



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare

Part XI: More on Counter Tactics to Those of the Evil One



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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. In addition to being my lovely wife (which is a handicap to her, but a blessing to me), 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 World Youth Day.

Of course, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because if our panel is going to hit the home runs they always do, someone has to pitch. 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 as well as their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

Dear Lord, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise that Nick's son was able to come home from the hospital. We pray Your healing hand will continue to rest upon him as this young child completes his recovery.

We also lift up our hearts, asking that You will grant the parents of our day an increase in faith, as well as a thirst and desire to learn Your Holy Word, so that as they learn, they may so teach their children.

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, Apple PodCasts, Spotify, and CastBox, among a host of 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 you to help our 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 trust 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:

Lessons of History and Serenity

If you remember a couple of weeks back, I mentioned the Serenity Prayer. 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)

Today, I would like to take a moment to address a situation which I believe this prayer fits perfectly, and that is the situation of history. Looking back, we cannot change history. Well, I guess the ideologues can change how people might view history or make history look different than it actually was, but we cannot change the events themselves. What was done was done. We cannot change that. We can only change how we shall proceed as we go forward.

If we are to learn the lessons of history, we must examine its truth. Rewriting it to glorify or villainize only serves ideological purposes to elevate or enrage emotions for political objectives. When we allow it to be rewritten for any purpose other than to yield its truth based on previously unknown information, we base the lessons learned on lies. We cannot learn the real lessons if we do not examine the real facts.

This brings up a dilemma, for given the current media of our day, we have a problem. Truth seems to be reported only if it fits political narratives and ideological objectives. If the truth does not align with ideological objectives, then, only the context as it supports the political narrative is reported, which can be quite misleading. We have also witnessed example after example where supposedly anonymous sources fabricate their stories, again, for political narratives and agendas. What, then, are historians to document when media reporting, actually propaganda, historically records deceptions and deceit as if they were truth?

We should also note that our political language is littered with euphemisms designed to hide real meaning by which to mislead. Calling abortion, reproductive health care is one such example. Death is not health, so we must stop playing word games and stop attempts to slap lovable labels on killing children while they are in the womb. If we do not examine truth, we cannot examine and address the real problem of abortion and why people look to things such as abortion as a solution. We must find solutions which do not require we allow the killing of children while in their mother's womb.

We can better deal with our problems if we start from a position of honesty. If we begin from a position of deceit, by which to hide political objectives, the real problem is unlikely to be addressed, much less solved.

As we look back at history, especially that which occurred generations before us, we must recognize that we cannot undo the event. If we did not cause the events or make the decisions, pointing fingers years and generations later only serves to build animosities – and who do we suppose wants us at one another's throats? Of course, this is how the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, so the children must decide to stop the cycle of sin; in other words, learn from history and apply solutions which are right and just in the eyes of God.

We must consider the lessons past, which we do not want to repeat, but we must not dismiss the good with the bad. We must also learn from the inspiration of loving souls. Fanning hate of one another for what was done before we walked this earth serves no purpose other than the objectives of the evil one, but we do have the opportunity to choose how we intend to live in our day and promote the commandments of love.

In case I haven't mentioned this before, the discourse of Matthew 22:36-40 reveals to us through the Word made flesh that the two greatest commandments are to love God with all our mind, all our heart, and all our soul. Without prompting, Jesus also told us the second is like the first, to love one another as we would love ourselves.

If we are to fulfill these commandments, then, we must look at history to learn the reasons why we have failed in such tasks, but we must also look at the means by which we have succeeded. Dishonest looks at history produce dishonest lessons.

As I mentioned, we cannot change the past. That does not mean that if the failure is personally ours that we do not need to atone for what we have done or failed to do, but we should not build animosities over wars or events past where none of us were present or over which we had no influence. Instead, we should work together to evaluate how we can prevent repeating previous injustices. We must remember that pointing speculative fingers and bearing false witness is another form of harm; hence the commandment which tells us we must not bear false witness, which is often the outcome of gossip and political spin. Instead, we must ask ourselves, why do we not seek more to sow the seeds of love and nurture them to produce the most blessed of fruits?

As we approach the problems of our day, let us not dwell on how to change history, but let us approach one another with humility, civility, dignity, and respect and engage the problem solving process with truth. Let us, also, seek to sow the seeds of love through the blessings of engaging one another with humility, civility, dignity, and respect. Let us look to the ways we may minister to one another. Let us look to the ways we may share the blessings of faith; and if I haven't mentioned this before, we must remember that a blessing is an invocation of God's power and care.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part XV:

St. Mother Théodore Guérin, S.P.

Feast Day: October 3

Missionary and founder of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods

In Etables, France, on October 2, 1798, Anne Therese Guerin was born to Isabelle and Laurent Guerin. This is a special day for me as I have a sister and a grandchild who were born on this same day many years later.

