



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Family, Faith, and Social Issues

Part XII: Vocations



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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, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because this is not Jeopardy, where the answers come first. 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 a special guest panelist, Father Carl Wertin who is the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Pueblo.

Father, 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.

Dear Lord, we pray especially for Amber, a child who is battling cancer. We pray Your healing hand will rest upon her, as well as Your hand of comfort; that You will guide the hearts and hands of her care givers, and that Your hand of comfort shall also rest upon all who love and care for her.

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 we start a New Year, it is a good time to reflect on what we have learned from what is past, but it is also a time to look forward to what is coming, especially our eternal future. As we prepare for the New Year, we recommend spending some time with a calendar and look for the opportunities to learn, reflect on, celebrate, and live our faith. If we look ahead, we may better prepare and participate. As part of our preparation, we can also discuss or research together with our children, our special days of worship.

A reference which may be of assistance from which to view the coming liturgical year can be found by entering “Catholic Liturgical Calendar 2020 pdf” into a search engine. You can also find a link to the USCCB Liturgical Calendar for the United States in the topic summary for this show. Simply go to <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides> and select episode 127.

<http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar/upload/2020cal.pdf>

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Back to Confirmation! The reception of Confirmation is the strengthening and completion of Baptism. When a person receives Confirmation they receive graces abundantly and these graces bring to us what are known as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in Isaiah 11:2-3.

(Isaiah 11:2-3)

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD, 3 and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide.

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord

How awesome to receive such wonderful gifts from the Holy Spirit! But if we are going to receive such gifts, shouldn't we know what they are about? Let us look at what each means so that we can know exactly how generous is our Lord.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the gifts are set into two classifications. The first are gifts that deal with reason or intellect. Those are Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding and Counsel. The second set of gifts are those of affection or emotions and those are Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

The following definitions are taken from a variety of sources. Much is also from my own learning about Confirmation way back in the 6th grade.

Wisdom: Wisdom helps us to understand and value correctly the things of God. The truths of Catholic Christian belief are far more important than things of this world. Wisdom helps us see the world differently and to perfect our relationship to the created world properly, loving creation for the sake of God, rather than for our own sake.

Understanding: Understanding helps us to know the mysteries of faith more clearly and allows us to grasp the essence of the truths of the Catholic faith.

Counsel (also known as Right Judgment): Counsel helps us to discern. With this gift we can figure out the right and wrong of every day life. It helps us to follow God's direction so that we may follow the narrow path in life on our way to heaven. This gift helps guide us in defending the truths of faith.

Knowledge: Knowledge allows us to discover God's will for us. Similar to the gifts of wisdom and understanding, knowledge is the perfection of faith. Wisdom gives us the desire to judge things according to the truths of the Catholic faith, and knowledge is the ability to actually do the job. This gift allows us to determine God's purpose in our lives and to live as He directs.

Piety (also known as Reverence): Piety is the gift that allows us to love. Through this gift we can serve God and be in a reverent relationship. Piety takes our willingness from a sense of obligation to a place of worship of God. Through Piety, we can lovingly serve God.

Fortitude (also known as Courage): Fortitude is the gift of strength. This gift enables us to do God's work with the strength and courage of a soldier. In times of persecution, "fortitude" will help us to stand up to the evil that is around us. Fortitude is the virtue of the martyrs. This gift allowed them to suffer with courage.

Fear of the Lord (also known as Wonder and Awe): Fear of the Lord is the most misunderstood of all the gifts. This gift is not a negative but a positive. Fear of the Lord gives us the desire to not offend God. With this gift, we clearly understand that we must depend on God for everything. It also allows us to know that God will provide the graces we need to keep from offending Him.

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.

If you would like to learn more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, 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 127.

Discussion:

Last time, I mentioned that during the course of this series, we discussed a number of family, faith, and social issues which we must navigate during the spectrum of life. I also mentioned that it is cliché to say that children are our future, but it is also very true, for what we teach our children is what will become the foundation for how our children will lead their lives and for what our children will teach generations to come.

How we engage our children will influence how they engage us as our years progress. We must have a balance of love and discipline, for when we allow these to fall out of balance or become inconsistent, we create challenges. We may not see the consequences in the moment; in fact, we may not see them at all, but they will be there as we interact or fail to interact with one another.

If we were perfect, we could lead perfect lives; but of course, we are not. That does not mean we should not try the best we can. Scripture provides us with insight as to what God asks of us and the importance of family, but it is not easy for any of us to read and fully comprehend everything alone. The time we spend with our children, helping them to learn, will also influence our own learning. Indeed, we must recognize that all which God has laid out for us is to enable our life long journey.

The issues of family, though, are not just about the time of childhood, but the full spectrum of life. The tools we give our children by which to experience and interpret the world will follow them into adulthood. They will become the doers and decision makers of our society. Let us enable them with love. Let us also enable them, not just with education, but also with experience and the experiences of faith.

As we consider the range of issues and traps for the hearts and minds of our children, we must remember, they will be molded by those who engage them. If we are absent in our emotions or our values, someone else will be present, most likely, someone pulling them in unhealthy directions. As we engage our children in prayer, learning, ministry, and life activities, we have the opportunity to provide them with what will enable them to influence the future. Let us fill

them with the blessings and grace of God and help them put on the armor of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of the gospel.

Just a reminder, blessings are an invocation of God's power and care and grace is God's undeserved help.

