



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare
Part VI: What Jesus Taught Saint Faustina



Saint Faustina
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 a catechist for both youth and adult formation, and 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 World Youth Day.

Of course, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because it is really hard to kick off a discussion with an answer. 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 pray especially today, dear Lord, for the repose of the souls of Laura and Bobby. We pray for Your mercy as they come to receive Your embrace. We also pray that in this time of loss, Your hand of comfort shall also rest upon all who love and care for them.

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:

Serenity and Change

I must confess that as I watch current events, I am disturbed and frustrated. I am disturbed by the politically fanned violence in the streets and frustrated because I feel helpless towards changing anything for the better. I am frustrated as I watch the flood of media propaganda which is designed to manipulate us. I am frustrated as I struggle to find sources of ground truth. I am frustrated as effective teamwork and problem solving, in the manner which God expects of us, are overwhelmed by political agendas and ideological power struggles which are taking our nation and our church away from the path which God desires for us; the path of responsibility, love, mercy, charity, and ultimately, salvation.

As I pondered the situation, the Serenity Prayer came to mind. It is a prayer that is used by a variety of Twelve Step programs and goes something like this:

God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,
the courage to change the things we can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
(Wikipedia)

The prayer is appropriate for a variety of circumstances, especially the objectives of the Twelve Step programs, but I realized it was not appropriate for my frustrations. My frustration is associated with the change we need as a world to accomplish the will of God, which Saint Faustina reminds us is Love and Mercy itself. To say that I must “accept” both the flaws of myself as well as the conditions of our world, under the assumption that I am powerless to cause any change, seemed to me to admit defeat to the one fanning the flames of our flaws.

I know some will tell me that I am over thinking a simple concept, in other words, don't let the frustrations of what we cannot change to cause us to waste our energy and over stress us, rather, we should focus our energy on what we can change. I agree with this concept, but in terms of what God asks of us, how am I to accept the evil which I appear to be powerless to change – or is that the issue; are any of us really powerless to influence the change we need to help accomplish the will of God?

The Serenity Prayer can be a powerful prayer if we understand how God desires we apply it. The evil one wants us to assume we cannot change the direction to which he seduces the world. He wants us to assume we are powerless to turn the world away from evil ways. He wants us to assume that we are powerless against evil and we must simply accept what is evil. We'll simply be less stressed if we don't even try to resist his temptations.

We must remember, what may appear impossible for us is possible with God, so, perhaps before we accept the “things we cannot change,” we should turn to God and ask Him. We should ask that He help us understand His desires for us. We should ask Him to help us understand the gifts and talents He created within us and the purpose He desires they should be put so that we may share the blessings of love and help accomplish His will.

By ourselves, we cannot change the direction of the world away from all evil, but with the assistance of God, the change we don't think is possible, is more than possible, but we must remember to ask God to lead us in what He calls us to accomplish.

As members of His church, joining together our gifts and talents through ministry, we may bring forth many blessings, but if we do not listen for God's light, silent sound within our hearts, we leave ourselves battling the evil one alone. Let us, then, in prayer, ask our Lord to guide us in what He asks of us to help bring His light to the world. Let us ask Him to help us see how we may be instruments of His peace, then, let us go forth with the wisdom, courage, and strength He grants us to help accomplish His will, which Saint Faustina reminds us is Love and Mercy itself.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part X:

St. John Neumann, C.Ss.R.

St. John Neumann's feast day is January 5. He was a missionary Priest. He was the 4th Bishop of Philadelphia and he founded the first diocesan Catholic school system in the US.

On March 28, 1811, John Nepomucene was born in the village of Prachalitz in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). As was the practice of the time, baby John was taken to the local church only a few hours after his birth so that he could be Baptized. He was given the name John in honor of a patron saint of his country.

John knew from a very early age that he was called to the priesthood. It was no surprise to anyone when after graduation from school in Bohemia, he applied to the seminary. He excelled in his studies and was especially interested in his studies on theology and natural sciences. Languages were also important to him and by the end of his formal education, he had become fluent in eight languages, which included Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

While in school, John had the urge to become a missionary in America. Thousands of German Catholics had immigrated to the United States and he believed that he was needed since he spoke German and could easily minister to the new immigrants in the United States.

