



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare
Part XIII: The Evil One's Avenues of Attack



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. In addition to being my lovely wife, as well as my blessing, 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 allows a contrast to answers. I'll let everyone ponder that statement for awhile. 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 pray especially today for Dora and the young child maturing in her womb. We pray You will keep them healthy and safe and enable Dora to safely deliver her child without complication to either mother or child.

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. We ask that you include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we will give it priority and ensure we capture it and get it placed in 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 the course of our daily prayers.

We would like to remind you that you can listen to all of our shows on demand through any device with an audio component 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 assist us in 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:

What is Our Context?

The context of statements or actions influences our understanding of truth. Context can help clarify or it can obscure. In our day and age of 24/7 media and social media, we face an information overload which becomes difficult for us to assess, absorb, and filter such that we are able to discern the truth we must know, not only for our daily lives, but for our eternal life.

For those who engage social media, I'm sure they can attest how it has become a wicked storm. Media headlines bombard us with outrage after outrage, but I often find that the stories more often than not promote political narratives without evidentiary substantiation and often are based on anonymous sources reporting what is little more than gossip as a means to mislead for political ends. The more I browse the media, the more disappointed I become as I discover deceptions generated through manipulations of context. It is a means by which propagandists may claim that they reported truth, when in fact, they withheld relevant context or connected irrelevant context as a means to manipulate us to a political objective.

Quite frankly, this issue is not new and is not limited to the secular media. During our series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” episodes 57 – 68, we referenced the following quotes concerning the political narratives of some Catholic journals. The author writes:

The journal that seeks to be Catholic and at the same time has the name or reputation of Liberal becomes in the general opinion an ally of those who, under the Liberal banner, combat the Church in front and rear. Vainly will the editor of such a journal explain himself; his excuses and his explanations grow wearisome.
(Salvany, 71)

Moreover there is little doubt that the readers of such journals are little prepared to distinguish the subtle limitations drawn by editors of this character between Liberalism and Liberalism. Most readers know the word in its common usage and class all things Liberal in a lump. When they see an ostensibly Catholic journal practically making common cause with the Liberal creed by sanctioning its name, they are easily led into the dangerous belief that Liberalism has some affinity with their faith, and, this once engrafted in their minds, they become ready adepts of Rationalism.
(Salvany, 72-73)

These words are not from one of the conservative commentators of our day, they come from Father Salvany, a priest who wrote the book, originally titled, Liberalism is a Sin. He was lamenting the political narratives of such journals in 1886. His book received an imprimatur from the Archbishop of Saint Louis in 1899. This battle of truth and context, therefore, is nothing new. Perhaps all which has changed is the speed and variety of means by which we are deluged with political narratives designed to manipulate rather than to present ground truth.

In our day, the lament is not only about Liberalism, really Progressivism, aka Socialism, but it includes opposite extremes as well. So, what are we to do? We cannot ignore current events, for if we are unaware of what is moving through our social sphere, how are we to influence as God would have us influence? Even if we unknowingly perpetuate lies, we become the accomplice. We might present the excuse that we were misled, but what is the saying? “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”

What this implies is we have a responsibility to investigate truth. The propagandist depends upon our willingness to believe without validating. Indeed, the propagandist also depends upon those who repeat the story and spread it, for through spreading, credibility is implied. The media is one means by which this is accomplished, as we noted during episode 61 when we cited the former head of Romanian Intelligence, LTG Pacepa. In his book, Disinformation, he wrote:

“The truth is, the Western media are quite easily manipulated, for they often craft their stories from press releases and tend, on the whole, to be indiscriminate about the nature and reliability of their sources.” (Pacepa, Disinformation, 17)

The problem, though, seems to have morphed during the past few years in that it is no longer about manipulation of the media by the propagandist, rather, it appears the media have become complicit with the propagandists, if not propagandists themselves. It is revealed in their double standards of reporting as well as their manipulation of context to fit political narratives.

We must engage our media, but we must also search for full relevant context by which to discern truth. That is not always easy, especially when media sources are anonymous or no verifiable evidence is presented. What then, are we to believe?

Remember the adage, consider the source? That is often the first tip. When I hear something sourced to the main stream media, I consider that something happened, but what they present as fact is rarely truth. I recognize their objective is not to inform, but to manipulate our emotions for purposes of manipulating public opinion. In fact, I look at polls as being less about what people believe as they are the media's report card on the effectiveness of their manipulation and what we must regurgitate to avoid the “cancel culture.”

