



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare

Part III: Know Yourself



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 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, as everyone knows by now, I'm here to ask the simple questions because I'm a simple kinda guy. Ok, the panel is looking at me like I need to take that one to confession. 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.

Dear Lord, we continue to lift up our prayers for our nation. We pray that You will touch hearts so they may all recognize You call us all to be part of the body of Christ. We pray You will help each one of us to become instruments of Your peace. Have Mercy on us, dear Lord, and on the whole world.

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:

Peace in our Day

If we are to have peace in our day, we must seek to learn the wisdom of the Prince of Peace. One might think, by now, that with all the turmoil of the generations, we should have learned that lesson, but still, our world is such that we seem to look everywhere but.

As I pondered that thought, I remembered something from episode 156, which was the final episode of our series concerning “Our Lady of America.” During that episode, we discussed something Sister Mary Ephrem wrote that Our Lady told her:

My sweet child, the Father will never recognize a soul as His own unless He sees in it the likeness of His beloved Son. Souls must attain to the perfection of the Father through the Spirit of the Son.

Beloved daughter, you wonder at the sword and the deep wound it has made in my Heart. It is the sword of grief plunged therein by my children who refuse to let me teach them the true way. There is only one true way to the Father, my child, only one way to eternal union. It is the way of the divine humanity. It is through my Son, the Only-

begotten of the Father, that souls attain perfect union with the Divinity, as perfect as human nature is capable of, aided by divine grace.

But my children will not heed; they will not listen. Every other way they will take, but not this one. (Neuzil, 15)

As I reflect on those words, I can hear in my mind the sorrow in Our Lady's voice. I can sense her asking us how is it that the wisdom of God is within our grasp, but we set it aside for the errors of the world? We pray for peace in our day, but we fail to see that it begins with what we choose.

As we read the news of our day, tragedy and outrage appear to be the norm. I often tell people, that I feel like I am in that commercial, which is a spoof of a horror movie where a young woman says to the fleeing twenty-somethings, "Why don't we just get into the running car?" One young man, playing the part of our mainstream media, remarks, "Are you crazy? Let's hide behind the chain saws," to which everyone readily agrees. The scene then cuts to the masked chainsaw murder who simply shakes his head. I'm certain that Satan does the same thing, probably thinking to himself, "How easy they make my job."

I understand the temptation to believe that there is nothing which we can do, for I have also looked at the world with despair and wonder how evil always seems to have such control, but that is exactly what the evil one wants us to believe, to rob us of hope. We must also remember that he will increase his attacks against us when we are at our lowest points, but we must not let go of our most important sustenance, the love and wisdom of our Lord.

When Satan found Jesus fasting in the desert, he said to Jesus:

(Matthew 4:3)
"If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread."

To which Jesus replied:

(Matthew 4:4)
"It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

We must recognize the nourishment which the Word of God provides for our soul. No matter what battle we face, His Word will strengthen and enable us to stand. We should also recognize that the world is in the shape it is because of all the malnourished souls.

Let us, then, turn to His Word to lead us through the conflicts of our day. Let us also remember what Jesus told us as He spoke the beatitudes:

(Matthew 5:9)
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part VII:

Today we continue looking into the lives of American Saints.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha

St. Kateri Tekakwitha was a native American and a consecrated virgin. Her feast day is July 14 in the United States and April 17 in Canada.

Kateri Tekakwitha was born in 1656. Her mother was an Algonquin. She was captured by the Mohawks and became the wife of a Mohawk chief. Kateri's birth place was in a Mohawk village in Auriesville, New York.

When Kateri was only 4 years old, she became very ill with the smallpox disease which was moving through her community. Because of this illness, she suffered two major heartbreaks that would affect her the rest of her life. First, the disease caused scarring on her skin. She covered herself so that others might not see her disfigurement. The second and more horrible heartbreak for her was that her whole family died from the smallpox outbreak. At the ripe old age of 4, Kateri was orphaned and very self conscious of her scarred body. She was adopted by her aunt and uncle.