John studied diligently and learned what it meant to do God's will. He did all that was required of him to become a priest and was eager to make this his life's mission. He was ready. When his time for ordination came however, the bishop became ill and the ordination was canceled. Due to an over abundance of priests in Europe at the time, his ordination was never rescheduled. (Wouldn't it be great if we had an over abundance of priests now?)

Knowing that he was truly meant to be a priest, young John traveled from Bohemia to New York City. He met Bishop John Dubois a few days after arriving in his new homeland. Learning that the Bishop had very few priests to care for the thousands of Catholics in New York, he requested to receive his ordination in New York. At the young age of 25 and in one week's time, in June of 1836, Bishop Dubois ordained John a sub-deacon (today we call this an accolite), a deacon and finally a priest. When being ordained a priest, John's name was changed to Neumann, John Neumann. A week later he was named pastor of the entire Niagara Frontier.

At the age of 29, John made the decision to join the Redemptorists Priests. He was the first one to make these vows in the United States. As a Redemptorists Priest, John did his missionary work in Maryland, Virginia and Ohio. He was most popular with the German communities as he spoke their language.

In 1852, John became the bishop of Philadelphia, he was only the 4th Bishop to hold this position. John was ordained a bishop on his 41st birthday. What a gift!

He was very well known for his holiness and his ability to learn. He enjoyed writing and preaching as well. Because of his powerful skills in education and organization, he began to draw into his community, sisters and brothers who came to establish Catholic education and thus began the parochial school system very similar to what we enjoy to this very day.

Because of his long and stressful labors to care for the needs of his flock, Bishop Neumann suffered much. He was often ill. Despite his frequent illnesses, it was a huge shock to his people when he suddenly died on January 5, 1860 from a stroke at the age of 48.

Bishop Neumann's journey to sainthood began in 1886. The title of Venerable was bestowed upon him ten years later when Pope John XXIII made the proclamation for his Beatification. Strangely, just as his original ordination to priesthood was delayed, because of an illness of the bishop, this ceremony was also delayed due to the death of Pope John XXIII. On October 13, 1963, Pope Paul VI held the ceremony. In June of 1977 he was canonized and became the first man from the United States to become a saint in the Roman Catholic Church. Saint Neumann is buried in St. Peter the Apostles Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The following is taken from franciscanmedia.org:

Neumann took seriously our Lord's words, "Go and teach all nations." From Christ he received his instructions and the power to carry them out. For Christ does not give a mission without supplying the means to accomplish it. The Father's gift in Christ to John Neumann was his exceptional organizing ability, which he used to spread the Good News. Today the Church is in dire need of men and women to continue in our times the teaching of the Good News. The obstacles and inconveniences are real and costly. Yet when Christians approach Christ, he supplies the necessary talents to answer today's needs. The Spirit of Christ continues his work through the instrumentality of generous Christians. (Franciscan Media)

These are some timely words that we might all ponder as we reflect on our own abilities for our times.

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 , 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 162.

Discussion:

During our last discussion, we addressed assessment of our spiritual environment, which includes the realms of influence upon our spiritual values, behaviors, and decision making. We also discussed the need for our spiritual situational awareness along with understanding how the spiritual terrain may influence our physical world as well as the battle for our place for eternity. While there are those who would lead us to believe that political correctness should be our guide, we must ask ourselves, how do the unwritten and ever shifting rules of such *ad hominem* logic provide us a clear path to what is right and just, or more importantly, our salvation?

As we assess our spiritual environment and endeavor to maintain our spiritual situational awareness, we can expect that the evil one will do whatever He can to confuse and confound us. If we study the Word of our Lord, if we look to the example of His life and the wisdom of His

teaching, if we ask the Holy Spirit to be our guide; He will lead us to the favorable spiritual terrain which best enables us to help accomplish the will of God.

It is a principle of warfare that we do not want to engage in battle on ground favorable to the enemy. As we know our enemy, know ourselves, and assess our environment; we are better able to assess the ground which is favorable to us. Let us always be wary of our surroundings and let us look for the opportunities to which God leads us, for if we rely in His wisdom, the evil one shall be at the disadvantage.

Today, we shall turn our discussion to the wisdom of our Lord and what He taught Saint Faustina in relation to spiritual warfare. We must remember, that spiritual warfare is not the same as physical warfare, for it is often fought in ways we do not always see through our physical senses, nor do we always see the destruction which the enemy causes.

