



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare
Part II: Know Your Enemy



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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 no longer the only cradle Catholic on the team, as we are also blessed to have on our panel, Donna Mae, who is the artist who sculpted the statue of Our Lady of America which was carried by our youth and blessed by Saint John Paul II at the 1993 Word Youth Day.

Of course, everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because our Human Resources Department keeps telling me it is in my job description – and you know how those conversations go. Anyway, to answer my questions, correct my pronunciation, and make sure I know which century I am talking about is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

Dear Lord, we also lift up the prayers in our prayer basket. You know what is written on each one and you know the hearts of those who offer their thanks and praise and their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

We also pray today for the healing of our land. Guide us, dear Lord, in how we may touch hearts of darkness and violence and turn them to become hearts of light and peace.

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.

Current Day Commentary:

The term “Cancel Culture” has become prominent in our day. It is a tool of politicians to flex their power and impose their ideologies on people without doing the hard work of reasoned debate or rational problem solving. Cancel culture works this way. I disagree with you and will destroy you by publicly shaming you and going after your livelihood and possibly even threatening your family. It is simply a culture of intimidation. It is a demonstration of power, not problem solving.

Some may argue over the justice or injustice of the approach, but we must also consider the temptation. Intimidation can motivate people, but we must remember, when someone tries to motivate people through intimidation, minds are unlikely to be changed. While the intimidated may withdraw for the moment and lick their wounds, the problem at hand is not solved because reasoned discussion has not taken its course. In fact, the wound may fester and return in very unhealthy and vengeful ways.

The faithful have a different opportunity and that is to promote an “encouragement culture.” Sowing divisions can make an organization or society suffer and collapse, but sowing encouragement promotes teamwork towards what is effective, reasonable, right and just. Too often we engage the social discourse looking to score political points over this issue or that, not to conduct reasoned and just problem solving in the manner which God asks of us.

What does this mean to ministry? True ministry is not about winning an argument, rather, it is about preserving the opportunity for conversation which can encourage people to work together towards just and workable solutions. It is an opportunity to encourage teamwork.

For the politician, the issue is about power, not solutions. They focus on outrage and emotion as a means to manipulate, because when our emotions are elevated, the quality of our communications, analysis, and problem solving suffer. When we are focused on outrage and not the context of the problem, we can be easily steered to accepting flawed ideologies and solutions.

Communication is always the hardest piece. This is one of the spaces the evil one loves to play, for as we fail to communicate effectively, the errors of assumptions and perceptions become magnified. This is one of the objectives of propaganda and values grooming.

If we are to accomplish the good works which God asks of us, then, we must work at the difficult tasks of communication. Implicit in that task is to also look at the power of positive encouragement through which to promote teamwork.

There are times where we must make decisions to separate from those walking a bad path, but this should be a decision of last resort. Once we cut off communications, we also cut off an important element of the problem solving process. Effective and just problem solving is not possible without just, reasoned, and effective communication between stakeholders.

There are also times where we must call out someone for the errors of their direction, and call them out for what they promote or exemplify, but we must also be careful about name calling, for that has a tendency to invoke emotion where reason is needed.

How should we engage the cancel culture? Well, it is right there for us in scripture. Saint Peter tells us:

(1 Peter 3:8-17)

[A]ll of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. 9 Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For:

*“Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep the tongue from evil
and the lips from speaking deceit,
11 must turn from evil and do good,
seek peace and follow after it.
12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears turned to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against evildoers.”*

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.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints VI:

In recent weeks we heard in news reels about Junipero Serra. Not that the news was good, rather for scandal and destruction. Why? I think that some of the problems are that people do not know anything about the person of whom others felt great joy. If someone was so well loved that others had statues made, then perhaps we should know something about the person before we render judgment and elect to destroy property that was lovingly set in a place in remembrance.

St. Father Junípero Serra, O.F.M

Junipero Serra was declared the patron of Vocations and his feast day is July 1st.

