



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Spiritual Warfare
Part XV: More on Defense of the Soul



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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, as well as a 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 that gives something for our panel to talk about – the questions, not me – well, hopefully not me. 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 continue to pray for the spiritual healing of our nation. We ask that You will enable hearts of peace and love to prevail over those with agendas in opposition to Your Holy Will, which saint Faustina reminds us is love and mercy itself.

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 we are available through a variety of on-demand services. In addition to wcatradio.com/armoroffaith, we are available through 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:

Our Worldly Divide

No matter the final outcome, the results of our election are clear, our nation stands divided, not based upon who we are, but by what has been groomed into our beliefs and values. Our Lady warned the children of Fatima that if her requests were not heeded, Russia would spread her errors to the world; and now we live that aftermath as those errors infect America.

After years of serving in the fight against the forces of Marxism, Communism, Socialism, Liberalism, Progressivism; whatever you want to call it; I never dreamed that it would rise in the land of the free and in its institutions to such the degree it has. Many in our nation, despite its position in the world, somehow believes socialism will provide greener grass than the freedom we have had for more than 200 years. The divide seems to be over whether socialism or freedom will provide the solution to all of our problems. What strikes me is that so many have failed to observe, much less learn, the lessons of history and what transpires when we fail to live as God asks of us.

Our election divide is but one symptom of a greater battle in progress. It is the battle for our beliefs, values, and faith; a battle which is embodied in the political divide over the sanctity of

life and family. During this last election, citizens voted against the protection of the most defenseless among us; the child in the womb. Why shouldn't we be surprised that our nation is willing to give up its freedom when we are so willing to give up on the sanctity of life? If we do not have a right to life, then, we hold no other right, for what right is exercised without life?

The temptation for us as we see the levers of power turned against the ways of God is to throw up our hands, for what power do we have? What can one person do? Indeed, we might ask, what can one person do? The answer is simple, no matter what has been taken from us, no matter the means of power arrayed against us, what no one, but us can do, is take away our power to pray; of course, we must remember we have that power and we must exercise it with love.

Some may lament, but if God was going to act, He certainly would have done so by now. In the gap, the evil one tempts us to despair, to give up the fight for what is right and just. We lift up our petitions to our Lord, but when we do not see the reaction from God we desire, we are tempted to believe He has abandoned us.

Of course, the faithful know God will not abandon us, but do we remember that prayer is a conversation? As we lift up our cries, mourning, and weeping; are we also listening for His light, silent sound where God speaks to guide our hearts? As we lift up our petitions, do we hear His question; a question which might be something like this? "And what have you done with the gifts and talents I have given you to help accomplish My will?"

Still, as we observe the serpents of deception and deceit weave through our society to drive our perceptions of helplessness, we are tempted to lament and cry to God, "Why have You allowed this?" Perhaps, what we do not understand is that God sometimes lets the children of His creation see the brink so they might better understand the consequences of their choices. We have forgotten what has happened in generation after generation and we are marching once more to repeat it.

If we do not like what we see, we can take action. We must raise up our nation and good shepherds in prayer and seek to help accomplish God's will, which St. Faustina reminds us is love and mercy itself.

Love and mercy, of course, does not mean backing down to evil or allowing it a free hand. Neither does it mean resorting to the enemy's tactics of deception and duplicity. It means, we must learn the ways and Gospel of our Lord. It means we must learn how to share our faith, not to impose it, but to encourage others to join in the blessings we may share as we live the fullness of our faith in God. It means we must ask our Lord how He wants to use the gifts and talents within us to help accomplish His will, which if I haven't mentioned this before, St. Faustina reminds us is love and mercy itself.

The generations of our day may suffer the fight, but let us stand with wisdom, strength, and courage; for we know the end: she will crush its head. The question is, will we help her, or will we leave it to her to accomplish alone. We might expect that heaven is interested in that answer.

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Saints – Part XIX:

Last time I told you that we were doing the last saint. I am also well known for saying, “this is the truth as we know it today”. Well the truth has changed. Last week, we had another man beatified and working his way to sainthood for the Americas. Today we will talk about Father McGivney.

Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney

Feast day: August 13

Priest and founder of the Knights of Columbus

On August 12, 1825, Mary and Patrick McGivney received into their family a baby boy they named Michael. These parents were Irish immigrants and settled in Connecticut. Michael was the first of 13 children born to this couple. Six of his siblings died in infancy but that still left a large family.

Michael went to school in Waterbury Connecticut. He left school when he turned 13 in order to take a job to help support the family. When he was 16, he went to Quebec, Canada, to register with a college to prepare him for entry into a seminary. He attended classes in Quebec and later in New York and then in Montreal. All this study and moving was in an effort to become a good and holy priest.

When he was 21, Michael had to leave the seminary to return home. His father had passed and Michael was needed to provide for the family. This situation fortunately did not derail his plan to become a priest, but it certainly influenced his priestly passion in caring for families.

He was ordained on December 22, 1877. His ministry began on Christmas Day, 1877, when he celebrated his very first Mass. What a glorious Christmas it must have been for him and his family.

We all know that when a priest is assigned to a parish, they not only care for the sacramental need of the parishioners, but pick up additional duties within the community. Father Michael found himself doing pastoral care for inmates and visited with them on a regular basis. He also, because of his young age, was tasked with working with the young people and promoting abstinence to prevent unmarried pregnancies. He made it his job to care for those who were fighting alcoholism as well. Goodness, Father sure had his plate full.

In doing his duties, Father found yet another area of which he felt called to address and to be involved with. During this time, there was a surging popularity in clubs for any theme and he wanted yet one more club to meet the needs of Catholic men. On March 29, 1882, the Knights of Columbus was born. This new club was to address charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism.

One of the first challenges for the newly formed Knights was to establish blood donation stations. This was a new project at the time, but today it is happening all over the country and has contributed mercifully to people everywhere.

Due to Father's experiences with his own family and those of the people he served, he also recognized that mothers with children were in great need when their spouses died, leaving them the sole care givers of the children. The next mission for the Knights of Columbus was to establish an insurance program that would help families in their times of need.

The Knights of Columbus grew from a small one parish activity into a large world wide organization dedicated to service and charity. They tend to the needs of immigrants, refugees and families. Father Michael was certainly a man of vision. Today, there are 15,000 councils all around the world. What a legacy he left behind!

In January, 1890, Father was taken ill with pneumonia. He was cared for and received good treatment, but no amount of effort was able to help cure him. Father McGivney died on August 14, 1890. He was buried in Waterbury, the place of his birth.

In 1982, the Knights of Columbus celebrated their 100th anniversary by taking Father McGivney's remains to St. Mary's Church in New Haven Connecticut. This is where he began the Knights of Columbus.

Fr. McGivney was declared a Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008. On October 31, 2020 he was beatified. This means that one miracle has been authenticated and attributed to his intercession. This makes him a candidate for sainthood. One requirement left is one more miracle to happen, be authenticated, and approved.

Congratulations to Father Michael McGivney, his family and the Knights of Columbus. Good job, good and faithful servant!

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 Venerable Father Michael McGivney, 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 170.

Discussion:

Last time, we began a discussion concerning the defense of our soul. As we continue our examination of that topic today, we must recognize that knowing the measures and applying the measures are two different things. The first requires knowledge, but the second requires not only knowledge, but also training and practice.

I mentioned that when a soldier steps on the field of battle, the quality of their training will be a critical factor towards teamwork, dealing with the unexpected, and adjusting to achieve

objectives. If we do not avail ourselves of quality and frequent training, we will experience deficiencies when we are challenged in battle.

I pointed out that we must not underestimate the enemy. He has trained his demons across generations with great discipline, which leaves us at a disadvantage. Still, let us remember, we do not fight alone unless we choose to leave ourselves isolated on the battlefield. Again, we are not talking about a war fought on dirt, but in the heart and mind. Let us encourage one another to learn the depths of our faith so we may know not only how to put on the whole armor of God, but employ it to effectively “*stand firm against the tactics of the devil*” and “*resist on the evil day*” so we may hold the ground of our soul. (cf. Ephesians 6:10-17) And, even if we should fail or fall wounded, let us remember the ultimate hospital for the soul, the Sacred Heart of Our Lord and Savior.