As a child, Anne Therese was very devoted to God. At the age of 10 she received her First Holy Communion. It was on this day that she informed her parish priest that one day she would become a nun. This would have to wait until she was 25 years old.

Anne Therese was home schooled by her mother. Her studies revolved around religion and Scripture. Young Anne spent hours daily in meditation, prayer, reflection, and solitude. The family lived near a rocky shore and it is here that she spent much time being alone with God. She did not know her father very well as he was in the navy and therefore spent years away from home.

Anne Therese was 15 years old when her father was horribly murdered. Her mother did not take this murder well and was over come by ills due to her suffering heart. During this time, Anne

Therese took on the care of her mother and younger sister. As she grew and cared for others, Anne never forgot her desire to devote herself to God and daily continued her prayer life and found times for quiet with God.

When she turned 25, her life time of prayers were answered. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Ruillé-sur-Loir. This was a community of young women who served God by caring for and educating the children, the poor, the sick and the dying. Upon entering and taking her vows, Anne Therese was given the name of Sister Theodore.

As was most common for the time, there was great interest in doing missionary work in the newly developing territory called the United States of America. Sister Theodore was asked to lead a small group of sisters to Indiana. Their mission was to do exactly as they were doing in France---to educate and care for the less fortunate. Because of her ability to lead this mission, she was elevated to now being Mother Theodore before departure. In October 1840, the Sisters arrived to their new home. There was a small cabin that was to serve as a chapel. That evening the Sisters made their way to the chapel and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament to thank God for the safe journey and to ask for blessings upon this new mission.

Upon arriving in America, the Sisters established a mother house, from where they worked and made plans for the development of Catholic education and care. Saint Mary-of-the-Woods was the name of their new mission. The compound consisted of a small framed farmhouse and a chapel. The farmhouse served as a home for the Sisters as well as a few postulantes (young women seeking a vocation). The chapel was of course used for Mass and the Blessed Sacrament, but it also served as a lodging place for priests who came to care for the spiritual needs of the community.

Moving to this new community was exciting, scary, dangerous and full of harms. The sisters found life in Indiana far different than that of their lives in France. They experienced prejudice against Catholics and especially female Catholic Sisters. They endured betrayals, misunderstandings and ignorance. They worked hard to grow a few crops for their food and one day they were consumed by a fire. The sisters were left hungry and poor. Despite the hardships, Mother Theodore was up lifting in her spirit and claimed that when the community gets settled, it will be propped up by the Cross. She counted on Jesus to care for her always.

Within a year, Mother Theodore and the Sisters would open schools in Indiana and Illinois. By the time of her death, schools were built in many neighboring communities, the sisters were well respected and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Providence was most strong. As always, Mother Theodore gave full credit for all the success of the ministry to the Blessed Mother and the reason she named the community, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods.

To the people she served, Mother Theodore was saintly. She was able to pull out the best in people and get them to do things they never dreamed of doing themselves. She was pure love. She loved God, the Roman Catholic Church, the people, the Sisters, and they all knew that they were loved by her.

Being a person of total dedication to prayer, Mother Theodore knew that without her prayer time, she could accomplish nothing. She often shared with her Sisters her thoughts about prayer and how important it is to be in constant communication with the Almighty.

Saint Mother Theodore died May 14, 1856. On Oct. 15, 2006 at St. Peter's Square in Rome Mother Theodore was canonized and received the title, "Saint" from the Catholic Church. She is designated in the Vatican's official record as Saint Theodora.

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 St. Mother Théodore Guérin, 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 167.

Discussion:

As we concluded our last discussion, I mentioned that as we consider the tactics of the evil one, we must recognize that deception is designed to seduce us to accept what is evil as good and manipulate us to turn away from what is good and towards what is evil. I also pointed out that distraction is designed to divert our attention from what God asks of us and the priorities He expects of us such that what is right and just in the eyes of the Lord is not accomplished. These are two major tactics of the evil one which influence our daily choices and by which he endeavors to separate us from our Creator and one another.

As we discussed, prayer plays an important role in our discernment, but we must also prepare ourselves with knowledge such that we are able to decide correctly in the moment. The more we know our faith, the more difficult becomes the task of the evil one to deceive us. The more we know our faith, the more difficult we make the task for the evil one to distract us away from the responsibilities God has for us. The more we know our faith, the more we will recognize the opportunities we have to help accomplish the will of God, which, just in case I haven't mentioned this before, Saint Faustina reminds us, is love and mercy itself.

