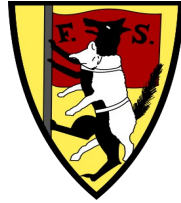




The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them *Part III: Recruiting the Wolves*



*Wolf in Sheep's Clothing - Fabian Society
Public Domain*

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, which is also known as the Order of Preachers, and she, along with her husband Dan, are engaged in youth catechesis and music ministry at Saint Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge, Colorado. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone by now knows, I am simply here to ask questions, because he who has the questions does not always have the answers, so to cover up my ignorance, that 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.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Discussion:

Last time we discussed political organizations and the politics in play designed to lead Catholics away from the moral teachings of our faith. We noted that just because Catholic is in the name of an organization, it does not mean they properly reflect Catholic Church teaching and traditional values of what we believe God asks of us. We noted there are a variety of

organizations which exist to promote a political agenda and confuse our understanding for political objectives or to distract us from what we believe God asks of us.

The same can also be said for publications which may contain truthful elements of the Catholic faith, but, then, reframe the discussion in ways designed to prevent or at least lessen opposition to political agendas or solutions which may appear noble on the surface, but carry harmful consequences.

As I mentioned before, the issue of our discussion is not whether liberals or conservatives are correct in their political ideologies, rather, the most important point for our consideration is whether we understand what God asks of us as we tend to His creation and how we lead our lives. In our efforts, it is not just a matter of identifying a problem. We may all agree there is a problem, but in looking for the solution, that which is right and just must be considered as we navigate the complete problem solving process and manage the consequences of solutions and actions. We must also recognize that the prowling wolves are not contained in just one person, organization, party, or institution. The wolf roams wherever they may find their prey.

Our best defense, as we face those who endeavor to manipulate us, is to know our faith. If we find ourselves questioning what is truly right and just, then, let us pray that God will lead our discernment.

Last time, we ran out of time before I could get to my final question, so we shall lead off with it today.

(Question 1: Of course, we have spent considerable time in relation to “Progressive” organizations as we consider the boast of Alexander Trachtenburg as to the use of labels made lovable, such as “Progressive” and “Liberal,” by which to assume power, but, in fairness, they are not the only wolves over which we might be concerned. Where else need we be concerned for those who might endeavor to deceive us away from what God asks of us?)

Of course, as Catholics, as it has been throughout history, we face a number of anti-Catholic forces, but the focus of our discussion are those who come presenting themselves as Catholic, but promote agendas in opposition to the teachings of the church. They are perhaps the most dangerous to us, because, while we hope to trust all the children of God's creation, we expect a common bond and trust with those who profess our faith. Even more, we desire to follow our shepherds.

Of course, as we think of wolves in sheep's clothing, we think of those who are hiding among the sheep. We look at the sheep as mostly the laity, the average person, those who we hope to find within the pews. We believe we share common bond of faith with all who profess to be Catholic. When we see “Catholic” associated with an organization or publication, we would like to trust they represent the truths of our faith.

(Question 2: As members of the flock, we want to be vigilante for the wolf who disguises themselves as sheep. What other clothes might the wolf wear which may cause us grave concern?)

In the documentary, “A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,” which I referenced as we began this series of discussions, there were concerning statements made by a woman named Dr. Bella Dodd. In 1917, Dodd entered high school, which put her on a path to becoming a teacher and a lawyer. She would eventually become the head of the New York State Teacher's Union as well as a high ranking official in the Communist Party of the USA. Some of the quotes attributed to her include:

“In the late 1920's and 1930's, directives were sent from Moscow to all Communist Party organizations. In order to destroy the Catholic Church from within, party members were to be planted in seminaries and within diocesan organizations...” (Westerman)

“I, myself, put some 1,200 men in Catholic seminaries...” (Westerman)

“In the 1930s we put eleven hundred men into the priesthood in order to destroy the Church from within. The idea was for these men to be ordained, and then climb the ladder of influence and authority as Monsignors and Bishops” (Wikipedia)

(Question 3: In 1930, there were an estimated 27,000 priests in the United States. (Wikipedia) What could be the consequence of 1,200 being inserted into that number?)