Junipero Serra was born in Petra, Mjorca, Spain on November 24, 1713. His parents were Antonio Nadal Serra and his mother was Margarita Rosa Ferrer, both worked diligently as farmers. The new babe was baptized on the same day and was named Miguel Jose Serra.

By all accounts, young Serra grew up in a normal setting and lived his life just like all children his age. He attended grade school under the direction of the Franciscans. When he turned 15 years of age, his parents took him to the Franciscan Monastery of San Francisco, Spain. There he studied philosophy.

In September 1730 he was admitted as a novice to the Convento de Jesus. He made his profession in September 1731. A year later, he chose the name Junipero. This naming was in tribute to a companion of St. Francis. While in school, he studied philosophy and theology. There is no recording of his exact ordination date, it is believed that he was ordained in December 1738. Due to his love for study, he continued and obtained a doctorate in theology in 1742. His zeal for his faith and his studies were recognized and he was invited to become an Indian missionary in America.

In April 1749, Junipero along with Francisco Palou, set sail for America. They landed in Mexico in December the same year. The young friars were offered horses for transportation, but declined and the two men walked 250 miles to Mexico City. On the way, the men spent a night at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and arrived at San Fernando College on New Years Day, 1750.

In 1750 Juniper answered a call to go to Sierra Gorda missions. While there, he worked with the Pame Indians. During the next 8 years, he took on the task of building a mission church and that church is still being used today.

Junipero learned the language of the Pame Indians which was Otomi. He used the language and sight methods to teach religion. He was very zealous in his preaching and his manner of teaching brought large numbers of Indians to practice the Catholic faith. Junipero brought prosperity to the community by teaching them about raising domestic animals, farming, and building up stores. He defended Indian rights when others would want to run them over. Junipero was never one to be boastful or hold a superior attitude. While working to do all this building, he himself acted as a laborer just like all the others.

In 1758 he was assigned to the San Fernando College. He held many jobs during his time at San Fernando. He was made choir director, master of novices, college counselor and a confessor. In 1767 he was invited to be the president of the ex-Jesuit mission of Baja California. He lived at the former Jesuit headquarters with missionaries who he sent out to care for 15 missions.

Serra loved to travel and explore. He left the mission in March of 1769 and went north. He traveled by donkey and arrived at San Diego on July 1st of the same year. Along the way, he founded his first mission at San Fernando de Velicata in May. Serra kept a diary of his adventures and noted how he suffered greatly from pains in his legs and feet. This malady caused him to be carried on a stretcher.

Serra lived in San Diego until April 1770 and spent much of his time founding missions. After leaving San Diego, he went to Mission San Carlos and made this his headquarters. This was the place of his death on August 28, 1784. He was 70 years old. He is buried in the floor of the sanctuary of the church he had built.

Serra was not a tall man as he measured five feet two inches in height. He had dark eyes and hair, had swarthy skin and a melodious voice. He appeared to have a strong and courageous constitution, but he suffered greatly during the latter part of his life with the swelling of his feet and legs that caused him at times to neither be able to walk or stand. Later yet, he developed asthma and suffered with his breathing.

Serra's character was very dynamic, optimistic, and he was always eager for the next task. He was an active man and preferred to be out evangelizing than to be stuck in a classroom. He loved his American converts and was a model religious for them. He fought for religious freedom and defended the Indians.

The cause for Serra's beatification began in the Diocese of Monterey-Fresno in 1934 and was completed in 1939. Pope John Paul II beatified him on September 25, 1988 and Pope Francis canonized him on September 23, 2015.

In recent weeks, Serra has been a subject for the news. On July 4, 2020, a crowd destroyed a statue of St. Junipero Serra in Sacramento, California. One person burned the statue's face before it was knocked down. Someone else took a sledgehammer to it.

