



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them *Part X: The Fight Across the Generations*



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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 and mispronounce as many names as possible. I'm working on the world record for the most names mispronounced. Anyway, to answer the questions and translate my mispronunciations is why we have our panel, 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:

During our last discussion, we noted how we are influenced by various media forms. With the growth of the Internet and Social Media, we might say we exist in a time of information

overload. The challenge for us, is how to discern truth and what is right and just as we face a world of misinformation, disinformation, and lies.

During our discussion, we reviewed a couple of examples from what we consider the “left and the right.” We observed the similarities of tactics, such as demonizing and the use of negative labels, as a means to appeal to emotion rather than to our reason. While there is a time for every purpose, and there is a time for emotions, when we encounter such tactics, we must look deeper and we must be wary. The key for us to discern is whether the position of the author is consistent with what God asks of us.

As we discussed last time, media itself is not good or bad, it is simply a tool. Like any tool, it can be used for good or evil. The objective of the wolf is for his deceptions to wind their way through our communications so we may be influenced away from our relationship with God. As Catholics, our faith is not about whether liberals or conservatives are right or wrong, it is about our understanding of what God asks of us. We must remember, the evil one does not care how we miss the mark in living the Word of God, whether it is to the left or the right; only that we do.

As we engage the media, we must evaluate the message. We must consider the source, but we cannot always discount a message because of the source. We must sometimes trace the trail of sources such that we can learn the relevant context. If possible, we want to get to source documents or original transcripts which do not filter the context.

This is not always an easy task. Search engines can help, but my recommendation is to use multiple search engines, especially those which do not track you, so we do not get boxed in by algorithms which assume what we want to see. Just as we evaluate organizations, we must also evaluate our media sources. During our travels of information, we should look for sources we trust from which to balance what is reported through sources which may have a political agenda. As we mentioned during our last two discussions, some of the questions we should ask are:

- What is the focus of content, political talking points or faith?
- Is the content consistent with Scripture and Catholic Teaching?
- Are hidden (political) agendas evident? (Remember, the push may not be overt, it may be in small baby steps or simply planting seeds for purposes of values grooming)
- Do they promote what God asks of us or the demands of political ideologies?
- When they present positions with scriptural justification, do they represent the full context of what scripture teaches?
- When they present positions with quotes from the Catechism as justification, is it consistent with the full context of Catholic teaching?
- As we research and examine the full context, are there inconsistencies with what the author promotes?
- How much time is spent name calling or assigning negative labels? (sometimes this is unavoidable to make a point, but is it constant and emotional versus analytical?)
- How much time is spent political shaming – not about what God asks of us, but pressing the ways of the world or political correctness?

- To what extreme are issues analyzed (true analysis or propaganda?)

Still, in matters of faith, our best line of defense is to know our faith. The more we learn about what God asks of us, the more difficult we make the job of the evil one who seeks to deceive us so he might separate us from our Creator. If we know our faith, especially the foundations of our faith, we will better recognize the fruits of those who endeavor to deceive us away from our faith.

Today, we will talk about the generational fight. Our tendency is to think in terms of our personal reference; the history in which we live, for it is the history we experience. We have the tendency of evaluating the remainder of history through this lens. What we often do not think about is what history are we repeating? What lessons have we not learned from those who walked the journey of life before us?

When we do take a moment to look back at the generations, we are more tempted to judge them than to learn from them. We look at our day and wonder, how did the world get so bad? The reality is, this is not the best of times, nor is it the worst of times, but it is our time in which we face the evil of the world and must consider where we stand in relation to what God asks of us. The truth of history may provide us the insight required so we do not repeat past evils, especially when those paths were paved with good intentions which did not consider the ripple effects and outcomes in relation to the outcomes God desires.

Before we get into our discussion, I would like to travel a timeline. So, in the beginning, God said, let there be light. No one has told us exactly what that day was, but let's assume it was in the past. Of course, a few things happened since then, or so I have been told, but let's fast forward to 13 Oct 2016. On that day, I responded to an announcement of the showing of a documentary. During the course of viewing that documentary, I heard the statement, "Russia will spread her errors to the world." (St. John Neumann Men's Ministry, 12)

That statement did not register with me in the moment, but the documentary captured my attention because it addressed history that I recognized from my experiences as a military officer during the Cold War. I also remember that day because it was the same day that the "Catholic Spring" email exchange between Sandy Newman, the President of Voices for Progress and John Podesta, was circulating in the news.

In this email exchange, Podesta revealed that Catholic organizations were created to achieve the political objective about which Sandy Newman was suggesting, which was that, "Catholics themselves demand the end of a middle ages dictatorship and the beginning of a little democracy and respect for gender equality in the Catholic church." John responded, "We created Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good to organize for a moment like this." (Newman)

Of course, I knew Catholics have been a political target throughout history, but I was stunned that in a nation with a Constitution which guarantees religious freedom, a political party was scheming to manipulate the flock of the Church Christ Built upon Peter (Matthew 16:18-19) to adopt morals and values inconsistent with their understanding of what God asks of them. It smacked of what I recognized as a Soviet style disinformation operation. In other words, the

tactics of the wolf, to which I was mostly exposed to during the 80's, had not perished with the Soviet Union, but were alive and well in political hands within the United States.

