



***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Our Lady of America**  
***Part I: Introduction to the Call***



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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 with a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I always mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our only cradle Catholic on the team, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because how can we have answers if we don't have questions? Anyway, to answer my questions, correct my pronunciation, and make sure I know which century I am talking about 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 pray especially today for all the sick and afflicted. We pray Your healing hand shall rest upon them, 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.

Dear Lord, we also turn our prayers today to those who are in ministry of any sort. We pray You will look over them and protect them as they do the work in care of others. May Your blessing and grace always be upon 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 listen to us on any device where you can connect to the Internet, including 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 your assistance in evangelization. By sharing the URL for our show, you can help us spread knowledge of our faith. All you need to do is share the URL, [wcatradio.com/armoroffaith](http://wcatradio.com/armoroffaith) via email or social media and tell family and friends as well. Several of the streaming services through which we are available on demand also have share options, so we invite you to join the evangelization and help us spread the good news of the Gospel and our faith in Jesus Christ. You can also help us by selecting the follow or subscribe option associated with the service through which you listen to our show.

### **Current Day Commentary:**

The pandemic is obviously causing changes to our lives. It is also causing us to look at how we conduct ministry. Normally, we come together to help others, but during this time of social distancing, we must make adjustments to our gathering.

One such event impacted is the annual Walk for Life in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This year, the walk will be virtual. To learn how to participate in and support this virtual event, you can visit <https://www.walkforlife.com/>.

Part of the challenge we face is the determination of what we can do safely. That particular term is relative, for some are more risk adverse than others and some are more vulnerable than others. We must consider the activity, space in which it is to be conducted, and the vulnerability of participants. Unfortunately, our news media, because they appear committed to keeping everything political, has done an absolutely deplorable job of keeping us informed of safety measures which enable us to go on about our life, ministry, and worship.

The challenge for us is that because we cannot see the transmission of viruses and the vulnerability of each person is different, it is difficult to assess the efficacy of protective measures or assess, not just our own risk, but what risk we present to others. We are dependent upon the experts to advise us, but as long as the media keeps up the political hype and sensationalism, effective problem solving by churches and ministries will be hindered.

Regardless of the political environment in which we must lead our lives, we must remember we are called to ministry of one another. If we have concerns, we must use effective problem solving measures to discuss and agree how we may protect ourselves and others. As the media amplifies the politics of fear, we must still ask in prayer, what does God ask of us? Let us allow the Holy Spirit to guide us to the work we need to do and ask for God's grace and blessings. Oh, and if I haven't mentioned this before, grace is God's undeserved help and a blessing is the invocation of God's power and care.

By the way, let us remember to pray for our leaders, our problem solvers, our decision makers, and all who work to keep services and ministries operating. Let us also pray for truth and integrity in our media. That last one may sound like a long shot, but remember, nothing is impossible with God!

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

### ***Spring – Part VI:***

Welcome back to a short exercise on Spring cleaning of our souls. This exercise is called, examination of conscience. Why is examination important? We are told that we should do this each evening before going to bed. We need to review each day all the good and bad that has crossed our path during the day. The good part of this is that in doing this examination, we also realize all the blessings that have been part of our day.

For this exercise, we are wanting to prepare for going to confession so that we may cleanse and purify our souls. When was the last time you went to confession? I find that whenever I go, no matter how long it has been since the last visit, I always leave feeling so refreshed. Sometimes I leave with tears of joy for the happiness I feel by letting go of sins that have mounted up and are hurting my heart.

We have made it to the half way point of using the Ten Commandments for self examination-of-conscience. So, let's look at commandment number five, You shall not kill.

In Exodus 20:13 it states:

*You shall not kill.*

In Deuteronomy 5:17 it states:

*You shall not kill.*

In today's traditional teaching we learn:

You shall not kill.

These four words are pretty simple and easy to understand, right? Well, maybe. To kill in this case does not always mean to physically murder a person. The word kill takes on other

meanings as well. So let us look at some questions we might ask ourselves in this examination process.

- 1) Have I physically harmed a person?
- 2) Have I spoken falsely about a person so that others might join in to condemn that person?
- 3) Have I kept feelings of anger or resentment or hostility toward a person?
- 4) Have I had an abortion?
- 5) Have I helped another person to obtain an abortion?
- 6) Have I agreed with or assisted in the act of euthanasia?
- 7) Have I abused alcohol or drugs?
- 8) Have I harmed myself, or encouraged others, to use forms of sterilization?
- 9) Have I disrupted natural law by participating in sins that go against human life, such as artificial insemination or invitro fertilization?
- 10) Have I ever voted in an election for a person who openly promotes abortion, euthanasia, or sins against natural law?

The sinful acts that fall under killing, are quite a few. These, like all the sins of the Ten Commandments are very serious, however, Jesus gave us a way to repent and be forgiven and we should take advantage of this and keep our souls pure. As human children of God, who have free will, we are prone to doing sinful acts. But also, as children of God, we are called by His love and grace to seek forgiveness. The hardest part of seeking forgiveness is in forgiving ourselves. By going to confession, the priest, acting in Persona Christi (being the heart and voice of Jesus), will help us to understand the gravity of our sins, how we can avoid doing them again, and to also understand that despite our sins, God still loves us. Love is what God is all about.

