



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare
Part VII: Spiritual Tactics of the Enemy



Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
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 youth and adult formation catechist, 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 Word Youth Day.

Of course, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because it is the blessed skill of the two year old mind. If Sharon was here, I'm sure she would expound upon that. 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 pray especially for all the sick and afflicted, especially the child Francesca. We pray Your healing hand shall rest upon them, as well as Your hand of comfort. We pray You will guide the hearts and hands of their caregivers, and we also pray that Your hand of comfort shall rest upon all those 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:

Politics and Catholics

As the election approaches, it is incumbent upon us to research our candidates and for what they stand. It is not enough to listen to their speeches or media interviews, but we must research their policy actions in relation to their words. If they tell us they are pro-life, marriage, and family and want to help the least among us; their voting record or policy actions should reflect that, or they are simply giving the issue lip service.

As voter guides make their rounds, a statement was made by some that Catholics cannot be Democrats. While there are obvious concerns with the Democrat platform, I would not go that far. It is true, we cannot vote for candidates which do not support what God asks of us, such as; the sanctity of life, marriage, and family along with the care and protection of the least among us; but that does not mean that as Catholics we cannot be a Democrat. What it means is that if we are Democrat, we have an obligation to try and influence the conscience of the party to support the will of God and dissuade the candidates away from policies which are in opposition of Catholic teaching. We must encourage any party of which we are a member to field candidates with proposed solutions consistent with what God asks of us.

We are also told that Catholics must not be one issue voters. In other words, if we will just accept policies which enable a culture of death, and assaults on family and marriage, we will get policies which will help the poor and our environment; as if the pro-life, pro-family, pro-sanctity-of-marriage candidate is indifferent to the poor.

Sadly, this thinking opens the door to ideological rationalization through relativism. As long as we rationalize our vote as for something good, we are tempted to believe it is OK to turn a blind eye to intrinsically evil policies such as abortion and euthenasia. Because political parties and candidates cannot seem to produce a platform wholly consistent with what God asks of us, we are often left in the position of trying to pick who represents the lesser of two evils.

We may consider the answer to that from the standpoint of who does the least harm, but we must also consider the gravity of what we enable as we choose.

A preeminent issue is the sanctity of life. If we do not respect life, then, we must ask, what does any other right matter? If we do not have a right to life, we do not have a right to anything else, for all rights are lost when life is lost.

This does not mean that if we support life we endorse other policy failures, but we cannot justly work other issues without first ensuring the sanctity of life. As Catholics, we must work to influence the platform of whatever party to which we subscribe so that it aligns with what God asks of us. That also means that we must know our faith, so that we may correctly discern what God asks of us when candidates ask for our vote, especially when we do not have what we perceive to be good choices in front of us.

We are often drawn to a candidate because we agree with the problem they pledge to us they will solve, but we must recognize that we must look at more than the problem, we must also look at the means and the solutions, for we have all heard that old phrase, “the devil is in the details.” We may desire to address a moral problem, but if the means and solutions are not also moral, then, we still have a problem.

If we find ourselves confused in any way, then, we should turn in prayer to the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us He would send us an Advocate to remind us of all which He taught. (John 14:26) If we are uncertain of the right path and who or what we should enable with our vote, then, in earnest, we must ask the Holy Spirit to help us see who will best serve the children of God and help accomplish His will, which Saint Faustina reminds us, is love and mercy itself.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part XII:

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has listed 15 Saints and Blessed from the United States. We have made our way through more than half of them. Today let us look into the life of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, C.Ss.R.

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos was a missionary preacher and his feast day is October 5.

Like most of the American Saints, Francis Xavier Seelos was born in a distant land. He was born on January 11, 1819 in Bavaria Germany. He did not lack for God's creative beauty and inspiration that surrounded him during his formative years.

Like the other saints we have talked about, Francis was baptized on the same day of his birth. I don't know if this was due to illnesses, or just the tradition, but it certainly tells us a lot about the faith of the people in the 16, 17 and 18 hundreds.

As a child, Francis knew that he wanted to become a priest. He claimed that he did not just want to imitate his patron saint, but that he actually wanted to be another St. Francis Xavier. After completing his studies in philosophy, he entered a seminary in Augsburg, Germany.