Bishop Jamie Soto of Sacramento responded to the vandalism and said:

There is no question that California's indigenous people endured great suffering during the colonial period and then later faced the horror of government-sanctioned genocide under the nascent State of California. This legacy is heartbreaking. Yet, it is also true that while Fr. Serra worked under this colonial system, he denounced its evils and worked to protect the dignity of native peoples. His holiness as a missionary should not be measured by his own failures to stop the exploitation or even his own personal faults. Holiness, in the end, is more a result of God's grace and our willingness to cooperate with His mercy. Archbishop Gomez's letter of July 1st illustrates some of the Franciscan friar's efforts to do so.

Understanding the efforts of Fr. Serra to bring light into the bitter, bleak darkness of colonial ambition is the difficult task of history. So is the present arduous work to chart the future with hope. The strenuous labor of overcoming the plague of racism should not be toppled by nocturnal looting. Dialogue should not abdicate to vandalism. Nor should these unnerving episodes distract us from the duties of justice and charity upon which a better California can be built." (Soto)

Father Serra lived in a difficult time, but his labors brought many converts into the Catholic Church. His love for the people is why he built up so many missions in the State of California. Let us pray for those who are destroying not only Father Serra's legacy, but of all destruction. Jesus said it best, "*They know not what they do.*" (Luke 23:34)

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 Saint Junípero Serra, 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 158.

Discussion:

Last time, we discussed the importance of situational awareness and assessment during the preparation for spiritual battle. Situational awareness is critical to not just our physical safety, but more importantly to the safety of our soul. Situational awareness requires we survey all which surrounds us and assess from whence the enemy might attack us and where he has left traps and snares. The enemy has many hiding places and tactics of stealth.

For evil to do its damage, it must reveal itself, but the question for us is whether we shall recognize it in time to defeat it or at least mitigate its harm. We must remain alert. We must remain vigilant. But if we are to do this, we must prepare, we must train, and we must be ready to stand in the face of evil.

As I mentioned, war is always a scary thing, and spiritual warfare is the worst because of the consequences. We must remember, though, who is on our side. We are not defenseless.

We cannot battle alone and hope to prevail. We are called to help and encourage one another. We must work together and avoid friendly fire. We must also remember the One who leads us. Let us stand firm, then, with the King of kings who we also know as the Prince of Peace.

Today, we are going to turn our attention to a saying derived from Sun Tzu's, Art of War, which is to "know your enemy." The bottom line is that if we do not know our enemy, then, we may fail to recognize him as we face him, or underestimate the harm he can do to us. In other words, we become more vulnerable to the tactics of the enemy when we are not aware.

During our last discussion, I mentioned that in battle planning, the unit staff assesses the composition, strength, capabilities, weaknesses, and likely courses of action of the enemy. This is also an ongoing assessment, for the enemy will morph during the preparation for and during the course of battle.

We also mentioned some characteristics of the enemy we want to assess, which include:

- Form → spiritual or physical → what we see and what we cannot see
- Objectives → separate the children of God from their Creator → ruin of souls
- Tactics → disruption, deception, despair, degradation, temptation, seduction
- Weapons → pride, lust, over consumption, greed, sloth, anger, envy

(Question 1: Let's take a moment to look at this list. When we consider the "form" the enemy may take, what might we expect this to be?)

- Spiritual → what is in our heart and influences beyond the physical senses
- Word to action → the power of spirit to move hands – the interface with the physical realm

(CCC: 162) Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to man. We can lose this priceless gift, as St. Paul indicated to St. Timothy: "Wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith." To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith; it must be "working through charity," abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church.

(Question 2: When we consider the objectives of the devil, we know the prime objective is to separate us from our Creator. What is the impact to us if we no longer believe in or take the hand of God?)