*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 Spring Cleaning of the Soul and Examination of Conscience, 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 148.

## Discussion:

Last time, I mentioned that when we talk about the blessings of the fullness of faith, we must reflect on the fact that there is so much to learn and there are so many distractions. We certainly cannot read the Bible in one sitting, much less comprehend all of its wisdom. It is a life long journey, and as with any journey, it begins with the decision to make the first step.

As we concluded our series concerning Divine Mercy, we also mentioned that with a diary which consists of six notebooks consolidated into a 437 page volume, we were only able to present the highlights. We hope that during the course of that series, as with any series we present, we have stirred your curiosity to learn more through study, meditation, contemplation, and prayer.

We also mentioned that while even though Divine Mercy is an approved apparition, because it is private revelation, we have no obligation to believe in the writings of Saint Faustina or to practice the devotions outlined within.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia (New Advent):

When the Church approves private revelations, she declares only that there is nothing in them contrary faith or good morals, and that they may be read without danger or even with profit; no obligation is thereby imposed on the faithful to believe them. (Poulain)

While there is no obligation of belief, we should take a moment and reflect on the blessings we might share through them. As we reflect on the elements of the devotion, we should consider their consistency to what Jesus teaches us in scripture. For example, let's look at one example where Jesus spoke specifically about Mercy.

(Matthew 9:13)

*“Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”*

As we reflect on this instruction, we should observe an opportunity through the Divine Mercy Devotion to live what Jesus taught, not only that we should seek His Mercy and Love, but that we are also called to give mercy and love. The most important part of our consideration as to our practice of the devotion is the mercy and love to which we are called.

Today, our discussion turns to another private revelation which is not currently approved by the Church. As we do, we will also talk a little about discernment of private revelation.

If you remember, during our Divine Mercy discussion, we related that Saint Faustina received her vows in 1933. That same year, another woman, Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil also received her vows. The faith of two women, one in Poland, one in the United States, were a world apart, yet, joined in their vows to Christ. Of course, there were a number of women who received their vows in 1933, but anytime I see a connection to 33, the age of our Lord at His crucifixion, I look to see if there may be other connections to which our attention might be drawn.

Saint Faustina passed away in 1938. It was that same year that Sister Mildred Mary reported that she began to experience mystical events. These events apparently led to a series of purported apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first of which began on 25 September 1956. (Rhoades)

The nature of the purported messages from our Blessed Mother to Sister Mildred Mary were to call us to the sanctification of the family and purity of heart. (Rhoades)

**(Question 1:** As I mentioned about Divine Mercy, when we consider a private revelation, one of the first things we should examine is consistency with what we are taught from scripture. In what ways does scripture speak to us about family and purity of heart? What is the theme of family in scripture?)

(Exodus 20:12)

*Honor your father and your mother; that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

(Deuteronomy 11:18-21)

*18 Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul. Bind them on your arm as a sign, and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. 19 Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up, 20 and write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates, 21 so that, as long as the heavens are above the earth, you and your children may live on in the land which the LORD swore to your ancestors he would give them.*

(Proverbs 1:8)

*Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching;*

(Ephesians 6:1-4)

*1 Children, obey your parents [in the Lord], for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise, 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life on earth." 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.*

(Ephesians 5:21)

[Husbands and Wives] *21 Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

(Ephesians 5:1-5)

*1 So be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma. 3 Immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting among holy ones, 4 no obscenity or silly or suggestive talk, which is out of place, but instead, thanksgiving. 5 Be sure of this, that no immoral or impure or greedy person, that is, an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Of course, we are beginning with an over simplification of the reported messages from our Blessed Mother, but sanctification of the family and purity of heart certainly sound like matters of concern to God and issues to which Our Lady is likely to draw our attention. As I mentioned earlier, though, the apparitions reported by Sister Mildred Mary are not approved by the Catholic Church.

After some inquiry and investigation, the appointed ecclesiastical authority, the Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, declared, he “cannot approve or support public devotion or cult.” (Rhoades)

**(Question 2:** The bishops of the other five dioceses engaged in the examination process also accepted and supports these findings and conclusions. So, what does that mean to our discussion? What might we risk by examining these reported messages from Our Lady?)

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(CCC: 67)

Throughout the ages, there have been so-called "private" revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the *sensus fidelium* knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church.

Christian faith cannot accept "revelations" that claim to surpass or correct the Revelation of which Christ is the fulfillment, as is the case in certain non-Christian religions and also in certain recent sects which base themselves on such "revelations".

**(Question 3:** As we consider this brief statement of the Catechism on private revelation, what should we understand about private revelation in relation to living our faith?)