During the time of his seminary studies, he learned about the missionaries of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, also known as the Redemptorists. He liked what they did and soon made the decision to join their team. He wanted to evangelize and like many of the missionaries of his time, he desired to go to the United States to care for the German speaking immigrants.

Francis applied for admittance to the Redemptorist order and was accepted. He made his way to North America and arrived in New York in April of 1843. He entered his novitiate formation and studied theology. On December 22, 1844, Francis was ordained in St. James Church in Baltimore Maryland.

For almost a decade, he worked in Pittsburgh, PA. He began his work as an assistant to St. John Neumann, who was his spiritual director and confessor and who was the Superior of the Religious Community. After a few years he himself became the Superior of the order and the pastor of St. Philomena Parish. One of his other duties was to serve as the Redemptorist Novice Master.

Francis was dedicated to serving the people. He was totally devoted to preaching and teaching and soon earned a most favorable reputation. He was also known for always being available to anyone who needed him. His kindness, understanding way and quick response to those he served had people from far and wide coming to him for all their spiritual needs.

Francis was a humble man who embraced the charisms of the Redemptorist order. He lived a simple life and expressed himself in simple ways. When he preached, he used a great deal of biblical references and made sure everyone could understand him no matter what their education level or life style was. He particularly felt the call to pastoral care for children and instructed them in the faith.

Throughout his entire priestly life, he had a deep devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. Not only was he devoted to Our Lady, but he instructed others to follow this same devotion.

In 1854 he moved from Pittsburgh, leaving behind the community he loved. During the next decade, he moved forward to Baltimore, Cumberland and Annapolis, Maryland. He was active in parish life and took on the role of teaching many about the Redemptorist's ways of being “perfect students.” These followers learned what it meant to always be kind, happy, and attentive. He infused his students with enthusiasm, a spirit of sacrifice and inspired in them a zeal for caring for the spiritual and temporal needs of the people.

In 1860, he was nominated to be Bishop of Pittsburgh. His interests were more for missionary work so Pope Pius IX ended this nomination and sent him to care for English and German speaking people. From 1863 to 1866 he traveled throughout Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin.

In 1866, he was reassigned and moved to New Orleans. This assignment was designed to slow him down a bit and put him back in parish life and not so much traveling. While in Louisiana, he served as pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish continuing to do what he did best--- preaching, teaching and loving.

During his time in Louisiana, an epidemic of yellow fever broke out. He took on the task of visiting and caring for many who had contracted the disease. While caring for the ill, he too contracted yellow fever. He suffered and patiently endured this illness for only a few weeks. On October 4, 1867, Francis was only 48 years old when he was received into Heaven.

On April 9, 2000, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Father Francis Xavier Seelos as “Blessed” in St. Peter's Square. His journey to sainthood continues.

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 Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, 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 164.

Discussion:

As we discussed during previous episodes, spiritual warfare may have consequences in our physical world due to the choices we make, but it is often warfare conducted within ourselves on the ground of temptation and desire. It is also found on the ground of ignorance, especially ignorance of our faith and what God asks of us. One of the concerns of our show is that those who do not know their faith leave themselves vulnerable to the one who would deceive them away from their relationship with and trust in God, not to mention, away from what God asks of us.

As we consider what Jesus taught Saint Faustina, we must reflect on what those instructions mean to us. His desire is that we shall all survive the battle, but we can only do so if we prepare ourselves. Of course, I know we are preaching to the choir here, for by listening to our show

you have already taken a step forward in learning – and even if this is the first time you have listened to us, congratulate yourself on taking this step and encourage yourself to continue to learn and don't be afraid to learn with others.

We should remember there are various means by which we may study God's Word and allow Him to whisper His desires for us to our hearts. If we listen carefully, whether He speaks through scripture, through His messengers, or directly to our soul, we shall have the opportunity to follow Him so we may forever be with Him within His kingdom where love is shared by all, where there is no pain or affliction, and where evil is not allowed to follow. Let us also take advantage of the ways God speaks to us during the Mass, adoration, prayer, religious formation, the sacrament of reconciliation, and ministry.