This week, as we conclude our series concerning faith, family, and social issues, I thought a fitting conclusion would be a discussion concerning vocations. As we are told in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the family plays a very important and significant role in relation to the discernment of vocations. As we pointed out during the course of this series, as well as during the discussions of several of our previous series, parents are called to teach their children as Moses advised the people in Deuteronomy 4:9-10.

(Deuteronomy 4:9-10)

[Moses instructed the people:] *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, 10 that day you stood before the LORD, your God, at Horeb, when the LORD said to me: Assemble the people for me, that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me as long as they live in the land and may so teach their children.*

We are also told in the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

(CCC: 1656)

... It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation.

(CCC: 1657)

...Thus 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.

Of course, one means through which we offer our life is through our actions as we live our vocation. In CCC: 2223, we are told, “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.” The Catechism continues in paragraph 2225 to state, “Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children.” And later, in paragraph 2226, we are told, “Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.”

While we have emphasized the role of parents, we must not forget that parents become grand-parents and hopefully, great-grand-parents, so the role of one generation for another continues for us all. While parents have the first and primary responsibility to teach their children, as family members, we must all consider our role towards enabling the discernment of vocations if we are to encourage and enable a healthy parish and church community.

(Question 1: Often, when we discuss vocations, our focus is upon the call to the priesthood, but that is not the only vocation to which we might be called. Father, what are the vocations to which God calls the children of His creation and why are these vocations important?)

- Priesthood
- Religious life
- Matrimony
- Single life

(Question 2: Also, when we talk of vocations, we often discuss the discernment of our youth, but the time of discernment is unique to each person. Father, who should engage in vocational discernment?)

- Children
- Teens
- Young adults
- Adults

(Question 3: In the moment, we do not always recognize God's call and to what He nudges us within our heart. What are some misconceptions about vocations and vocational discernment?)

- Immediate revelation → not an overnight process, but not never-ending either
- One-and-done → life events can drive adjustments or changes
- Prayer only → prayer is essential, but so is conversation and exploration
- Voices → listen for His “*light, silent sound*” (1 Kings 19:12) in our hearts
- Recruitment → discernment is a personal and environment examination process

(Question 4: During the introduction to our discussion, I pointed out the role of parents. In what ways can parents help their children learn about and discern to what God calls them?)

- Help them see the vocations which God lays out before them
- Discuss lives of the saints and religious
- Encourage them to read the stories of people of faith
- Talk about prayer and discernment
- Talk to them about God's plan vs expectations of worldly success
- Encourage them to talk with priests and religious
- Engage them in active ministry and ask them about their experiences
- Discuss, don't pressure
- Encourage them to reflect through the power of questions
- Engage them when they ask questions and help them research answers

(Question 5: While the family is the first place of vocational encouragement and discernment, parishes should endeavor to support parents and families. In what ways can parishes encourage and be supportive of the vocational discernment process?)

- Pray for vocations
- Incorporate education and discussions as part of religious formation
- Invite vocation directors, councilors, or advocates to speak
- Invite seminarians and religious novices to speak
- Form questioning and discernment groups
- Conduct visits to seminaries, monasteries, and convents
- Conduct discernment retreats
- Encourage children, teens, and young adults to participate in ministry

(Question 6: Most of our discussion so far has been about discernment and encouragement. If someone feels the call or has questions about discernment, to whom might they reach to assist them?)

- Parents
- Parish priest
- Vocation directors
- Vocation councilors
- Religious representatives

Quotes:

– *Saint John Paul II*

Creating the human race in His own image and continually keeping it in being, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation... of love and communion. Love is therefore the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being.

– *Saint John Paul II*

The vocation and mission of the faithful can only be understood in light of a renewed awareness of the Church as sacrament or sign and instrument of intimate union with God, of the unity of the whole of mankind, and of the personal duty to adhere more closely to her.

– *Saint John Paul II*

What have I done with my baptism and confirmation? Is Christ really at the center of my life? Do I have time for prayer in my life? Do I live my life as a vocation and mission?

Final Thoughts:

During the course of this series we discussed a variety of aspects of family, faith, and social experiences. While our discussion traversed twelve episodes, we barely scratched the tip of the iceberg in relation to living our faith in family and society. Of course, our faith is a life long journey, which requires ongoing learning, reflection, and action.

Our vocational discernment enables us to examine what God asks of us and the purpose to which He desires we put our lives. Of course, there is also a lot of noise generated by the world

to distract us from understanding to what we are called, but if we seek God's help, He will not deny us.

As we mentioned during the course of our discussion, while parents have the first and primary responsibility for the education of their children, we all have a responsibility to support the family and nurturing of our youth. A healthy parish will endeavor to provide robust encouragement and support for vocational education and discernment.

During the course of our daily prayers, Sharon and I pray a simple prayer for vocations:

Dear Lord, we pray You will guide parents in how they may share with their children the vocations You have laid out before us. We pray You will touch young hearts so they may respond to the vocations to which You call them. And because we are in such desperate need, dear Lord, we pray You will raise up for us a multitude of priests and religious; priests and religious who will teach Your holy truth, who will do what is right and just, and who will lead the people in all which is right and just so that hearts may be opened to You and Your will may be done.

We hope you will join us in prayers for vocations during the course of your daily prayers, prayers with family, and prayers in fellowship.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we start a new series and turn our discussion to the Rosary.

Father, we are really happy you were able to join us today.

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: The Rosary – Part I: The Controversy

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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