In that moment, I did not really know anything about Fatima. I had heard the name. I knew it was associated with a Marian apparition, but I did not really know any details. In the coming months, books and information crossed my path which drew my attention to the statement of Our Lady that Russia would spread her errors to the world. (Marchi, 28) It was a statement which haunted me because a good portion of my military career was engaged with facing the Soviet threat and their tactics of political deception. I knew the tactics of propaganda and disinformation employed by the KGB against the West, but it was not until I read a book by a former Romanian spy chief, LTG Ion Pacepa, entitled Disinformation, that I recognized the magnitude of effort directed against the Catholic Church. At least half the book, if not more, is devoted to outlining KGB methods and operations directed against the Catholic faith.

As providence would have it, I began reading this book about a month prior to my first exposure to the documentary, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing." (St. John Neumann Men's Ministry) What surprised me as I continued to stumble across various pieces of information is how history corroborated Our Lady's warning at Fatima; that if her instructions were not followed to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart, then, Russia would spread her errors to the world. (Marchi, 28) From that moment until now, I slowly began to connect moments of history. The connections reveal a struggle which has continued across the generations.

For example, a generation before Fatima (1884), Pope Leo XIII had a vision which inspired him to write the prayer to St. Michael, a plea that we may be defended against the evil which prowls the world in search for the ruin of souls. A generation before that, Pope Pius IX, wrote the Syllabus of Errors which pointed to several encyclicals written between 1846 and 1863 which criticized Communism, Socialism, Liberalism and Secret Societies. Pope Pius IX wrote:

"Pests of this kind are frequently reprobated in the severest terms in the Encyclical 'Qui pluribus,' Nov. 9, 1846, Allocution 'Quibus quantisque,' April 20, 1849, Encyclical 'Noscitis et nobiscum,' Dec. 8, 1849, Allocution 'Singulari quadam,' Dec. 9, 1854, Encyclical 'Quanto conficiamur,' Aug. 10, 1863. (Pius IX)

One generation after Fatima, we observe the world engaged in World War II. A generation after that, the world is engaged in the Cold War. A generation after that, the Soviet Union is no more, but now, the living generations are still contending with the errors which it spread.

As history reveals, generations before us have contended with the errors of man-made ideology, but what matters at the moment is that we are the generations currently engaged. The question is, how will we respond? As we examine the flow of history, how many times do we observe that because one generation did not listen, another generation suffered.

Of course, the first generation was Adam and Eve. We know what was introduced through them. The generation which followed included Cain and Abel. (Genesis 4:1-16)

(Question 1: So, Adam and Eve had their moment of temptation in the garden. While their disobedience brought death into the world, God also made them such that they could bring new

life into the world. What does scripture tell us about the generation spawned by Adam and Eve? What drove the events between Cain and Abel? Do we notice any similar experiences in our generation?)

(Question 2: Most of us are aware of the stories of Noah (destruction of evil), Abraham (destruction of evil), Joseph Son of Jacob (betrayal, famine, and forgiveness), and Moses (God's commandments and a stiff necked people). What generational similarities might we observe as scripture discusses the generations in which they lived?)

(Deuteronomy 4:9-14)

9 However, be on your guard and be very careful not to forget the things your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live, but make them known to your children and to your children's children. 10 that day you stood before the LORD, your God, at Horeb, when the LORD said to me: Assemble the people for me, that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me as long as they live in the land and may so teach their children. 11 You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain blazed to the heart of the heavens with fire and was enveloped in a dense black cloud. 12 Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; there was only a voice. 13 He proclaimed to you his covenant, which he commanded you to keep: the ten words, which he wrote on two stone tablets. 14 At that time the LORD charged me to teach you the statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land you are about to cross into and possess.

(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.

(Question 3: So Moses exhorted the people to teach their children. What was it that Moses wanted taught? What was the likely consequence if parents failed to teach their children?)

