



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Our Lady of America
Part VII: Our Youth as Torchbearers



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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 a wise fictional woman once said, “simple is as simple asks,” or something like. I was just paraphrasing. In reality, I'm not sure exactly what that means or has to do with anything, so I will just let everyone ponder that wisdom of fiction for awhile. In the mean time, 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.

We are also joined by special guest panelist, Donna Mae. Donna Mae is the artist who sculpted the statue of Our Lady of America which was carried at the 1993 World Youth Day at Denver, Colorado. While Donna Mae did not personally meet with Sister Mary Ephrem, she did converse with Sister via phone and mail as Donna Mae sculpted the statue and therefore, Donna Mae became part of the history associated with Our Lady of America.

Donna Mae, we are happy to have you back as a member of 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 for Rena and Jared as they battle for health. 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 on all those 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 listen to us on any device where you can connect to the Internet, including 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 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 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.

We would also like to remind everyone that Father Donald Calloway will join us on our 16 July 2020 show, which will be episode 155. Father Calloway is the author of a new book which Scott Hahn describes as, “...a summary of the whole of the study of St. Joseph — the wisdom of the saints, the teachings of the popes, and the reflections of theologians.”

The title of the book is Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father. It is available for purchase through the website, www.consecrationtostjoseph.org or you can also visit www.fathercalloway.com, and at the upper right hand corner, you will see an oval that says, “Consecration to St. Joseph, Click here.” So, click there, and if technology works, it will take you where you can learn more about Father Calloway's book.

We hope you will join us next time as we talk with Father Calloway about his book and the example of love which Saint Joseph brings to the faithful in his role as the Patron of the Universal Church and the Terror of Demons.

Current Day Commentary:

Last time, I mentioned the divisions between Catholics being sown through social media. Some will criticize me by saying that I am only concerned about the tone of social media discussion concerning matters of the Catholic Church while our cities are marred with violence and the flames of hate are fanned by political organizations and what is known as our entertainment, mainstream, and social media platforms. I will address that in a future segment, but if Catholics are to be of loving service to the world, we must first address the wolves in the clothing of sheep within our faith community and how they are working to destroy us from within.

During our series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” (episodes 67 – 68, which you can listen to on demand) we mentioned that our intent was not for the faithful to sleuth out the wolves, for we shall leave that to our good shepherds, but because our good shepherds are so few and we are in such desperate need, we must be better prepared to do our part if we hope to avoid the wolves who roam in the search of the ruin of souls, to paraphrase Pope Leo XIII.

We must remember, the more we comprehend about the fullness of our faith, the more difficult we make the tasks of the “wolves in the clothing of sheep” who are set to deceive and mislead us. We leave ourselves vulnerable, if we do not endeavor to learn the fullness of our faith, which is also a challenge, for learning the fullness of our faith is a life long journey. We pray this show may provide some assistance along the way.

We must also recognize that we cannot leave all the effort for the defense of our souls, and our Church, to our good shepherds. We must be prepared to share our faith, not just in words, but also in deed; for words only have power through the actions they inspire. The actions of love are the most powerful of all as demonstrated by our Lord as He conquered death and lit, with Love and Mercy, the path to His heavenly kingdom. (cf. John 15:13)

Last time, I mentioned 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 as scripture which helps us understand who we are truly called to follow. You have also heard me mention 1 Peter 3:13-18, which reads:

(1 Peter 3:15-18)

13 Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, 16 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. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.

We cannot adequately give reason for our hope if we do not know the One who is the source. If we are to know our Lord, we must spend time with Him. We must also listen to Him through what He reveals to our heart as well as through what He reveals through His scriptural teachings. The closer we come to Him, the more we are able to explain the reason for our hope as well as comprehend what God asks of us.

We cannot remain silent as evil hearts twist our faith and our society, but neither can we be part of the solution if we do not speak with hearts of love. To prepare ourselves, we must go to Jesus in adoration, listen to Him in prayer, learn from Him in scripture, and live what He teaches through our service to those who surround us and those God sends to cross our path.

So, as we engage the discourse on social media; before we respond to the barbs and falsehoods, we should say a prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in a response which is consistent with the mercy, compassion, love, and the strength in faith to which we are called. Keep in mind; mercy, compassion, and love, do not mean weakness. We must not shrink as the social media political trolls descend upon us, nor should we be surprised that hashtags of love never seem to trend. It would be good if that was the norm, but we must also remember, the place where it is most important for love to trend is through what we share in our daily lives.