- God or His emissaries have spoken to man for centuries
- Some reports are considered credible, while others maybe not so much
- Private revelation does not belong to the deposit of faith as Christ, the Word made flesh, is the fulfillment of revelation
- Private revelation does not improve or complete what Christ as revealed, but we may use it to live our faith more fully
- Discernment must be guided by the Magisterium of the Church
- Part of discernment is determination of the authenticity of the call

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As we discussed, one of the big questions is discernment. One of the Church documents on this subject is “Norms Regarding the Manner of Proceeding In the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations,” established by the Sacred Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith. This document states:

When Ecclesiastical Authority is informed of a presumed apparition or revelation, it will be its **responsibility**:

- a) first, to **judge the fact according to positive and negative criteria** (cf. *infra*, no. I);
- b) then, **if this examination results in a favorable conclusion, to permit some public manifestation of cult or of devotion, overseeing this with great prudence** (equivalent to the formula, “**for now, nothing stands in the way**”) (*pro nunc nihil obstare*).
- c) finally, in light of time passed and of experience, with special regard to the fecundity of spiritual fruit generated from this new devotion, to **express a judgment regarding the authenticity and supernatural character if the case so merits**. (Šeper)

**(Question 4:** This section of the document presents the “responsibility” of the Ecclesiastical Authority. Why is this statement important to us? Why do we want the Ecclesiastical Authority to express a judgment as to authenticity and supernatural character?)

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The document goes on to specify the “criteria for judging, at least with probability, the character of the presumed apparitions or revelations.” The positive criteria it relates are:

- a) **Moral certitude, or at least great probability of the existence of the fact**, acquired by means of a **serious investigation**;
- b) **Particular circumstances** relative to the existence and to the nature of the fact, that is to say:
  1. **Personal qualities of the subject** or of the subjects (in particular, psychological equilibrium, honesty and rectitude of moral life, sincerity and habitual docility towards Ecclesiastical Authority, the capacity to return to a normal regimen of a life of faith, etc.);
  2. As regards revelation: **true theological and spiritual doctrine and immune from error**;
  3. **Healthy devotion and abundant and constant spiritual fruit** (for example, spirit of prayer, conversion, testimonies of charity, etc.). (Šeper)

**(Question 5:** So, the first step is to discern positive indicators. Why are these criteria critical to evaluation of a purported revelation?)

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The document then specifies negative criteria:

- a) **Manifest error** concerning the fact.

- b) Doctrinal errors attributed to God himself, or to the Blessed Virgin Mary, or to some saint in their manifestations, taking into account however the possibility that the subject might have added, even unconsciously, purely human elements or some error of the natural order to an authentic supernatural revelation (cf. Saint Ignatius, *Exercises*, no. 336).
- c) Evidence of a search for profit or gain strictly connected to the fact.
- d) Gravely immoral acts committed by the subject or his or her followers when the fact occurred or in connection with it.
- e) Psychological disorder or psychopathic tendencies in the subject, that with certainty influenced on the presumed supernatural fact, or psychosis, collective hysteria or other things of this kind. (Šeper)

**(Question 6:** The examination according to these criteria may be considered disqualifying conditions. Why might these be indicators dissuading authenticity?)

To clarify the appropriate use of these criteria, the document states:

It is to be noted that these criteria, be they positive or negative, are not peremptory but rather indicative, and they should be applied cumulatively or with some mutual convergence. (Šeper)

### Quotes:

(Luke 9:49-50)

49 Then John said in reply, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company." 50 Jesus said to him, "Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you."

(Acts 5:33-39)

33 When they heard this, they became infuriated and wanted to put them to death. 34 But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up, ordered the men to be put outside for a short time, 35 and said to them, "Fellow Israelites, be careful what you are about to do to these men. 36 Some time ago, Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone important, and about four hundred men joined him, but he was killed, and all those who were loyal to him were disbanded and came to nothing. 37 After him came Judas the Galilean at the time of the census. He also drew people after him, but he too perished and all who were loyal to him were scattered. 38 So now I tell you, have nothing to do with these men, and let them go. For if this endeavor or this activity is of human origin, it will destroy itself. 39 But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God." They were persuaded by him.

(1 John 4:1-6)

1 Beloved, do not trust every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 This is how you can know the

*Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God, 3 and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus does not belong to God. This is the spirit of the antichrist that, as you heard, is to come, but in fact is already in the world. 4 You belong to God, children, and you have conquered them, for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They belong to the world; accordingly, their teaching belongs to the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We belong to God, and anyone who knows God listens to us, while anyone who does not belong to God refuses to hear us. This is how we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of deceit.*

## **Final Thoughts:**

While our intent within this series is to discuss the reported message of Our Lady of America, we cannot converse about such things without understanding the church's teaching on private revelation as well as private devotion.

As we grow in faith, our desire to live our faith grows and we may seek devotions by which to express our faith. We are not limited in the devotions we may exercise, but, it is essential that the devotions by which we express our faith are consistent with and reflect the will of God. Indeed, at this very moment, false prophets and wolves in the clothing of sheep endeavor to confuse and divide us as a means to separate us from our Creator. We must be wary and we must test the spirits as scripture tells us, but neither do we want to turn away the light silent sound which speaks to our heart in truth. If ever we are confused, we must remember the One Jesus sent to remind us of all He taught and to testify to truth.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we continue our discussion concerning discernment of private revelation and devotion.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to share the blessings of our trust and faith in You. 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:** Our Lady of America – Part II: Private Revelation and Devotion

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