Even when presented with a snippet of video evidence, I find I still need to investigate context, such as what happened before whatever outrageous incident displayed. Sometimes what happens after is revealing as well. Sometimes there is a video from a different angle, or which includes a broader capture of the surrounding context. Sometimes a new angle reveals what a different angle hides.

We must also consider that initial reporting is not always accurate. As a military man, I know that early intelligence reports are rarely accurate. We call it the fog of war where we attempt to make sense of the information we can gather through various means and try to determine what we call “ground truth.” Of course, the enemy does not want us to know what they are doing, so they seduce us to bad decisions through disinformation operations.

Where time is not a constraint to a decision, I usually find it is best to wait a couple of days, as additional context is brought forth through various sources. The headlines, though, are designed to elevate our emotions to seduce us away from prudence. I find the more reliable sources to be up front about what they do not know and measure their comments accordingly, but in the cut throat world of publishing first, even they can be seduced to repeat political narratives when they are short on facts.

As we follow the stories of our day, especially stories concerning our faith, it is important to consider sources and evidence presented. Sources dominated by political narratives and rants with slurs which fail to present hard evidence are obviously suspect. Their value is little more than to let us know something happened, but if we want truth, we need not waste much time with their politically charged superlatives. Sources which present first hand evidence and primary source documents, with reasoned and controlled statistical analysis, without sprinklings of emotionally charged adjectives, are more reliable; but that still does not absolve us of the responsibility to ask ourselves, what is the authenticity of evidence presented and what is missing?

We rely on our media to sort through the relevant questions and work to obtain for us truthful and reliable information, but that seems to be in short supply these days. To make matters worse, we often do not have the time ourselves to vet truth, so we must be guarded in how we discuss what the media portrays.

When dealing with disinformation, it is not enough to uncover the deception, that is but the first task. When we recognize disinformation, the more important task becomes to discern from what are we being distracted or to what are we being manipulated to do or accept.

In matters of faith, the targets of the propagandist's deception are often the boundaries of our values. The objective is to move those boundaries so that we are either in opposition to what God asks of us or we fail to apply the love, mercy, and compassion to which He calls us. If we are to protect ourselves, we must look for reliable sources, we must engage truthful teachers, and we must study our faith so that we are better able to recognize when that faith is misrepresented.

We must remember, in our search for truth, it is not about whether this political ideology or that is right or wrong, it is a matter of whether we understand what God asks of us. The evil one cares not how we miss the mark of that understanding, whether to the right or left, only that we do. The more we know our faith, the more difficult we make the task of the one who would deceive us away from it or cause us to misapply it.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part XVII:

We are exhausting the list of saints provided by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops. Today we will talk about Blessed Sister Miriam Teresa and next week we will tackle the last on the list. So let us get busy with today's “almost saint.”

*Blessed Sister Miriam Teresa, S.C.
Sister of Charity of St. Elizabeth*

Teresa Demjanovich came into this world in 1901 in New Jersey. While she was born in the United States, her family was of immigrant status. Her parents came from Slovakia and raised their large family with love, faith and hard work. Teresa was one of seven children. When she was only 15 years of age, she graduated from high school, a testament to her intelligence.

From an early age, Teresa aspired to be part of a religious order and to serve God. She had studied about the Carmelite order and desired to follow in the footsteps of other saints, such as, Teresa of Avila, and Therese of Lisieux. It was expected that she would follow her dreams upon high school graduation.

This dream would have to wait. Her parents became ill and she was needed to care for them. The ills of her parents were terminal, and she stayed with them both until the end. This was a clear sign to all of her charity and dedication. During the years of education and caring for her parents, Teresa never lost sight of her religious life goals.

After her mother's passing, she was encouraged to go forward with her plans to seek out the religious life and to continue her education. She entered the College of Saint Elizabeth at Convent Station in New Jersey. Her studies were many but her major was in Literature. Again, owing to her scholarly gifts in learning, she graduated *summa cum laude*. Following her college

days, she took on a job as a teacher at the Academy of Saint Aloysius.

During her years of education and caring for her parents, she never lost her desire to be in a religious order. She finally decided to apply to the Carmelite order. Because she had some medical issues, the order declined to accept her. Her family encouraged her to seek out an order that would appreciate her teaching skills.