(Question 1: Last time, we finished our discussion by addressing the vulnerabilities we face as a result of relationships. I wanted to revisit this question as we ran out of time before we could complete our discussion on this topic. So, let me re-ask the question. **How might we engage our relationships to reduce our spiritual vulnerabilities?)**

Positive engagement

- Look for means to engage positive energy in conversation
 - ➔ Employ active listening (a rather difficult skill when emotions are high)
 - ➔ Employ the power of questions to facilitate understanding
 - ➔ Compliment positive interaction
 - ➔ Work from common understanding and common ground
 - ➔ Console
 - ➔ Remember the objective is to preserve the opportunity for dialogue, not to win an argument
- Engage with meekness
- Engage with kindness
- Engage with humility
- Take a breath and seek distance should anger swell
- Ignore ridicule and insults → turn the other cheek (cf. Matthew 5:38-48)
- Distance from abusive relationships
- Look for gaps in perception and understanding → Communication is always the hardest piece

As we discussed the evil one's avenues of attack, we mentioned that 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. The conclusions of science are not always accurate because of flaws in assumptions or our inability to account for the full range of behavior for all variables. God's creation is complex and we too often look for overly simplistic explanations.

We also mentioned that our education systems can educate in truth as well as misinformation or outright falsehoods. Education is also a means by which to “values groom” students according to the desires of those who control the sources of our education. We should be on guard when we observe politics creeping into the presentation of conclusions drawn from scientific study.

(Question 2: As I mentioned during episode 170, I trusted my teachers. In fact, to this day, I do not believe anyone of them intentionally deceived me, but I believe there was and remains a deceptive system by which they were “values groomed” such that they would “values groom” others. I also mentioned that as I look back, I reflect on how the “system” groomed my values and that now I recognize efforts to “values groom” the youth of our day away from what God asks of us. **In what ways may we defend ourselves from deceptive education?)**

- Be suspicious of group think → 99% of scientists agree (99% of what?)
 - ➔ What are the biases of the researchers?
 - ➔ What are the incentives influencing the researchers?
 - ➔ What are the disincentives influencing the researchers?
 - ➔ What are the politics influencing the researchers?
 - ➔ What is the social culture influencing the researchers?
 - ➔ What is the experience of the researchers?
- Employ critical thinking → learn through the power of questions
- Examine methodologies as well as conclusions
 - ➔ Did the study collect the relevant data?
 - ➔ Did the study collect the right data?
 - ➔ Did the study collect complete data?
 - ➔ Did the study interpret the data correctly, considering all relevant variables?
 - ➔ What leaps of logic were covered by assumptions versus facts?
 - ➔ Can the outcomes be reliably repeated? → are variances explained?
 - ➔ What context or variables were excluded from consideration?
 - ➔ What alternative explanations were discarded or dismissed?
 - ➔ What are the exceptions or deviations we observe and their magnitude?
 - ➔ What trusted/fair sources can assist our understanding?
- When evaluating history:
 - ➔ What are the sources → primary, secondary, opinion
 - ➔ What context is considered?
 - ✓ Positional → before, during, after → contributions and consequences?
 - ✓ Cultural → lens of the time versus today?
 - ✓ Linguistic → variations, likely meaning of the time versus today?
 - ✓ Geographical → challenges/obstacles of the time versus today?
 - ✓ Environmental → technology/conditions of the time versus today?
 - ✓ Political → lens of the time versus today?
 - Ideologies
 - Alliances
 - Adversaries
 - Agendas

