



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them *Part V: Tactics of the Wolves – Corruption of History*



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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, 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. They may not be the best of questions, but it gives our panelists something to do, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

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.

Discussion:

Last time, we discussed disinformation and framing, largely from the perspective of KGB operations conducted against the Catholic Church as a means to destroy the Church's moral image and influence. I mentioned that the wolf does not need everyone to believe the disinformation or framing presented, they only need enough to believe through which power might be seized. The more who believe the circulated disinformation, the better, but even a few

can change the conversation and subsequently how a society may act or fail to act in relation to what is right and just.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned, the effort to uncover truth is a daunting task. If, though, we are to do what is right and just, we must endeavor to discern truth. We must be wary of the tactics of deception, such as forgeries, false witnesses, cloaks of credibility (by that, I mean the spread of disinformation through sources considered by and large to be credible), words presented out of context, context connected which does not apply, or promotion of perceptions of evil doing by association with controversial or villainous actors. The identification of such tactics can be quite difficult to accomplish during our reading, observations, and conversations, especially when dissemination appears to include credible sources.

In this battle, information is both our friend and our enemy. We can use history as our teacher, but only if we are able to discern the truth of history, which means we must find credible sources of both accurate information and historical accounts. In today's information age, that appears to be another problem. Today, we will discuss how disinformation damages our historical record.

One prime objective for the purveyor of disinformation and framing is to elicit an emotional response against an opponent or to gain sympathy towards a political objective. We must recognize that when emotions run high, the quality of communication, coordination, collaboration, problem solving, and decision making suffer.

The root cause of bad decisions is often found as a result of emotionalism fueled by bad information. Sometimes this is unintentional and can simply be the result of human error, but as a tactic of the wolf, it is designed to achieve a purpose. Either way, to improve the quality of our communication, coordination, collaboration, problem solving, decision making and evangelization, we must endeavor to recognize and disarm sources of bad information, especially sources of disinformation.

(Question 1: Let's take a look at the list I just presented which outlines what is adversely impacted by disinformation. I mentioned communication, coordination, collaboration, problem solving, decision making and evangelization. Why do you think I included evangelization in the mix? How does this relate to the other items I mentioned?)

(Question 2: I mentioned that the root cause of bad decisions is often rooted in emotionalism fueled by bad information. What do you think I mean by emotionalism and how might that influence our decision making? What kinds of decisions might be of the greatest concern to us?)

(Question 3: We have heard a lot, recently, about something called “fake news.” It covers a spectrum of news reporting which engages some form of dishonesty or lack of candor. Sometimes there is an element of truth within the story, but some form of disinformation is engaged, whether it concerns context, interpretation, omission, or manipulative facts. What is the relationship between fake news and fake history?)

I would like to share with you an excerpt from the article, “*Fake News Has Been Used Against Catholics for 2,000 Years,*” published in the *National Catholic Register* on 14 Jul 2017)

In his book, Bearing False Witness: Debunking Centuries of Anti-Catholic History, historian Rodney Stark makes the argument that fake history against the Catholic Church abounds. Many Catholic apologists respond to the unjust maligning of their church, but Stark's book is unique insofar as it was written by a non-Catholic who wanted to respond to **prevalent fake history**. As Stark writes: "Finally, I am not a Roman Catholic, and I did not write this book in defense of the Church. I wrote it in defense of history." Bearing False Witness covers ten major areas in which the church has been—and continues to be—unfairly treated and unjustly accused by those who call themselves historians.

There is a saying that "history is written by the victors," yet Stark's book illustrates that history is often written by those with a clear anti-Catholic bias, such as Voltaire, Edward Gibbon, and Bertrand Russell. To compound the problem, the modern "histories" that exhibit the most pronounced contempt toward Catholicism get the most press. As Stark puts it:

...in recent years **some of the most malignant contributions to anti-Catholic history have been made by alienated Catholics, many of whom are seminary dropouts, former priests, or ex-nuns**....Normally, attacks originating with defectors from a particular group are treated with some circumspection. **But, attacks on the Church made by 'lapsed' Catholics are widely regarded as thereby of special reliability!** (Clark)

(Question 4: The excerpt above states, "the most malignant contributions to anti-Catholic history have been made by alienated Catholics, many of whom are seminary dropouts, former priests, or ex-nuns..." **Why do we believe such sources are considered to have a "special reliability?"**)

One example which we previously presented during our "Study and Discernment of Scripture," series was contained in a magazine brought to my front door. Someone came and left me a copy of a magazine entitled, "Awake." In it, was an article about a gentleman by the name of Antonio Della Gatta. The title of the article was, "Why a Priest Left His Church." ("Awake," Feb 2015, pg 12). The article begins:

"AFTER studying in Rome for nine years, Antonio Della Gatta was ordained as a priest in 1969. Later, he served as the rector, or head, of a seminary near Naples, Italy. While there, after much study and meditation, he concluded that the Catholic religion is not based on the Bible."