In her diary, Saint Faustina writes that Jesus told her:

(Diary, 1760)

My daughter, I want to teach you about spiritual warfare. Never trust in yourself, but abandon yourself totally to My will. In desolation, darkness and various doubts, have recourse to Me and to your spiritual director. He will always answer you in My name. Do not bargain with any temptation; lock yourself immediately in My Heart and, at the first opportunity, reveal the temptation to the confessor. Put your self-love in the last place, so that it does not taint your deeds. Bear with yourself with great patience. Do not neglect interior mortifications. Always justify to yourself the opinions of your superiors and of your confessor. Shun murmurers like a plague. Let all act as they like; you are to act as I want you to.

Observe the rule as faithfully as you can. If someone causes you trouble, think what good you can do for the person who caused you to suffer. Do not pour out your feelings. Be silent when you are rebuked. Do not ask everyone's opinion, but only the opinion of your confessor; be as frank and simple as a child with him. Do not become discouraged by ingratitude. Do not examine with curiosity the roads down which I lead you. When boredom and discouragement beat against your heart, run away from yourself and hide in My heart. Do not fear struggle; courage itself often intimidates temptations, and they dare not attack us.

Always fight with the deep conviction that I am with you. Do not be guided by feeling, because it is not always under your control; but all merit lies in the will. Always depend upon your superiors, even in the smallest things. I will not delude you with prospects of peace and consolations; on the contrary, prepare for great battles. Know that you are now on a great stage where all heaven and earth are watching you. Fight like a knight, so that I can reward you. Do not be unduly fearful, because you are not alone.

In these three short paragraphs, I counted 25 instructions which Jesus gave Saint Faustina.

(Question 1: Let's begin with the first, which is, “*Never trust in yourself, but abandon yourself totally to My will.*” Why might we think that we should not trust in ourselves, but we should instead abandon ourselves totally to the will of our Lord?)

By what strength do we make our choices?

(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.”

By whose wisdom do we make our choices?

(Proverbs 26:12)

You see those who are wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for fools than for them.

(1 Corinthians 3:19)

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God, for it is written: “He catches the wise in their own ruses,”

What is our ability to see as God sees?

(1 Samuel 16:7)

But the Lord said to Samuel: Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. God does not see as a mortal, who sees the appearance. The Lord looks into the heart.

(Isaiah 55:6-9)

6 Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake their way, and sinners their thoughts; Let them turn to the LORD to find mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways—oracle of the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Bottom line, we lack the wisdom of God and through our weakness, are tempted to rationalize in our eyes that which separates us from the will of God.

(Isaiah 5:20)

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.

(2 Timothy 4:1-5)

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: 2 proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. 3 For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers 4 and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. 5 But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.

These next five instructions are somewhat related.

- In desolation, darkness and various doubts, have recourse to Me and to your spiritual director:
- Always justify to yourself the opinions of your superiors and of your confessor:
- Let all act as they like; you are to act as I want you to.
- Do not ask everyone's opinion, but only the opinion of your confessor; be as frank and simple as a child with him.
- Always depend upon your superiors, even in the smallest things.

(Question 2: These instructions seem to have a commonality of seeking understanding from Jesus, but also through Saint Faustina's spiritual director, confessor, and appointed superiors. **If we have recourse to Christ, why would we concern ourselves with these others.)**

We should note the authority Jesus gave to His Apostles and instructions to His disciples:

(Matthew 16:18-19)

18 And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

(John 14:16-17, 26)

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, 17 the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. ... 26 The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.

(Matthew 10:19-20)

19 When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. 20 For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

(Matthew 28:18-20)

18 Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Jesus told Saint Faustina: “He [referring to her spiritual director] will always answer you in My name.” (Diary, 1760)

These four instructions appear to be related to our interactions with those who surround us.

- Do not pour out your feelings.
- Be silent when you are rebuked.
- Shun murmurers like a plague.
- If someone causes you trouble, think what good you can do for the person who caused you to suffer.

(Question 3: As we examine these instructions, we see the battleground is sometimes contained within our heart. What do these instructions reveal to us about how we sometimes leave ourselves vulnerable, how we may be struck, and how Jesus calls us to respond?)

(Proverbs 18:6-7)

The lips of fools walk into a fight, and their mouths are asking for a beating. 7 The mouths of fools are their ruin; their lips are a deadly snare.