So, let us not be afraid to stand up for the truth of the Lord. Let us stand firm, but lovingly behind our words. Let us allow Jesus to lead us through our persecutions. Let us always be ready to give reason for our hope, but let us also remember to “...do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping [our] conscience clear, so that, when [we] are maligned, those who defame [our] good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.”
(1 Peter 3:16)

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part II:

Back to our study on Sainthood.

I visited the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) web site for information on Sainthood and found a wealth of information. Since the Bishops have the authority to teach and to inform us, I thought it appropriate to use their own words. Let's us go back in history to find out how this has evolved from the beginning of Christianity to today's process of attaining sainthood.

In the first centuries of the Church, the process of recognizing a saint was based on public acclaim or the *vox populi, vox Dei* (voice of the people, voice of God). There was no formal canonical process as understood by today's standards. Beginning in the sixth century and continuing into the twelfth century, the intervention of the local bishop was required before someone could be canonized. The intervention of the local bishop usually began with a request from the local community for the bishop to recognize someone a saint. Upon studying the request and a written biography, if he found it favorable, the bishop would typically issue a decree, legitimize the liturgical cult and thereby canonize the person.

Starting in the tenth century, a cause proceeded with the usual steps, i.e. the person's reputation would spread, a request to the local bishop from the people to declare the person a saint occurred, and a biography would be written for the bishop's review. Now however, the bishop would collect eyewitness testimony of those who knew the person and who had witnessed miracles, and he would provide a summary of the case to the Pope for his approval. The pope then reviewed the cause and if he approved it, he issued

a decree declaring the person a canonized saint. The first documented case of papal intervention is by Pope John XV on January 31, 993 for the canonization of St. Ulric. When Pope Sixtus V reorganized the Roman Curia in 1588 he established the Congregation for Sacred Rites. One of its functions was to assist the Pope with reviewing causes. Except for a few canonical developments, from 1588 the process of canonization remained the same until 1917 when a universal Code of Canon Law was promulgated.

The 1917 code contained 145 canons (cc. 1999-2144) on causes of canonization and mandated that an episcopal process and an apostolic process be conducted. The episcopal process consisted of the local bishop verifying the reputation of the person, ensuring that a biography existed, collecting eye witness testimony and the person's written works. All of this was then forwarded to the Congregation for Sacred Rites. The apostolic process consisted of reviewing the evidence submitted, collecting more evidence, studying the cause, investigating any alleged miracles and ultimately forwarding the cause to the Pope for his approval. This process remained in effect until 1983 with the promulgation of the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the new norms for causes of canonization: *Divinus Perfectionis Magister, Normae Servandae in Inquisitionibus ab Episcopis Faciendis in Causis Sanctorum and Sanctorum Mater* (2007). This revised process for causes of canonization is still in force and is detailed below.

Stage I – Examining the Life of a Candidate for Sainthood

Phase 1: Diocesan or Eparchial Level

Five years must pass from the time of a candidate's death before a cause may begin. This is to allow greater balance and objectivity in evaluating the cause and to let the emotions of the moment dissipate. The pope can dispense from this waiting period.

The bishop of the diocese or eparchy in which the person died is responsible for beginning the investigation. The petitioner (who for example can be the diocese/eparchy, bishop, religious order or association of the faithful) asks the bishop through a person known as the *postulator* to open the investigation.

The bishop then begins a series of consultations with the episcopal conference, the faithful of his diocese or eparchy and the Holy See. Once the consultations are done and he has received the '*nihil obstat*' of the Holy See, he forms a diocesan or eparchial tribunal. The tribunal will investigate the martyrdom or how the candidate lived a life of heroic virtues, that is, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, and others specific to his or her state in life. Witnesses will be called and documents written by and about the candidate must be gathered and examined.

Phase II: Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Once the diocesan or eparchial investigation is finished, the documentation is sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The *postulator* for this phase, residing in Rome, under the direction of a member of the Congregation's staff called a relator prepares the '*Positio*,' or summary of the documentary evidence from the diocesan or eparchial phase in order to prove the heroic exercise of the virtue or the martyrdom.

The '*Positio*' undergoes an examination by nine theologians who vote on whether or not the candidate lived a heroic life or suffered martyrdom. If the majority of the theologians are in favor, the cause is passed on for examination by cardinals and bishops who are members of the Congregation. If their judgment is favorable, the prefect of the Congregation presents the results of the entire course of the cause to the pope, who gives his approval and authorizes the Congregation to draft a decree declaring one Venerable if they have lived a virtuous life or a Blessed if they have been martyred. (USCCB)

When next we meet, we shall continue learning about this process to sainthood. In future episodes we can examine not only the history and process of becoming a saint, but we will also take a look at some of our saints and what they were 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 our relationship with saints, 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 154.