Later in the article, Antonio is asked if his training involved any Bible study. His answer was:

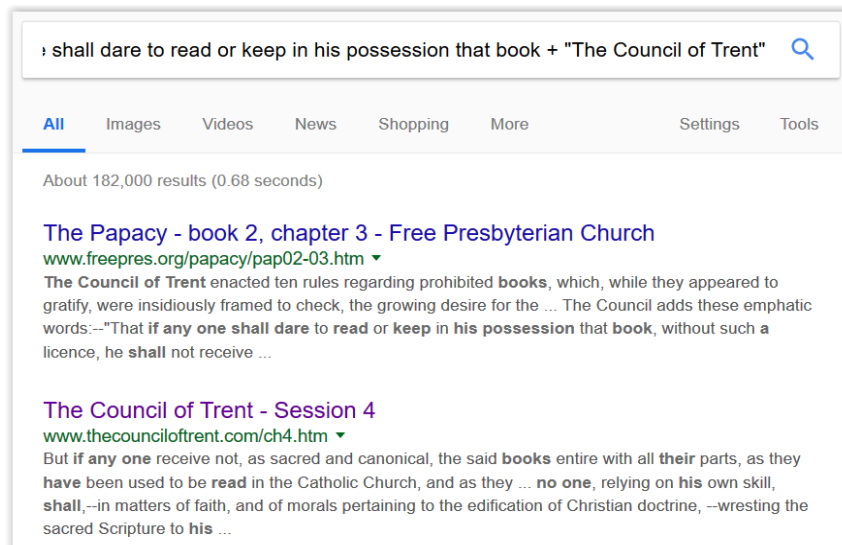
"Not really...When I was 18, I went to Rome to study in the pontifical universities, which are directly under the pope's authority. I studied Latin, Greek, history, philosophy, psychology, and theology. Although we recited verses from the Bible and heard Bible reading in Sunday sermons, we did not actually study the Bible."

(**Question 5:** When I read this, I thought to myself, “A priest said this?” Why do you think I would be skeptical about such a statement being attributed to a priest of the Catholic Church? Who might be the target of such a story and who might we think would believe it?)

One constant criticism of the Catholic faith, which I often encounter in social media, is that the Church prohibits Catholics from reading the Bible. As proof, they cite The Council of Trent. One such article states:

The Council of Trent (1545-1564) placed the Bible on its list of prohibited books, and forbade any person to read the Bible without a license from a Roman Catholic bishop or inquisitor. The Council added these words: "That if any one shall dare to read or keep in his possession that book, without such a license, he shall not receive absolution till he has given it up to his ordinary."(Excerpted from an article by David Cloud entitled, "The KJV and the Latin Vulgate")

I wanted to understand the full context, so, I took a portion of the words cited and dropped them into a search engine. I included in our topic summary for this show a screen shot I captured from a similar search.



(**Note:** The search results show in bold the words which match the search criteria, but the exact quote cited by the Catholic critic was not in the historical record of the Council of Trent decrees, at least that I could find. Perhaps this was a result of which translation of the council documents Cloud used, but in any case, a review of the Council decrees reveals context important to understanding.

This method of quotation, which LTG Pacepa calls selective editing, is outlined in LTG Pacepa's book, **Disinformation**. It is a method by which quotes are selected in a manner such that they appear to support the writer's assertion rather than what was originally intended in the source of the quote. (Pacepa, 189-190))

There are two documents associated with the Council of Trent which are necessary to understand the intent behind the quotation as cited by Cloud. The first is the Second Decree from Session IV of the Council of Trent. This decree explains the reasons for restrictions and prohibitions concerning the editions and use of the sacred books.

As a result of the Council of Trent, there were also ten rules drafted by fathers selected by the synod for this purpose (see session XXV - 6th Decree - On The Index Of Books; On The Catechism, Breviary, And Missal). Rule number IV of these rules contains wording similar to Cloud's quote, so you could say his quote is true, but context matters in relation to the impression Cloud presents. Cloud presents his quote as a means to assert that the Catholic Church placed the Bible, regardless of translation or heresy, on the prohibited books list as well as prohibited Bible reading without a license.