Once again, Teresa turned to her faith and her prayer life to help her discern what to do next. She was given the idea to join the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth and soon became a postulant. She taught in the Academy of St. Elizabeth.

As a novice, Teresa became Miriam Teresa. Then her life took a different turn. She became ill in 1926 and was diagnosed with myocarditis, acute appendicitis, and physical and nervous exhaustion. Her illness worsened quickly.

Her family knew that she was dying and sought to help her achieve her true goal by asking for her to be received into the order before her death. She took her vows on April 2, 1927 and died on May 8, of the same year. She was 26 years old and was loved and admired for her courage, faith, holiness, and perseverance in her life.

Her spiritual director made a request of her before she made her vows. He requested that she write down her spirituality. She taught her students that “God calls everyone.” So, in her writings for her spiritual director, she explained her thoughts and ideas. These writings would later be used to teach other novices and were published after her death for the edification of others.

The thoughts of this young religious were published in book form called, Greater Perfection: Being the Spiritual Conferences of Sister Miriam Teresa. Not only were her writings used to teach other young novices, but Vatican Council II used them as well.

After her death, it was not long before people made requests for her to intervene on behalf of various causes. On May 10, 2012 she was declared “venerable”. A miraculous healing occurred in 1964. A boy who was legally blind was suddenly cured through her intercession. After being authenticated, Pope Francis approved the miracle and beatified her on October 4, 2014 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, NJ. This would be the very first beatification in the United States.

Currently her cause is in need of one final miracle to pave the way for her canonization.

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 Sister Miriam Teresa, 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 169.

Discussion:

As we concluded our last discussion, I mentioned that as a military man, when I think of a weapon, I think of a device which may be used to injure or kill an opponent or destroy the resources which enable them to fight. The choice of the weapon is often scoped as to its capabilities to accomplish these objectives in relation to the threat. For example, you do not use a rifle to combat a tank. If you want to destroy a tank, you use an anti-tank weapon.

When we select a weapon with which to fight, we must also consider the collateral damage it may cause. It is not a good weapon choice to use a nuclear weapon to take out a sniper. We must consider both effectiveness and precision by which to defeat the enemy and prevent friendly casualties.

As we discussed, the rosary is unique in that it is both a very powerful weapon, but also one with tremendous precision and focus. Its versatility as a weapon is so unique that, as Father Calloway points out in his book, Champions of the Rosary, it also contains that which is healing. Only God can provide such a weapon by which demons may be scattered and souls healed.

As I mentioned during our discussion, I used to resist the rosary. If you are like I was, I recommend you read Father Donald Calloway's book, Champions of the Rosary, which you can find at <https://www.fathercalloway.com>. We also recommend listening to our series on the Rosary, episodes 128 – 139.

To bring the rosary into our life, we simply need to begin to pray it and let the Holy Spirit lead us through the mysteries. As we pray the rosary, we may lift up our intentions to the Lord. We may lift up our devotion. We may lift up your weaknesses and ask for our Lord's help. We may tell Jesus and Mary of our love for them. We may reflect on the virtues to which our Lord calls us. We may allow the rosary to help us put on the armor of faith so that we may “*stand firm against the tactics of the devil*” and may “*resist on the evil day.*” (cf. Ephesians 6:10-17)

Today, we are going to turn our discussion to the avenues by which we may expect the evil one to attack us. When a military unit assesses the battlefield, one major consideration are the avenues by which the enemy may approach us and do damage to us. We monitor these avenues for evidence of approaching enemy forces.

Remember, the nature of spiritual warfare is different than physical wars. While it may manifest itself in some physical forms, the ground upon which spiritual warfare is fought is the ground which influences our understanding and our decisions. The avenues of attack are the means by which the evil one deploys his tactics of deception, distraction, temptation, and doubt.

(Question 1: When we consider the objective of the enemy is to seduce us to bad decisions, our behaviors become avenues of attack. Through what behaviors might we think the enemy will seek to achieve his objective to separate us from our Creator?)

Seven Deadly Sins (Behaviors)

- Pride
 - Gluttony (Over Indulgence)
 - Greed
 - Sloth (Laziness)
 - Anger
 - Envy
 - Lust
-

(Question 2: A major avenue of attack by which our values are influenced is media. What are some of the media means by which we may be influenced and how might they influence us?)