God speaks to us during ministry, some might ask? Yes, if we are alert, if we pay attention, God will speak to us in various ways as we set about the work and effort to help accomplish His will, which Saint Faustina reminds us is love and mercy itself.

Today, we are going to turn our attention to the spiritual tactics the enemy may use against us. First, we need to take a moment to understand what a tactic is. According to our friends, Merriam-Webster, “tactic” is defined as:

- 1a : the science and art of disposing and maneuvering forces in combat
 - b : the art or skill of **employing available means to accomplish an end**
 - 2 : a system or mode of procedure
- (Online Dictionary)

(Question 1: The heart of this definition is “employing available means to accomplish an end.” Before we look at the means, **what do we think the primary “end” is that the evil one wants to achieve?**)

- Turn us away from the truth of the Word of God
- Turn us away from what God asks of us
- Turn us against one another
- Turn us away from a relationship with our Creator

(Question 2: To accomplish some of the things we just discussed, an essential end towards that objective is to turn us away from truth. If we fully accepted God's Holy Truth, we certainly would not be dancing with the devil, and yet, so often we find ourselves with the evil one as our dance partner. **The tactic used to change someone's view of truth is obviously “deception.” What are some forms of deception which we might expect to be deployed against us by the evil one?**)

- Lies
- Disinformation
- Misinformation
- Partial context
- Infiltration (Trojan Horse/Saboteur/Wolf in Sheep's Clothing)

- Circumstantial Justification/Rationalization (Good is evil/evil is good, depending on political circumstances)

(Isaiah 5:20-24)

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 4:3-5)

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.*

(Colossians 2:4-8)

4 *I say this so that no one may deceive you by specious arguments.* 5 *For even if I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing as I observe your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.* 6 *So, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him,* 7 *rooted in him and built upon him and established in the faith as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.* 8 *See to it that no one captivate you with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and not according to Christ.*

Note: Ideologies of the world often present noble intentions as their justifications, but they become flawed as we examine the consequences of their means and actions. Good intentions are often a means by which to seduce us to evil outcomes.

We might think to ourselves, we are not dumb. We can see when deception is in play; but that is part of the art of deception, to seduce us with kernels of truth so that we will accept the lie of the evil one. Of course, if we are vigilante, if we do our study and research, if we look for the full context of the issues and examine the paths for likely consequences, either intended or unintended; we make the task of deception difficult.

Of course, this requires time and effort, so another tactic the evil one may use is “distraction” to slow us down, to either lure us to rash judgment or cause us to abandon prudence and due diligence such that we look past the evil in the details.

(Question 3: There are many forms of distraction we may experience in our lives. What are some of the forms of “distraction” we might expect the evil one will deploy against us?)

- Gossip/Framing (false witness)
- Noise/Pursuits of Trivial Value
 - ➔ Overwhelming our ability to focus on what is important
 - ➔ Skewing our priorities → focus on the trivial versus what is important in the eyes of God
- Miscommunication
- Emotional overload
- Confusion
- Division
 - Political Power Struggles
 - Retribution/Vengeance
 - Conflict → Violence → Destruction → Suffering → Death

(Psalm 52:6)

You love all the words that create confusion, you deceitful tongue.

(James 3:1-12)

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you realize that we will be judged more strictly, 2 for we all fall short in many respects. If anyone does not fall short in speech, he is a perfect man, able to bridle his whole body also. 3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we also guide their whole bodies. 4 It is the same with ships: even though they are so large and driven by fierce winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot's inclination wishes. 5 In the same way the tongue is a small member and yet has great pretensions.

Consider how small a fire can set a huge forest ablaze. 6 The tongue is also a fire. It exists among our members as a world of malice, defiling the whole body and setting the entire course of our lives on fire, itself set on fire by Gehenna. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. This need not be so, my brothers. 11 Does a spring gush forth from the same opening both pure and brackish water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce olives, or a grapevine figs? Neither can salt water yield fresh.

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show his works by a good life in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 Wisdom of this kind does not come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.

(Question 4: When we are distracted from truth, there are consequences. What might we think some of the consequences might be in relation to the tactic of distraction?)