If the distractions of the world lead us to believe that living our faith is confining, boring or out-of-date, then, we must work to better learn that to which God calls us. The more we learn about the fullness of our faith, the more the meaning of our faith comes alive for us. The closer we approach our Lord and Savior, the more we shall see His desire to prepare us for His kingdom. Let us allow Him to mold us. Let us take His hand so that He may guide us to prevail over the tactics of the evil one. As I mentioned last time, we should seek to be, as the song goes, among that number as the saints go marching in.

Today we are going to discuss what we may do to counter the tactics of temptation and doubt.

(Question 1: Let's start with temptation. We mentioned in episode 165 that temptation is not always to acts of sin, but it may seduce us to the line so that we might be further tempted to cross into the realm of sin. **How might we counter temptations which lead us to the line?)**

- Assess the likely outcomes of what we are tempted to do or not to do
 - Evaluate why we are feeling tempted → examination of conscience
 - Look to the saints for inspiration through their response to temptation
 - Seek support and encouragement → an ally or allies in resistance
 - Pray for assistance to stand strong against temptation → help of the Holy Spirit
 - Seek understanding of God's Word to help us see and walk away from temptation
 - If we feel weak, flee to the heart of Jesus, the ultimate hospital for the soul
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(Question 2: So, we have all fallen into the trap of temptation. **What can we do when we recognize we have slipped and failed?)**

- Sacrament of reconciliation → confession (recognize the failure/problem)
 - Penance, penance, penance
 - Pray for assistance to repent → ask for God's grace
 - Encourage and support one another to do better (circle of friends matters)
 - Flee to the Sacred Heart of Jesus → pray for His Mercy → Spend time with Him in adoration
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(Question 3: Let's turn to the evil one's tactic of sowing doubt. **How might we recognize when the devil is trying to plant the seeds of doubt and how do we defend against his efforts to sow doubt?)**

- Are we seduced to justify dismissing what God asks of us?
- Are we seduced to compromise on what God asks of us?
- Are we seduced to doubt the teachings of our Church → as sinners, we have flaws, but Jesus will save us from them

- Our observation and reason are critical to removing doubt
- Our knowledge is critical to removing doubt → research and learn
 - ➔ Research sources
 - ✓ Scripture
 - ✓ Catechism of the Catholic Church
 - ✓ Church Documents
 - ✓ Writings of the doctors and saints of the church
 - ✓ History
 - ✓ Writings of modern day faithful, theologians, and analysts (careful here)
 - ➔ Examine and vet sources → look for:
 - ✓ Partial relevant context → what is missing important to understanding?

- ✓ Irrelevant context → clouding the picture
- ✓ Ad hominem attacks/assertions → attacks on character, but not substance
- ✓ Non-sequitur reasoning
- ✓ False analogies
- ✓ Analytical gaps
- ✓ Ideological buzzwords (language of the fringes and heretics)
- ✓ Political spin and word games
- ➔ Learn
 - ✓ Daily reading, reflection, and discernment
 - ✓ Religious Formation
 - ✓ Faith and Bible study groups
- ➔ Discuss with others who may help guide the way
 - ✓ Catechists
 - ✓ Religious
 - ✓ Deacons
 - ✓ Priests
- Pray the Holy Spirit will guide us past doubt
- Pray for an increase in and understanding of our Catholic faith
- Flee to the Sacred Heart of Jesus → pray for Him to increase our faith

Quotes:

(James 1:12-15)

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, [f] for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him. 13 [g] No one experiencing temptation should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God is not subject to temptation to evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 Rather, each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire conceives and brings forth sin, and when sin reaches maturity it gives birth to death.

(Galatians 5:13-26)

13 For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another.

16 I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. 18 But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, 21 occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 Now those who belong

to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. 26 Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another.

– *Saint Faustina*

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:

When we recognize temptation before us or those planting the seeds of doubt, we may initially need to rely upon our personal strength, but we must recognize, we cannot fight the evil one alone. We have each other. We have the Word of our Lord. We have the love of Our Blessed Mother who always calls us to the Sacred Heart of her Son, the only begotten Son of God. WE have the angels God sends to help protect our souls. We have the saints to help lift up our prayers to God. We have the Holy Spirit. We have the love and mercy of our Lord and Savior.

When we consider all which is on our side, there is but one way we cannot prevail and that is if we defeat ourselves; and so Satan probes our weaknesses to accomplish just that. The spiritual weapons and tactics arrayed against us by the evil one are formidable, but they are only so when we let go of the hand of Christ.

We may take blows in our daily life. We may endure times of great suffering, but if we take the advice of Saint Faustina, especially when we find ourselves weak and overwhelmed, then, we must flee to the Sacred Heart of our Lord and Savior, the ultimate hospital for the soul. Let us trust in Christ and open our hearts to Him so we might receive the blessings of His Mercy.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has once more come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next time as we turn our discussion to our spiritual weapons.

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 XII: The Spiritual Battering Ram

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