(1 Maccabees 2:49-64)

49 When the time came for Mattathias to die, he said to his sons: "Arrogance and scorn have now grown strong; it is a time of disaster and violent wrath. 50 Therefore, my children, be zealous for the law and give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors. 51 "Remember the deeds that our ancestors did in their times, and you shall win great honor and an everlasting name. 52 Was not Abraham found faithful in trial, and it was credited to him as righteousness? 53 Joseph, when in distress, kept the commandment, and he became master of Egypt. 54 Phinehas our ancestor, for his burning zeal, received the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. 55 Joshua, for executing his commission,

- became a judge in Israel.
- 56 Caleb, **for bearing witness before the assembly,**
received an inheritance in the land.
- 57 David, **for his loyalty,**
received as a heritage a throne of eternal kingship.
- 58 Elijah, **for his burning zeal for the law,**
was taken up to heaven.
- 59 Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael, **for their faith,**
were saved from the fire.
- 60 Daniel, **for his innocence,**
was delivered from the mouths of lions.
- 61 And so, **consider this from generation to generation,**
that none who hope in Heaven shall fail in strength.
- 62 Do not fear the words of sinners,
for their glory ends in corruption and worms.
- 63 Today exalted, tomorrow not to be found,
they have returned to dust,
their schemes have perished.
- 64 **Children! be courageous and strong in keeping the law,**
for by it you shall be honored.

(Question 4: Let's take a moment and consider this teaching by Mattathias. Who was he teaching? What was the nature of this teaching? What stage of life did he deliver it? What does this reveal about our opportunities to teach the generations which follow us?)

(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.

(Question 5: Here, we see Saint Paul advise fathers as to their responsibility towards their children. What is the nature of this advice and why is this important?)

LTG Pacepa wrote:

During my years as an intelligence officer, I was many times involved in creating anti-Americanism out of whole cloth, and I could see how easy it was to make young people hate the almighty America...My main task was to mold them into anti-American protesters. (Pacepa, 299)

(Question 6: While LTG Pacepa made these statements in reference to political and ideological objectives, they reveal a concern as to the manipulation of our youth. In what ways are youth the target of ideological manipulation? Why should this be of concern to us in relation to the practice of our faith?)

(**Question 7:** Let's take a moment and consider what is in competition with us for the hearts and minds of our children? **What influences upon our children must we help them to face?**)

(**Question 8:** As we consider the influences we just listed, we see we face many sources of opposition to our faith. **What can we do to prepare our children to respond to the temptations and the ideological errors introduced to them?**)

Quotes: (all quotes below from *Saint John Paul II*)

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.

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.

Only in Christ do we find real love, and the fullness of life. And so I invite you today to look to Christ. When you wonder about the mystery of yourself, look to Christ who gives you the meaning of life. When you wonder what it means to be a mature person, look to Christ who is the fullness of humanity. And when you wonder about your role in the future of the world and of the United States, look to Christ. Only in Christ will you fulfill your potential as an American citizen and as a citizen of the world community.

To the whole Church is addressed Christ's command: 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation' (Mk 16:15). The whole Church, therefore, is missionary and evangelizing; she lives constantly in a state of mission. To be Christians means to be missionaries, to be apostles. It is not enough to discover Christ - you must bring Him to others!

My dear young people, only Jesus knows what is in your hearts and your deepest desires. Only He, who has loved you to the end (cf. Jn 13:1), can fulfill your aspirations. His are words of eternal life, words that give meaning to life. No one apart from Christ can give you true happiness. By following the example of Mary, you should know how to give Him your unconditional "yes". There is no place in your lives for selfishness or laziness. Now more than ever it is crucial that you be "watchers of the dawn", the lookouts who announce the light of dawn and the new springtime of the Gospel of which the buds can already be seen. Humanity is in urgent need of the witness of free and courageous young people who dare to go against the tide and proclaim with vigor and enthusiasm their personal faith in God, Lord and Savior.

Final Thoughts:

Today, we discussed elements of the generational fight. We must recognize that the evil one works patiently. If one generation is not moved, he will turn to the next until he finds the vulnerable soul. The tactics of the wolf used in days past remain before us today. As we have continued to mention during the course of this series, the tactics of deception and disinformation are nothing new. We saw them practiced by the serpent in the garden, but with the technology of our day, all the faster the errors of the evil one may be spread.

There is a lesson of hope revealed within the pages of LTG Pacepa's book. It is found as a result of analyzing the first attempt by Stalin to frame Pope Pius XII as "Hitler's Pope." The effort fell flat because true history was still fresh in the minds of those who lived it. (Pacepa, 59-61)

A generation later, though, Khrushchev would pick up where Stalin left off and achieved a measure of success where Stalin's team failed. The major difference was the people's knowledge of truth. What this reveals is that truth, and our awareness of truth, is our best defense against the tactics of disinformation. If we are to help our children, then, we must help them learn the fullness of their faith and how they may discern and find sources of truth.

We must remember, the faith which we hold now was passed to us through the generations. Some of us were blessed to be guided in our faith from our birth. Many of us have drifted in some form or fashion, but we were also blessed to encounter those who would bring us towards the light. Are we willing to do the same for a soul still floundering in the dark waters?

The struggles of our generation and the generations we influence are written daily. Let us consider where we might be if faithful souls had not defended our faith before us and passed it to us. Now, the question we must all discern is what shall we do for the benefit and blessings of the generations who will follow? We must remember, what we choose to do today will influence the ability of future generations to defend their souls.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with what does God ask of us?

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 XI: What Does God Ask of Us?](#)

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