If we take both documents into consideration, we see there are restrictions, but they are designed to help ensure proper understanding by the public, especially in light of literacy and quality of translations at the time, as a means to prevent the spread of heresies. It not as a means to keep the people from and ignorant of the Word of God.

We must also understand the importance of the role of the church in the effort to prevent the introduction of heresies as a result of interpretations or translations. The rules were to enable magisterial authorities of the Church to review and approve what was printed and circulated as such books represent the Holy Word of God. We must understand, Church authorities were dealing with new technology, the printing press; therefore, they were trying to contain what we may consider to be their own disinformation problem. Things did not move in internet time back then, but printing presses provided a means to quickly spread errors. We might think of it in terms of the issues we are facing with social media today.

We must take both documents together to fully understand the context of the issue and the solutions.

(From Session IV, Second Decree - <http://thecounciloftrent.com/ch4.htm>)

Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, It decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall,--in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, --wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church,-- whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures,--hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published. Contraveners shall be made known by their Ordinaries, and be punished with the penalties by law established.

And wishing, as is just, to impose a restraint, in this matter, also on printers, who now without restraint,--thinking, that is, that whatsoever they please is allowed them,--print, without the license of ecclesiastical superiors, the said books of sacred Scripture, and the notes and comments upon them of all persons indifferently, with the press oftentimes unnamed, often even fictitious, and what is more grievous still, without the author's name; and also keep for indiscriminate sale books of this kind printed elsewhere; (this

Synod) ordains and decrees, that, henceforth, the sacred Scripture, and especially the said old and vulgate edition, be printed in the most correct manner possible; and that it shall not be lawful for any one to print, or cause to be printed, any books whatever, on sacred matters, without the name of the author; nor to sell them in future, or even to keep them, unless they shall have been first examined, and approved of, by the Ordinary; under pain of the anathema and fine imposed in a canon of the last Council of Lateran: and, if they be Regulars, besides this examination and approval, they shall be bound to obtain a license also from their own superiors, who shall have examined the books according to the form of their own statutes. As to those who lend, or circulate them in manuscript, without their having been first examined, and approved of, they shall be subjected to the same penalties as printers: and they who shall have them in their possession or shall read them, shall, unless they discover the authors, be themselves regarded as the authors. And the said approbation of books of this kind shall be given in writing; and for this end it shall appear authentically at the beginning of the book, whether the book be written, or printed; and all this, that is, both the approbation and the examination, shall be done gratis, that so what ought to be approved, may be approved, and what ought to be condemned, may be condemned.”

This was a solution for the time, but the Council realized they could not possibly review everything, in fact, the volume of materials also provided a growing and moving target. For this reason, the 6th Decree of Session XXV of the Council of Trent called for a group of fathers, selected by the council, to address this issue. Subsequently, the fathers drew up Ten Rules concerning prohibited books.

Rule IV of the “Ten Rules Drawn Up By The Fathers Selected By The Synod Of Trent And Approved By Pope Pius IV,” contains the offending sentence to which Cloud refers, but, to understand what requires review, permission, and license; the remainder of the rules must be read. Specifically, heretical translations or translations that had not received review and approval of the magisterial authorities of the Catholic Church is what was prohibited or controlled. Licensing, as the *imprimatur* (let it be printed) and *nihil obstat* (nothing stands in the way) do today, was a means to recognize approved works.

(Rule IV From Ten Rules Drawn Up By The Fathers Selected By The Synod Of Trent And Approved By Pope Pius IV; <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/TRENTBKS.HTM>)
Whereas it is evident from experience, that, if the sacred books be permitted in the vulgar tongue indiscriminately, more harm than utility arises therefrom by reason of the temerity of men, in this respect let it depend on the discretion of the bishop or inquisitor, so that with the counsel of the parish priest or the confessor, they can grant to them the reading of the books translated by Catholic authors in the vulgar tongue, such persons as they may consider may derive not injury, but an increase of faith and of piety from such reading; which power they may have with respect to the scriptures. But whosoever shall presume to read them without such power, let him not be able to obtain absolution of his sins, unless he has first given back the books to the ordinary. But the booksellers, who shall sell the Bible written in the vulgar tongue, to a person not having the aforesaid power, or shall in any other way grant it, is to lose the price of the books, which shall be converted by the bishop to pious purposes, and they shall be subject to other penalties, according to the quality of the offence, at the discretion of the same bishop. But regulars

are not to have the power of reading or buying them, unless they have power to do so from their prelates.