As she was growing up in the village, Kateri was enchanted with the visiting priests who came to teach the people. When they walked through the village, she would follow them and listened intently as they preached. She fell in love with the Jesus of which they taught. At the age of 19, Kateri converted to Catholicism. She chose to be a bride of Jesus and took on the vows of virginity, penance, and prayer.

Kateri's adoptive parents and others in the village were very angry with her for this decision. Like many of the saints, Kateri was treated harshly for not following the norms. She was given more chores to do in hopes that she would turn away from her faith and marry a local tribesman. Since she refused to work on Sundays, which only added to the anger of her family, food was withheld from her.

A missionary visited the village where Kateri lived and witnessed the hardships she endured. He encouraged her to flee her home. She did as he advised and went to Montreal, Canada and enjoyed a life free to live her faith and to be able to live the vows of which she adopted when she became a Catholic.

Kateri was a very devout Catholic. She prayed for the conversion of her Mohawk family and even practiced acts of mortification in penance for the sins of others. Kateri was also a sickly young gal. Her acts of mortification and fasting did not help when she was ill. On April 17, 1680, in Kahnawake, Canada, and only five years after becoming Catholic, young Kateri passed into the arms of Jesus. She was only 24 years old.

The name Kateri is Mohawk for Catherine. She loved that her name came from St. Catherine of Sienna. When she was Baptized, she took the name Catherine. She was also known as the Lily of the Mohawks, a nickname she was given by her Mohawk family.

Pope John Paul II beatified Kateri in 1980. Pope Benedict XVI canonized her on October 21, 2012. During this canonization, she was named the patroness of ecology and the environment, people in exile and Native Americans. She is the very first Native American Saint.

If you would like to learn more about St. Kateri Tekakwitha, 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 159.

Discussion:

As we closed our last discussion, I mentioned that in 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 enemy. 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, no matter how seasoned or decorated by battle. That is the whole point of training; to fill in the gaps of knowledge and skill, to provide opportunity to practice what is learned, and to 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.

A similar principle within the Art of War, is to know yourself. As Jesus was teaching about discipleship, He asked the crowd,

(Luke 14:31)

28 Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? 29 Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him 30 and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' 31 [W]hat king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops?

While Jesus was pointing out the high bar of discipleship, He was also making the point that those who wish to be His disciples must assess themselves as to whether they are capable of the challenge. To answer that question, they must know themselves.

(Question 1: So, let's turn to ourselves. What are some things we might want to assess about ourselves when we consider our preparedness for spiritual battle?)



(Question 2: Let's take a moment to drill down into these things we just mentioned. Let's start with "Talents and Skills." What might we want to assess about our talents and skills?)



(Question 3: As we assess our talents and skills, we must also consider our knowledge. What might we want to assess about our knowledge?)

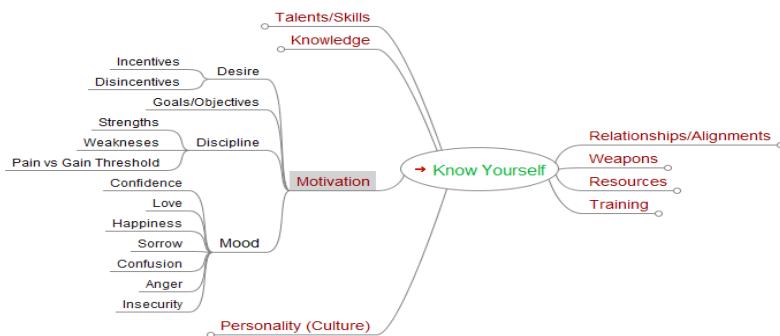


As we reflect on the agony of the Garden, scripture tells us:

