discerns how we shall apply the gifts and talents which God has given us, there is usually something in our discernment process which captures our attention. **Can you tell us a little about what inspired you towards the formation of your ministry?)**

(Question 3: Our concerns are influenced by our stage in life. **What are some of the concerns and faith issues which impact the elderly, or those chronically ill or near death?)**

- Pain management and physical therapy
- Nutrition
- Personal hygiene
- Financial Planning/Financial Elder Abuse
- Medical/Life Insurance
- Ability to attend Mass
- Ability to receive sacraments
 - ➔ Eucharist
 - ➔ Reconciliation
 - ➔ Anointing of the Sick
- Spiritual Help
- Prayer companionship
- Loneliness
- Dignity in frailty or incapacity
- Culture of Death (Euthanasia/Physician Assisted Suicide)

(Question 4: One of the main concerns for those in failing health is the loss of ability to care for one's self, especially in the face of those who would take advantage of them in that condition. **In what ways do you help those who are vulnerable to manipulation and abuse?)**

(Question 5: Sometimes, becoming a care giver is a matter of circumstance, such as a spouse, parent, or child falls ill. In other cases, it is a matter of discernment. Regardless of how we receive the tap on the shoulder, the work of care givers is critical to the needs of the chronically or terminally ill. **What advice do you have for care givers and those who are planning for their twilight years?)**

- Prayer
- Discernment
- Research skill needs and supporting organizations
- Visit potential organizations/institutions
- Speak with those who have already walked the path
- Training

(Matthew 25:40)

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

(Question 6: Jesus calls us to care for the least of us. That care requires a number of skills beyond that of doctors and nurses. Almost any talent can be put to the care of the least among us, especially those who are afflicted or terminally ill. **How can our listeners learn more about your ministry and opportunities to volunteer or contribute?)**

<https://homesoflife.net>

Quotes:

(Leviticus 19:32)

32 Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the old, and fear your God. I am the LORD.

(Ecclesiastes 7:10)

10 Do not say: How is it that former times were better than these? For it is not out of wisdom that you ask about this.

(Isaiah 46:4)

Even to your old age I am he, even when your hair is gray I will carry you; I have done this, and I will lift you up, I will carry you to safety.

(Sirach [Ben Sira] 3:12-16)

12 My son, be steadfast in honoring your father; do not grieve him as long as he lives. 13 Even if his mind fails, be considerate of him; do not revile him because you are in your prime. 14

Kindness to a father will not be forgotten; it will serve as a sin offering—it will take lasting root. 15 In time of trouble it will be recalled to your advantage, like warmth upon frost it will melt away your sins. 16 Those who neglect their father are like blasphemers; those who provoke their mother are accursed by their Creator.

(2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

[Saint Paul Wrote] 16 Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.

Final Thoughts:

During the course of our discussion, today, we talked about a number of concerns and faith issues which are faced by those who are afflicted, aging, or terminally ill. Some of these issues have become quite political in our society. Some look to our government to solve these problems, but too many politicians evaluate solutions more from the perspective of ideologies and what will gain them votes as opposed to workable, reasonable, and compassionate solutions.

We do not need to wait while our political parties wallow in their virtue signaling and political posturing as they ponder their paths of power. We have the ability to take action on our own. We simply need to look at the need around us and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us to how we may use the gifts and talents God created within us so that we can contribute to the help and care of those in need. Not everyone is expected to be a doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider. Remember what we were taught by Saint Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11:

(1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; 5 there are different forms of service but the same Lord; 6 there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. 7 To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; 10 to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

So, we are all given some talent. It may not be the talent by which the next medical miracle will come, but it may be the talent through which a spiritual miracle is shared. Sometimes, the only things we have to give to someone in need is time and love, but that may be the most important gift needed in the moment by someone who may be suffering, not just physically, but maybe spiritually. No matter our talent, we all can share the gift of love. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to our opportunities to help fulfill God's will, especially His call to care for those who are in need of assistance and care.

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 the blessings of attending a Catholic family conference.

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 XI: Midwest Catholic Family Conference

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>