In the book *Disinformation*, LTG Ion Pacepa, outlines how his Romanian intelligence organization supported the KGB with the infiltration of the Vatican through an operation called “Seat 12.” LTG Pacepa engaged 3 priests who were co-opted agents as a means to gain access to the Vatican archives and collect information which could be used to support a framing operation against Pope Pius XII. The information collected was not compromising, but would provide the kernel of truth the forgers would use to provide an “air of authenticity” to the products of the framing operation. (Pacepa, 116-118)

(Question 4: Framing operations are designed to present allies as saints and opponents as villains. How should we approach reports of bad priests? Are there bad priests?)

In Chapter 15 of his book, *Disinformation*, LTG Pacepa wrote:

“In the 1950s and 1960, most Latin Americans were poor, religious peasants who had accepted the status quo, and Khrushchev was confident they could be converted to communism through the judicious manipulation of religion. In 1968, the KGB was able to maneuver a group of leftist South American bishops into holding a conference in Medellin, Colombia. At the KGB's request, my DIE provided logistical assistance to the organizers. The official task of the conference was to help eliminate poverty in Latin America. Its undeclared goal was to legitimize a KGB-created religious movement dubbed “liberation theology,” the secret task of which was to incite Latin America's poor to rebel against the “institutionalized violence of poverty” generated by the United States.” (Pacepa, 106)

LTG Pacepa continues later:

“Pope John Paul II, who had experienced communist treachery first-hand, denounced liberation theology at the January 1979 Conference of the Roman Catholic Bishops of South America (CELAM), held in Pueblo, Mexico: 'This conception of Christ as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive of Nazareth, does not tally with the Church's catechism.' Within four hours, a twenty-page rebuttal of the pope's speech carpeted the floor of the Conference. Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, the Conference's organizer, explained that the rebuttal was the product of “some 80 Marxist liberationists from outside the Bishops' Conference.' I recall that the Romanian DIE [the Romanian Intelligence Agency] had earlier been congratulated by the KGB for having provided logistical support for such liberationists.” (Pacepa, 107)

(Question 5: Liberation Theology is perhaps one of the grandest examples of what I call, “values grooming.” From what I just read from LTG Pacepa's book, how might we observe “values grooming” as a means of disrupting and subsequently destroying an institution like the Catholic Church? How might this be an example of Russia spreading its errors to the world?)

In June of 1917, the same year the Communist Revolution was put in motion along with the warnings of Fatima, Pope Benedict XV wrote the encyclical, *Humani Generis Redemptionem* (*Redemption of Mankind*), concerning the preaching of the Word of God. He began by stating:

It was the desire of Jesus Christ once He had wrought the Redemption of the human race by His death on the altar of the Cross, to lead men to obey His commands and thus win eternal life. To attain this end He used no other means than the voice of His heralds whose work it was to announce to all mankind what they had to believe and do in order to be saved.

Pope Benedict XV, then noted the conditions of the times:

Here then, Venerable Brethren, is a burden added to the other misfortunes of these times, with which, more than any one else, We are tried. For if We look around us and count those who are engaged in preaching the Word of God, We shall find them more numerous perhaps than they have ever been before. If on the other hand We examine the state of public and private morals, the constitutions and laws of nations, We shall find that there is a general disregard and forgetfulness of the supernatural, a gradual falling away from the strict standard of Christian virtue, and that men are slipping back more and more into the shameful practices of paganism.

During the course of his encyclical, Pope Benedict XV noted the collective failing of those who preached. He noted that for a preacher to be effective, they must be fully formed to God's will, they must be prepared for hardships, and they must be filled with the “spirit of prayer.” He quoted Saint Peter Damian:

For the preacher two things are especially necessary: namely that his words should be rich in ghostly wisdom, and that his life should be conspicuous for the luster of its piety. But if a priest is unequal to being both holy in life and rich in learning, holiness of life is, without question, to be preferred to mere learning.