Rule I provides a general declaration of what is controlled, while Rule II provides more detail in relation to works considered heretical. The rules also contained exceptions, largely granted to those who would likely not corrupt understanding or be vulnerable to misinterpretation.

(Rule II From Ten Rules Drawn Up By The Fathers Selected By The Synod Of Trent And Approved By Pope Pius IV; <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/TRENTBKS.HTM>)
The books of those heresiarchs, who after the aforesaid year originated or revived heresies, as well as of those who are or have been the heads or leaders of heretics, as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Balthasar Friedberg, Schwenkfeld, and others like these, whatever may be their name, title or nature of their heresy, are absolutely forbidden. The books of other heretics, however, which deal professedly with religion are absolutely condemned. Those on the other hand, which do not deal with religion and have by order of the bishops and inquisitors been examined by Catholic theologians and approved by them, are permitted. Likewise, Catholic books written by those who afterward fell into heresy, as well as by those who after their fall returned to the bosom of the Church, may be permitted if they have been approved by the theological faculty of a Catholic university or by the general inquisition.

(Question 6: In this example, we see the use of selective editing or context to prove the assertion that the Catholic Church prohibited Catholics from reading the Bible. Why do we think some desire to paint Catholics as being prohibited from reading the Bible? What is to be gained?)

(Question 7: The average person has a limited view of both current events and history. When we are confronted with criticisms of our Church and our faith, how might we go about vetting information sources, discerning truth, and exposing disinformation? Why is it important that we should endeavor to do so?)

(Question 8: Another element of the misuse of history is to associate the context of the past to the generation of today. In other words, if Catholics did something bad ten centuries ago, today's Catholics must also be bad. Why is this a misuse of history?)

Quotes:

Misconceptions about the past can persist for centuries, despite the diligent work of historians, either because vested interests benefit from the distortions or because the fanciful version is more fun.

– *Piers Paul Read* (author of works of fiction, reportage, history, biography and journalism)

The Holocaust is simply the biggest club available for liberal Catholics to use against traditional Catholics in their attempt to bash the papacy and thereby to smash traditional Catholic teaching...

– *Rabbi David G. Dalin* (Stark, 32)

There are not one hundred people in the United States who hate The Catholic Church, but there are millions who hate what they wrongly perceive the Catholic Church to be.

– *Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen*

Final Thoughts:

Today, we discussed how history is often used as a club of sorts against Catholics and the Holy Catholic Church. It goes without saying there are many scandals in church history, but we must place those scandals in the proper context. Such scandals are not the product of our faith, but the failure of individuals to live according to what God asks of us. We should not allow the actions of a few to be interpreted as a justification to diminish the doctrines of our faith or our personal relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

As members of the body of Christ, we have a responsibility to discern and evangelize truth. If we are to fulfill this responsibility, we must not only study the scriptures and the teachings of the church, but we must also study history from which to understand the context of the times.

For members of the laity, we might ask, how are we to do this, for most of us are not theologians or historians? The task can appear daunting. The effort starts with prayer and study, but it also requires that we understand our limitations and where we need the help of God.

We should admit when we do not know something, but at the same time, we should take notes so that we might research questions some might have and look to provide answers at a later date. We also want to learn from the resources of the Church such that we do not become the source of unintentional heresy. Our objective is not to win arguments, but to dispel unjust perceptions of our faith. Through love, patience, and truth; we accomplish the objectives of Christ when we preserve the opportunity for another conversation, for small, loving, and truthful taps may cause the door of the heart to open when hard and threatening pounding may only serve to drive defensiveness or fear which may lead to a decision to bar and lock the door.

As we engage the information flow of the day, we must learn to vet what we read and what we hear. Especially when something peaks our emotions, we must look to apply a process by which we may enhance our likelihood to discern and find truth.

Of course, our most effective evangelization is not necessarily accomplished through our words, but our actions. If we are to evangelize through our actions, then, we must endeavor to learn and live the fullness of our faith. As we engage those who surround us, let us remember these words found in 1 Peter 3:13-17:

(1 Peter 3:13-17)

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.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we discuss more tactics of the wolf; labeling and emotionalism.

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 VII: The Tactics of the Wolves – Labeling/Emotionalism

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