- Power
 - ➔ What is the accuracy of the record?
 - ✓ Relevant facts vs *ad hominem* shading
 - ✓ Observer bias
 - ✓ Interpretation bias
 - ✓ Position of the observer (what may be obscured or amplified)
 - ✓ Full accounting of relevant context
 - ✓ Evidence of forgery
 - ✓ Evidence of observational or documentation errors
 - ➔ What is the completeness of the record?
 - ➔ Is the absence of the record properly interpreted? (because it wasn't written, doesn't mean it didn't happen)
 - ✓ Evidence of consequences
 - ✓ Evidence of oral tradition
 - ✓ Physical evidence vs circumstantial evidence
 - ✓ What is based on assumptions?
 - ✓ Evidence of ripple effects to other events (cause and effect?)
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(Question 3: Politics is a matter of power, so this is a favorite place for the evil one to play. How might we defend ourselves against the deceptions and seductions of politics?)

- Flee from anyone who requires loyalty to person or institution over God
- Engage to influence to align with what God asks of us
- Recognize tactics and sources of propaganda
 - ➔ Adjectives reveal efforts to manipulate emotions
 - ➔ Emotions cloud judgment
 - ➔ Context can distort perception
 - ➔ *Ad hominem* logic influences emotions without addressing truth of substance
 - ➔ *Non sequitor* logic distorts and manipulates understanding
 - ➔ Note: When disinformation is discovered, remember, the task becomes to uncover from what we are being distracted and/or to what are we being manipulated to do or accept
- Be suspicious of political litmus tests → circumstances and context matters
- Seek relevant context and evidence
- Engage with humility, civility, dignity, and respect
- Be wary of those who spin around our faith → wolves in the clothing of sheep
- When evil is entrenched; withdraw, pray, and regroup
- Engage allies in faith and encourage one another

Quotes:

– *Saint John Paul II*

"Spiritual combat" is another element of life which needs to be taught anew and proposed once

more to all Christians today. It is a secret and interior art, an invisible struggle in which (we) engage every day against the temptations, the evil suggestions that the demon tries to plant in (our) hearts.

– *Pope Benedict the XVI*

"Whatever the less discerning theologians may say, the devil, as far as Christian belief is concerned, is a puzzling but real, personal and not merely symbolical presence. He is a powerful reality (the 'prince of this world,' as he is called by the New Testament, which continually reminds us of his existence), a baneful superhuman freedom directed against God's freedom. This is evident if we look realistically at history, with its abyss of ever-new atrocities which cannot be explained by reference to man alone. On his own, man has not the power to oppose Satan, but the devil is not second to God, and united with Jesus we can be certain of vanquishing him. Christ is 'God Who is near to us,' willing and able to liberate us: that is why the Gospel really is 'Good News.' And that is why we must go on proclaiming Christ in those realms of fear and unfreedom."

– *Saint Francis of Assisi*

By the anxieties and worries of this life Satan tries to dull man's heart and make a dwelling for himself there.

Final Thoughts:

Anyone who stands to fight can be declared a soldier, but to fight effectively requires education and training. As our discussion so far in this series reveals, there is a lot to learn.

In boot camp, a soldier is educated and trained on the skills required for the job they were selected to perform in the fight. Not all are in the infantry, for an effective army requires the teamwork of a variety of skills by which to engage the enemy and prevail in the fight. Still, everyone must have knowledge of the basic skills which every soldier must have, so new soldiers are trained first in the basics, then, they are trained in their specialty.

Spiritual combat is no different. To be effective spiritual soldiers, we must learn the basics of our faith. This is perhaps the focus of the religious formation we receive in our youth. The vocation to which God calls us and to which we answer through our choices, is perhaps our specialty; whether it is single life, religious life, Holy Orders, or married life. To be effective in our faith, as well as our vocation, requires our study and learning. We should also remember effectiveness requires an ongoing commitment to training by which to keep our skills and abilities fresh and tuned. To be prepared with the basics, we must periodically revisit them.

We congratulate our listeners for taking that step of learning by coming here. We hope you will share and help others to learn as well so we may all encourage one another to help accomplish the will of God, which if I have not mentioned this before, St. Faustina reminds us, is love and mercy itself.

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 the weapon against which Satan has no match, the Spiritual Catapult of Divine Mercy.

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 XVI: The Spiritual Catapult

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