(**Question 6:** Pope Benedict XV reminded the bishops of their responsibility, as established by the Council of Trent, to ensure that only those "of approved virtue and learning" are allowed to preach. As the flock, it is not upon us to lead the shepherds, but, what responsibility to do we have in support of them?)

Quotes:

“When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that it is the great sign that God gives you, that He is going to punish the world for its crimes by means of war, hunger, persecution of the Church and of the Holy Father. To forestall this, I shall come to ask for the Consecration of Russia to My Immaculate Heart and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If they heed My requests, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, she shall spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecutions of the Church; the good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated; in the end, My Immaculate Heart shall triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, which will be converted, and some time of peace will be given to the world.”

– *Our Lady to the children of Fatima, 13 Oct 1917*

"In the late 1920's and 1930's, directives were sent from Moscow to all Communist Party organizations. In order to destroy the Catholic Church from within, party members were to be planted in seminaries and within diocesan organizations...I, myself, put some 1,200 men in Catholic seminaries..."

– *Dr. Bella Dodd*

"In the 1930s we put eleven hundred men into the priesthood in order to destroy the Church from within. The idea was for these men to be ordained, and then climb the ladder of influence and authority as Monsignors and Bishops"

– *Dr. Bella Dodd*

In February 1960, Khrushchev formally approved a joint Communist Party/KGB operational plan for destroying the Vatican's moral authority in Western Europe. Since 1945, the Kremlin had fought the Vatican indirectly by framing many of its priests and top clergymen in the Soviet Union and in its new territorial acquisitions "liberated" at the end of the war, slandering them either as Nazi war criminals or as enemies of peace. Now the Kremlin wanted the KGB to frame the Vatican on its home turf, using its own priests.

– *LTG Ion Pacepa, Former Chief of communist Romania's espionage service*

Final Thoughts:

What Pope Benedict XV recognized as one possible cause for diminishing faith within society has also been noted by those who desire the destruction of the Catholic Church. They saw a weakness which they believed could be exploited. By weakening the priesthood, the flock is not fed and properly led. The wolf in shepherd's clothing is even more dangerous than the wolf in sheep's clothing.

While we might be tempted to blame the priests for the dwindling of faith in society, we must also recognize greater powers are in play along with our own weaknesses. Still, there is hope, for we should also note that despite all the efforts within and without to attack and destroy it, the church Christ built upon Peter still stands, but the battle rages and the times are still dire. As we are told in Ephesians 6:11, to be prepared to stand firm against the tactics of the devil, we must put on the armor of God.

Pope Benedict XV levied responsibility upon our shepherds, but we must not neglect our part. We must recognize that priests are but men and, therefore, are subject to the same temptations as any other sinner, but because of their position as shepherds, they are a greater target for the evil one. We must also be wary of the wolf in shepherd's clothing, for they are in a much greater position to destroy trust. If we know our faith, we will also recognize the difference between the voice of the true shepherd and of the wolf in shepherd's clothing. (cf John 10:1-5)

We must pray for our priests and we must endeavor to assist them in maintaining the environment of the parish and the just values of the faithful. If we are to do so effectively, again, we must learn our faith so we may live our faith and encourage one another as we share the blessings of faith. If we are ignorant of what God asks of us and the means by which we worship and fulfill His commandments, then, we open the door to the one who would deceive us.

We must not be naive, the evil one is tireless and patient enough to work across the generations. We must protect our children by not only teaching them as Moses advised those to whom he gave the commandments of God (cf. Deuteronomy 11:19), but by also engaging our children as they learn and grow. Let us not simply drop them off at the door, but encourage them as we lead them in and provide them with the example which we seek for them to follow.

Let us also remember to pray for our priests and those who we hope shall answer the call to the priesthood. We are in desperate need for good shepherds who will do what is right and just and will lead the flock in all which is right and just so that the will of God may be done. Let us ask God for the wisdom, courage, and strength by which we may share in the fullness of faith. Let us ask God to protect our shepherds and strengthen them so that His flock will not be vulnerable to the wolves.

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 tactics of the wolves.

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: By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them – Part IV: The Tactics of the Wolves

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