(Proverbs 20:19)

A slanderer reveals secrets; so have nothing to do with a babbler!

(2 Timothy 2:14-17)

14 Remind people of these things and charge them before God to stop disputing about words. This serves no useful purpose since it harms those who listen. 15 Be eager to present yourself as acceptable to God, a workman who causes no disgrace, imparting the word of truth without deviation. 16 Avoid profane, idle talk, for such people will become more and more godless, 17 and their teaching will spread like gangrene.

(2 Timothy 2:23-26)

23 Avoid foolish and ignorant debates, for you know that they breed quarrels. 24 A slave of the Lord should not quarrel, but should be gentle with everyone, able to teach, tolerant, 25 correcting opponents with kindness. It may be that God will grant them repentance that leads to knowledge of the truth, 26 and that they may return to their senses out of the devil's snare, where they are entrapped by him, for his will.

(Matthew 5:43-48)

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? 48 So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

(Question 4: Jesus told Saint Faustina, “Do not bargain with any temptation; lock yourself immediately in My Heart and, at the first opportunity, reveal the temptation to the confessor.” During the open to our discussion, I mentioned that it is a principle of warfare that we do not want to engage in battle on ground favorable to the enemy. How might we see this instruction of Jesus as an example to that principle and to what ground does Jesus call us?)

- We are not a match for the deceptions and designs of the evil one
- The heart of Jesus is our refuge
- The heart of Jesus is the ultimate hospital for the wounded soul
- Our confessor speaks in *persona christi*, therefore provides the instruction of Christ

Quotes:

– *Pope Benedict XVI*

Let us ask the Lord to visit the dungeons of this world; all the prisons which are hushed up by a propaganda which knows no truth, by a strategy of disinformation, keeping us in the dark and constituting our dungeon. Let us ask him to enter into the spiritual prisons of this age, into the darkness of our lack of truth, revealing himself as the Victor who tears down the gates and says to us, “I, your God, have become your Son. Come out! I have not created you to be in prison for ever. I did not make you for the dungeon.

– *Pope Benedict XVI*

Christ summons us to find heaven in him, to discover him in others and thus to be heaven to each other. He calls us to let heaven shine into this world...

– *Saint Faustina*

The soul recognizes that God is counting on it, and this knowledge fortifies it. It knows that to be faithful it will often have to face various difficulties, but it trusts in God and, thanks to this trust, it reaches that point to which God is calling it. Difficulties do not terrify it; they are its daily bread, as it were. They do not frighten or terrify the soul, just as a warrior who is constantly in battle is not terrified by the roar of the cannon. Far from being frightened, it listens to determine from which side the enemy is launching his attack, in order to defeat him. It does nothing blindly, but examines and ponders everything deeply and, not counting on itself, it prays fervently and asks advice of other warriors who are experienced and wise. When the soul acts in this way, it nearly always wins.

These are attacks when a soul has no time to think or seek advice; then it must enter into a life-or-death struggle. Sometimes it is good to flee for cover in the wound of the Heart of Jesus, without answering a single word. By this very act the enemy is already defeated.

Final Thoughts:

During the course of our discussion about what Jesus taught Saint Faustina about spiritual warfare, we should note that the instructions of our Lord are not about holding physical ground or the material treasures of the world, rather it is about holding the ground of the soul and the treasures of God's blessings, especially the treasures of charity and love.

We must have no illusions, the evil one attacks our soul in a variety of ways and especially through our emotions, but if we put on the armor of God, if we study to know our faith, if we ask our Lord in prayer to help us understand how He desires we put the talents He created in us, if we pray to listen for God's whispers to our heart, if we seek refuge in the Sacred Heart of our Lord and Savior, we fortify our soul against attack.

We must also recognize that alone, we are no match for the evil one. While it may appear hopeless to fight him, we must remember that we are not in the fight alone. We must encourage one another. We must work together to spread the good news of the Gospel. We must help one another put on the armor of our faith. We must work together to help accomplish the will of God. But even then, if we do not listen to our Lord, we shall falter; therefore, let us take His

hand. Let us allow Him to lead us so that love and mercy may be shared by all and His will may be done, which Saint Faustina reminds us is Love and Mercy itself.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we continue to discuss the instructions Jesus gave to Saint Faustina about spiritual warfare.

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 VII: More On What Jesus Taught St Faustina

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