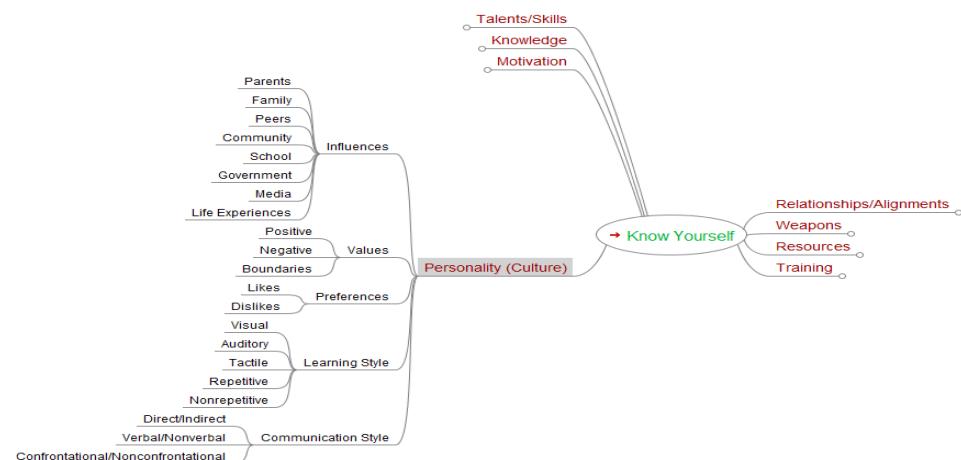
(Matthew 26:36-41)

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." 39 He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." 40 When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? 41 Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

(Question 4: This scripture reveals to us that if we are lacking in motivation, we are likely to falter in our tasks. What might we want to assess about our motivation?)



(Question 5: The development of our personality began in the womb. It continues to mature day by day. It is also heavily influenced by the culture in which we are raised and continue to live. What might we want to assess about our personality?)



Quotes:

Saint Teresa of Avila, Interior Castle

Self knowledge is so important that, even if you were raised right up to the heavens, I should like you never to relax your cultivation of it; so long as we are on this earth, nothing matters more to us than humility.

Saint Teresa of Avila, Interior Castle

We shall never succeed in knowing ourselves unless we seek to know God: let us think of his greatness and then come back to our own baseness; by looking at his purity we shall see our foulness; by meditating upon his humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble.

Saint John Paul II - Salvifici Doloris

For it is above all a call. It is a vocation ... as the individual takes up his cross, spiritually uniting himself to the Cross of Christ, the salvific meaning of suffering is revealed before him. He does not discover this meaning at his own human level, but at the level of the suffering of Christ. At the same time, however, from this level of Christ the salvific meaning of suffering descends to man's level and becomes, in a sense, the individual's personal response. It is then that man finds in his suffering interior peace and even spiritual joy.

Final Thoughts:

Knowing ourselves begins with honesty with ourselves. That is a lot easier said than done. In that honesty, we are likely to discover things about ourselves we do not like and things we know we must change. As we look to change, we may be excited at the prospect of self-improvement, but we may also struggle or even feel helpless towards attempting to accomplish that change because of a variety of issues.

Change management and self-improvement experts will tell us that we are unlikely to change ourselves for the long term until the pain of not changing exceeds the pain of changing. We will talk more about this during future discussions, but we must understand that the first step towards change is the recognition of the need. Another important step is to understand the benefit, which takes us to an honest assessment of our motivation.

Perhaps the most important thing we must understand as we assess ourselves, is that no matter what we find, we must not fall to the temptation of despair, for that is the worst ground from which to fight. Should we feel that temptation, and again, this is more easily said than done, we must remind ourselves that we do not walk the path alone and there is always reason for our hope. We may not comprehend the trial of the moment, but if we trust in our Lord, He will lead us to the greater good to come.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we continue to discuss things we should consider as we seek to know ourselves so that we may prepare for the spiritual battles ahead of us.

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 IV: More on Knowing Ourselves

Current Day Commentary References:

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