- Worldly desire replaces morality and proceeds without reason
- Worldly desire takes precedence to the bonds of family and friends
- Worldly desire takes precedence to the sanctity of life

- Loss of moral direction
- Loss of moral conviction
- Loss of faith, hope, and charity
- Loss of eternal life

(Question 3: Of course, objectives cannot be accomplished without means. **What are some of the tactics we might expect the devil to use against us?)**

- Disruption of trust, logic, and reason through temptations of worldly desire
- Deception that good is evil and evil is good (Isaiah 5:20-24)
- Doubt in the truth
- Discouragement/Despair that we cannot change ourselves or the world
- Degradation of ourselves and/or others
 - ➔ Devaluation of the person and soul
 - ➔ Temptation to self-destruction
 - ➔ Temptation to the destruction of others
- Temptation and seduction → Encouraging us to act while blinded to the error of worldly ways, the evil spread, and the harm done to self, others, and our relationship with God

(Isaiah 5:20-24)

20 Ah! *Those who call evil good, and good evil,
who change darkness to light, and light into darkness,
who change bitter to sweet, and sweet into bitter!*

21 Ah! *Those who are wise in their own eyes,
prudent in their own view!*

22 Ah! *Those who are champions at drinking wine,
masters at mixing drink!*

23 *Those who acquit the guilty for bribes,
and deprive the innocent of justice!*

24 *Therefore, as the tongue of fire licks up stubble,
as dry grass shrivels in the flame,*

*Their root shall rot
and their blossom scatter like dust;*

*For they have rejected the instruction of the LORD of hosts,
and scorned the word of the Holy One of Israel.*

(Question 4: We know physical weapons are employed to kill and destroy. The nature of the weapon also determines the magnitude of destruction caused. **What is the nature of the spiritual weapons we might expect Satan to use against us?)**

- Pride
- Lust
- Gluttony (over consumption)

- Greed
- Sloth (laziness - apathy)
- Anger
- Envy

Quotes:

– *Pope Benedict XVI*

The more one understands the holiness of God, the more one understands the opposite of what is holy, namely, the deceptive masks of the devil.

– *Saint John Paul II*

“Begone, Satan!” The Messiah’s resolute attitude is an example and an invitation for us to follow him with courageous determination. The devil, the “prince of this world”, even today continues his deceitful action. Every man, over and above his own concupiscence and the bad example of others, is also tempted by the devil, and the more so when he is least aware of it.

– *Saint John Paul II*

In the inner heart of every person the voice of God and the insidious voice of the Evil One can be heard. The latter seeks to deceive the human person, seducing him with the prospect of false goods, to lead him away from the real good that consists precisely in fulfilling the divine will.

– *Saint John Paul II*

Spiritual combat is another element of life which needs to be taught anew and proposed once more to all Christians today. It is a secret and interior art, an invisible struggle in which (we) engage every day against the temptations, the evil suggestions that the demon tries to plant in (our) hearts.

Final Thoughts:

Know your enemy does not mean live like your enemy. Unlike physical warfare, similar tactics and weapons are often employed by opposing sides, sometimes even for similar objectives. The nature of spiritual warfare, though, is different. The objectives, tactics, and weapons of the faithful are not the same as those of the devil. We must avoid the temptation to believe that in the fight, the “ends justify the means.” We must recognize that Satan often works by presenting to us truthful problems, but does his mischief within the means and solutions we select.

As we continue our discussion of spiritual warfare, we will continue to address the weapons and tactics of the devil. We must recognize that as the prince of lies, he is very adept at using deception as a means of manipulation. Truly, in spiritual warfare, what we do not know can hurt us severely, therefore, we must study and learn if we are to recognize and guard against the many ways the evil one will attempt to deceive and manipulate us.

No soldier comes to training knowing everything, even if they are seasoned and decorated. That is the whole point of training; to fill in the gaps of knowledge, provide opportunity to practice what is learned, and promote efficiency in ability.

In scripture, Jesus tells us:

(Matthew 10:28)

28 And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

If we are to know the difference, we must know our enemy and never underestimate the lengths he will go for the ruin of our soul.

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 need to know ourselves.

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: Spiritual Warfare – Part III: Know Yourself

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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