Discussion:

During our last episode, we mentioned that there is no doubt that America has been blessed in many ways and holds a position of leadership in the world. We must also reflect on the responsibilities such leadership brings, especially in consideration of Luke 12:48, which reads:

(Luke 12:48B)

Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.

In our reflection, we must consider our blessings and our calling, as well as what we are able to do to accomplish what is contained in that calling. The virtues to which we are called are also blessings we may share. The direction of our country, right now, is not toward God. The children of His creation are drifting away. We might seek to blame this condition or that, and indeed we must be wary of the tactics being used to manipulate us and against us, but we must also consider where we stand and to what direction we are turned. If we know the fullness of our faith, as I mentioned earlier, we make it more difficult for the one who would deceive and divide us. We also become part of the effort to accomplish the will of God.

I'm sure the thought by some who are listening is that we cannot change the world. By ourselves, that may be true, but we are not alone. Still, if we do not do our part to support, teach, and encourage the generations, we become part of the weakness which will cede to the evil one, his day.

We know the end, she will crush its head, but we also want to ensure we do not become a spiritual casualty along the way. If we put on the armor of faith, if we educate our children of this armor, if we wear the armor with confidence and place our hope in our Lord and Savior; through our belief in Him, through our trust in Him; His Mercy will be there for us, for as we are told by Saint Faustina, His will is love and mercy itself.

Today, we want to turn our discussion to the call of love to the hearts of our youth. As we mentioned last time, it is through the family by which generations are raised. While others may influence, and we may certainly change along the way as a result of that influence, our family experience provides the foundation for our growth and the values which influence the quality of our choices. We pointed out that:

- Children learn from their parents
- Parents are called to teach their children in the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 4:10, 11:19)
- Parents are called to protect their children
 - ➔ Protecting children includes protecting innocence
 - ➔ Protecting children includes teaching the ways of God
 - ➔ Protecting children includes teaching them the virtues which make for a more loving world
 - ➔ Protecting children includes preparing them for the vocations God has laid out before us
 - ➔ Protecting children includes helping them see all the blessings which God offers through living the fullness of our Catholic faith

Last time, we ran out of time before we could discuss what we might do to enable a positive environment for families, so before we turn to discussing the call to our youth, I would like to begin with the foundation of their learning and growth.

(Question 1: As we look at the condition of families in America, we observe that the traditional family is under heavy attack by politics, culture, finances, technology, and ideologies. Given our current direction and the overwhelming array of forces against us, we might be tempted to despair. **What might we do to help turn the tide?)**

- If we are to teach our children, we must first learn ourselves
- Parents must engage religious formation with their children
- Parents must help their children understand the blessings of their faith
- Parents must endeavor to be an example of faith for their children
- Families must live as examples of their faith in service of their communities
- Families must lovingly encourage one another to remain strong in faith

- Families must pray together, especially the Rosary and Divine Mercy chaplet
 - Families must talk about their faith together and the love we are called to share
 - Families must engage the community with charity, ministry, and love
 - Families should consider means to share in ministry together
 - Faith communities must provide religious formation for the entire family
 - Faith communities must encourage our youth by providing opportunities to put faith to action
 - As we engage our youth, we must always be prepared to give them the reason for our hope (cf. 1 Peter 3:13-18)
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In her diary, Sister Mary Ephrem wrote:

Our Lady made known to me that she is particularly interested in the youth of our nation. It is they who are to be the leaders of this movement of renewal on the face of the earth. Their ranks will be swelled by the youths of other nations whom Our Lady also calls to help in the accomplishment of this great renewal. (Neuzil, 12)

(Question 2: We see here mention of a renewal and the leaders of that renewal. What do we think that renewal might be and how might our youth lead that renewal?)

Renewal:

- Renewal of our dedication to God
- Renewal of spirit in faith
- Renewal of our learning the ways of God
- Renewal of our commitment to share the blessings of love
- Renewal of our commitment to help accomplish His will
- Renewal of the sanctity of the family
- Renewal of commitment to purity
- Renewal of the sanctity of life
- Renewal of love for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Leading:

- By pointing to the way
- With spirit
- With faith
- With energy
- With excitement
- As examples of His light
- As examples of His love
- As examples of His Mercy
- As examples of courage and strength in faith
- As examples of service to the Lord
- As examples of service to one another, especially the less fortunate

In her diary, Sister Mary Ephrem wrote:

St. Michael came to me one evening shortly after Our Lady's visit, holding an immense flaming torch. He held it towards me saying:

“My little sister, you must carry this torch through the world.”