Media

- *Print*
- *Television*
- *Internet/Social Media*
- *News*
- *Entertainment*
- *Music*
- *Video*
- *Movies*

Overt and Subliminal messages

- Why don't we do what others do?
 - Why don't we accept what others accept?
 - The famous do it, why not us?
 - Why don't we follow the science?
 - Why don't we accept Politically Correct/secular values?
 - If it feels good, how can it be bad?
 - The majority believes.....polls say → why don't we believe as the “majority” do?
 - We live in a modern day, so we must turn away from dated....
 - If we do not submit, we will not be accepted, we will be “canceled”
-

(Question 3: We are heavily influenced by our relationships. What relationships do we experience and how might they make us vulnerable?)

Relationships

- Family/Extended Family
- Significant Others
- Friends
- Co-workers
- Acquaintances

- Strangers
- Adversaries

Vulnerabilities

- Societal norms/values as they influence our own
- Our desire for love and acceptance
- Anger
- Ridicule
- Bullying
- Miscommunication → Communication is always the hardest piece
- Misunderstanding

Our values are influenced by our relationships, experiences, and education. Education is our means to build knowledge which may influence the quality of our decisions, but as we discussed in relation to science, science is but a methodology which provides us an educated guess as to our understanding of God's creation. Our education systems can educate in truth as well as misunderstandings or outright falsehoods. Education is also a means by which to groom our values according to the desires of those who control the sources of our education.

(Question 4: As I grew up, I trusted my teachers. In fact, to this day, I do not believe anyone of them intentionally deceived me, but I believe there was a deceptive system. As I look back, I reflect on how the “system” groomed my values and now I see the effort to “values groom” the youth of our day. In what ways may education be an avenue of spiritual attack?)

- Disordered power placed at the foot of science → which is only a methodology
- History taught out of context
- Denigration of faith as refuting science, as if they are incompatible
- Political values presented as modern while God's Word is dated
- Faith shaming as a means to separate us from our faith
- Political/Ideological social engineering

(Question 5: Politics is a matter of power, so this is a favorite place for the evil one to play. How might politics be an avenue of attack?)

- No political party is aligned with our faith
- We are called to always vote for the lesser of two evils
- Propagandists try to appeal to portions of our faith
- Propagandists try to convince us we may accept solutions which are in opposition to what God asks of us
- Litmus tests, forcing us to choose political solutions over the will of God, which Saint Faustina reminds us in love and mercy itself
- Etc

Quotes:

– *Saint John Paul II*

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

– *Pope Benedict XVI*

No one wants to believe in evil, really, above all, not in an evil being, an evil spirit. Everyone wants to abolish the idea. To admit the existence of evil means a responsibility, and no one wants that responsibility. That is the opening through which the evil spirit crawls, stilling all suspicions, making everything seem normal and natural. This is the “thought,” the unwariness of the ordinary human being which amounts to a disinclination to believe in evil. And if you do not believe in evil, how can you believe in or ever know what good is?

– *Saint Francis of Assisi*

We need to be especially alert to the evil subtlety of Satan. His one desire is to keep people from having a mind and heart disposed to their Lord and God. . . He wants to extinguish the light of the human heart, and so he moves in by means of worldly busyness and worry.

Final Thoughts:

During our discussion, we outlined a variety of avenues through which we may undergo spiritual attack. Our ability to defend our soul begins with awareness, but one of our challenges is to discern truth. In the realm of deception and duplicity, the enemy does not want us to see the threat. He wants us to believe that our faith is but a segment of our lives; one which we must compartmentalize and hide from public view; one which we may only practice in the confines of our home or parish. He does not want us to see that our faith is the foundation of our lives, our values, and our decision making.

Our faith is what guides us on our daily journey. A truthful understanding of our faith is what enables us to make decisions which are right and just and which help accomplish the will of God, but this is not possible if we do not endeavor to know the fullness of our faith and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in understanding.

Stealth is a military tactic by which the enemy attempts to sneak up on us. The enemy wants to get as close as possible before we detect his presence and before we can raise defenses. Through his stealth, the evil one attempts to make us believe we do not need to worry about his avenues of attack so that we will leave them open and unguarded such that he can ambush and seize our soul. No matter how well the enemy sneaks up on us, for evil to do its damage, it must reveal itself. The question is, are we prepared such that we may recognize his approach such that we may repel him or at least mitigate his harm.

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 means by which we may maintain watch over and defend the avenues over which the evil one mounts his attacks.

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 XIV: Defense of Our Soul

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