- Chasing bad fruits thinking they are good → Diverts time, resources, and effort away from the work God asks of us
- Misplaced priorities → What do we place before what God asks of us or God Himself?
- Failure to account for all variables → Hidden context hides truth
- Evil of unintended consequences → Failure to evaluate outcomes

(Matthew 4:5-7)

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you' and 'with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'"

(Matthew 24:24)

24 False messiahs and false prophets will arise, and they will perform signs and wonders so great as to deceive, if that were possible, even the elect.

Quotes:

Saint John Paul II

Excerpt from Veritatis Splendor (1993)

Called to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, "the true light that enlightens everyone" (Jn 1:9), people become "light in the Lord" and "children of light" (Eph 5:8), and are made holy by "obedience to the truth" (1 Pet 1:22).

This obedience is not always easy. As a result of that mysterious original sin, committed at the prompting of Satan, the one who is "a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44), man is constantly tempted to turn his gaze away from the living and true God in order to direct it towards idols (cf. 1 Thes 1:9), exchanging "the truth about God for a lie" (Rom 1:25). Man's capacity to know the truth is also darkened, and his will to submit to it is weakened. Thus, giving himself over to relativism and scepticism (cf. Jn 18:38), he goes off in search of an illusory freedom apart from truth itself.

As Cardinal John Henry Newman, that outstanding defender of the rights of conscience, forcefully put it: "Conscience has rights because it has duties".

Certain tendencies in contemporary moral theology, under the influence of the currents of subjectivism and individualism just mentioned, involve novel interpretations of the relationship of freedom to the moral law, human nature and conscience, and propose novel criteria for the

moral evaluation of acts. Despite their variety, these tendencies are at one in lessening or even denying the dependence of freedom on truth.

If we wish to undertake a critical discernment of these tendencies — a discernment capable of acknowledging what is legitimate, useful and of value in them, while at the same time pointing out their ambiguities, dangers and errors — we must examine them in the light of the fundamental dependence of freedom upon truth, a dependence which has found its clearest and most authoritative expression in the words of Christ: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8:32).

Final Thoughts:

As we examine the tactics which the evil one may deploy against us, we must also consider the ground upon which we may experience them. We find these tactics deployed against us where we learn, work, and play. We also find them creeping into the resources we use for learning and living our faith. For example, some presenting themselves as “Catholic Media” profess to promote our faith, but as we read the language, we find they are heavily infiltrated by and promote Progressivism, aka Socialism/Marxism/Leninism. To the other extreme, we find those who fall into what I call the “trap of the Pharisees,” where they are more concerned with the trappings of the law rather than endeavoring to comprehend its purpose and proper application.

As we engage, we must remember that our salvation is not about whether this ideology or that celebrity is right or wrong, it is a matter of our understanding of and living the truth to which God calls us.

We might ask ourselves, what are we to do when there are so many wolves in the clothing of sheep wandering among us, working through means of deception and distraction to pull us away from what God asks of us? We must look to our good Shepherds to help guide us to the truth by which we are called to help accomplish the will of God, which, I don't know if I have ever mentioned this before, but Saint Faustina reminds us is love and mercy itself.

Of course, if the wolf in the clothing of sheep is dangerous, we must be even more wary of the wolf in the clothing of the shepherd. This wolf walks among us with the appearance of the authority and office to which we believe obedience is owed. Indeed, such obedience is owed to the good shepherds, but not the wolves.

How are we to tell? After all, we are simply the sheep and disguises can be clever. The answer is found in what Jesus teaches us. The more we study His Word, the better we shall recognize His voice.

(John 10:1-5)

1 “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber. 2 But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice, as he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has driven out all his own, he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize

his voice. 5 But they will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.”

Do we recognize the voice calling to us? Have we studied the Word of the Lord enough to recognize what He speaks? Do we have a relationship with Him through prayer, adoration, reconciliation, and the Eucharist by which we may recognize His voice? Do we hear His light, silent sound in our hearts, leading us in our choices and our ministry? The closer we are to our Lord, the more difficult we make the task of the evil one to deceive us away from Him and the love and blessings which God desires us to share.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has once more come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we continue our discussion related to the spiritual tactics of the enemy.

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 IX: More on the Spiritual Tactics of the Enemy

Why Catholics Do What We Do References:

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