He came again the next night in the same manner.

The next day I was interiorly enlightened during Mass. It was made known to me that those, particularly the youth, who are willing wholeheartedly to follow Our Lady in her great battle against evil would bear the special title of "Torchbearers of the Queen." This torch, of course, is Divine Love, for it is Love alone that will conquer hate and all that hate brings with it. (Neuzil, 13)

(Question 3: Here we see the call, particularly to the youth, to follow Our Lady in her great battle against evil. There is a qualification, though, “willing wholeheartedly.” I remember in my youth, I was searching my way and I am not sure I was wholehearted about anything. How might our youth know they are being called and why would they want to respond wholeheartedly?)

- We must spread the word, not just in religious formation, but service
- We must enable our youth with quality religious formation
- We must encourage responsible participation in the activities of faith
- We must engage them in activities of ministry
- We must enable them to encourage and inspire their peers to join them
- We must help them understand what it means to be servant leaders
- We must enable and prepare them for the vocations to which they feel called
- We must help them experience living the blessings of faith in God

Sister Mary Ephrem attributed the following words to Our Lady.

"I wish to gather about me, my tender child, soldier and valiant bearer of the torch, an army of brave lovers, who as my torchbearers will enkindle the fire of Divine Love in the souls of men. Only those who are strong in love can become my soldiers to bear aloft, not the sword of destruction, but the sword of fire, the flaming torch of Divine Charity. (Neuzil, 10)

(Question 4: If we look at the news of our day, I don't know about you, but I do not see a “whole lotta love going on.” Our youth are being enticed to pick up the sword of destruction, not just of property, but of the soul. It is not typically difficult to wield that sword, for it is a sword of death, but the more challenging sword to hold is “the sword of fire, the flaming torch of Divine Charity, which is a flaming sword by which to extinguish the darkness.” Of course, I

have mentioned I am a military man, so whenever I hear mention of the use of a weapon, or any piece of equipment, I also look to the training required for its proper, effective, and efficient use. No soldier can be effective and proficient without training and practice. Who has the responsibility to train and enable our youth to bear the flaming torch of Divine Charity?)

- Parents
- Siblings
- Extended family members
- Parish community
- Clergy
- Religious
- Magisterium of the Catholic Church

Quotes:

Saint John Paul II – Quotes for consideration by our youth

Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

What really matters in life is that we are loved by Christ and that we love Him in return. In comparison to the love of Jesus, everything else is secondary. And, without the love of Jesus, everything is useless.

There is no place for selfishness and no place for fear! Do not be afraid, then, when love makes demands. Do not be afraid when love requires sacrifice.

The way Jesus shows you is not easy. Rather, it is like a path winding up a mountain. Do not lose heart! The steeper the road, the faster it rises towards ever wider horizons.

The future is in your hearts and in your hands. God is entrusting to you the task, at once difficult and uplifting, of working with Him in the building of the civilization of love.

Dear young people, let yourselves be taken over by the light of Christ, and spread that light wherever you are.

Final Thoughts:

It is cliché to point out that our youth are our future, but it is also a point of truth. The evil one is well aware of this, and we must expect he will send his minions to target the innocence of our children, to confuse our youth, and seduce them to all the flaws of the world.

To our listeners who are parents, one of our greatest challenges a parent faces is the defense of the innocence of their children while we work to provide for, educate, train, and prepare them for their role as adults. With all of the onslaught of the political, media, and technological institutions working to capture the attention of our children and present them with the messages

of the evil one, we must remain close to our children and help them see and recognize the evil which is after the ruin of their soul. It is no easy task, but it starts with a request for God's grace and blessing in performance of the parental vocation.

To our listeners who are currently engaged in non-parental vocations, your encouragement and support is required. As we discern our talents and the purpose to which our Heavenly Father desires they shall be put, we must remember to ask our Lord in prayer how we may be of assistance towards educating and encouraging our youth to assume their role to help spread the Gospel and perform the actions which God desires of us.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we are joined by Father Donald Calloway to discuss his new book and what we may learn from Saint Joseph.

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 VIII: Revisiting Saint Joseph and Fatherhood

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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