



The Armor of Faith
Topic Summary: Saints of Inspiration
Part XI: Saint of Cancer Sufferers



Saint Peregrine
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, in addition to being my lovely wife as well as a wonderful blessing in my life, is a youth and adult formation catechist. 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 they said they didn't really have anything else suited to my skill set. I'm not sure what they meant by that. Anyway, the hard part we leave to our panelists, which is to answer my questions, correct my pronunciation, and make sure I know which century I am talking about, 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.

We pray especially today for our Church and our governments. We pray, dear Lord, You will provide us a multitude of good shepherds within our Church as well as within our governments by which the children of Your creation may be led to live what is right and just and to protect the flock from the deceptions and darkness of the wolves in the clothing of shepherds.

Let us also lift up the Flame of Love Prayer:

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
spread the effect of grace of thy Flame of Love over all of humanity,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

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, all you need to do is 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 place it 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 also like to ask you to assist Armor of Faith Radio 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:

How Our Ministry Speaks?

A quote attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi goes something to the effect of, “Preach the gospel at all times. And if necessary, use words.” I don't think this quote was meant to denigrate the value or even the power of words, but it points to another saying we often use, which is, “Actions speak louder than words.”

When we do something, it causes reactions. Some reactions are matters of physics while others are matters of reason and intellect. We may influence people by what we say, but we tell others more about our convictions as well as the blessings of our faith through what we do and what we do not do. If we are not willing to engage ourselves with what is right and just, then, how can we call upon others to do the same?

We must consider, we speak through what we do in ministry. Of course, if we are not engaged in ministry, that sends a message as well, but that subject is for a different audience. The question for all of us, though, is how does our ministry speak? Does our ministry present an example of what God asks of us? Do we allow the Holy Spirit to be our guide? Do we seek to fortify ourselves with the bread from heaven as we prepare to do our work? What work of love do we leave undone because we do not lend our hands?

It is the dark one who whispers in our ear and causes us to doubt what may come of us. We must remember, it is not the grandness of what we do, but the love by which we do it which brings joy to heaven. Many saints have reminded us that little things done with love adds up in ways we cannot imagine. And if we are blessed to accomplish something grand, we must remember, it becomes meaningless if it does not come from the place of love as we are told in 1 Corinthians 13.

There is an important matter which God has left to us through freewill, and that is the choice of going it without Him or working with Him. Remember what young Dominic Savio said?

"Nothing seems tiresome or painful when you are working for a master who pays well."

"And who is your master?" [young Dominic was asked.]

"It is God, our Creator, who rewards even a cup of cold water given for love of Him."
(Bosco, 8)

What we do in ministry is part of that choice. We cannot do all things by ourselves, but if we join our hands with others of faith and love, we can help accomplish the will of God. There may be times we may feel we are standing there alone, but we must never forget the hand of God on our shoulder.

When my mother became Catholic, which was just a few short years before she passed, she engaged herself with several little ways of ministry. It did not surprise me, for she was always that way, doing the little things others often overlooked. Perhaps the patron saint she chose for her confirmation, Saint Therese of Lisieux, influenced my mother well before my mom ever knew. My mother did not seek recognition, she simply sought to warm hearts. Those with whom she worked saw, by her cheerful nature, the love by which she did her tasks. There could be no mistake by any who crossed her path that love filled her and that she was also warmed by the love she shared with others.

In prayer, we must ask the Holy Spirit to help us see our opportunities. Let us ask God to guide us in the ways our ministry may help accomplish His will. Let us not be blinded by the politics of our day, but let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us see where our hands and the talents God created within us may help. Let us also ask ourselves, how does our ministry speak, not only to those who cross our path, but to our own hearts as well?

Why Catholics Do What We Do:

Catholic Definitions – Part XXIV: Obedience

Often during adult formation classes we are asked, “this obedience thing...are we required to be obedient to everything the priest says?”

The short answer is yes..... and sometimes---no.

Obedience today is a word many struggle with. Mankind seems to want to dismiss this act as a sign of weakness. However, according to tradition and to the Catholic Church, obedience is to be encouraged as it brings great blessings.

Today we are going to look at this word and try to find out what the Church teaches. Let us start with a definition from Traditional Catholic Dictionary Online.

Obedience, n.; L. (1)The moral virtue by which one **submits his will to the will or law of one in authority.** (2) The evangelical counsel whereby one **renounces his own right to act independently in order to follow Christ.** (3) A vow of obedience is that vow made by a cleric or a religious in submitting himself or herself to **the authority of an ecclesiastical or religious superior.** (Traditional Catholic Dictionary Online)

Obedience is called a moral virtue. As we are growing up, we learn to obey our parents, teachers, and others who are in positions of authority. This is not unusual, in fact it is quite normal within our culture. To obey means that we act with righteous conduct when we follow the directives of a righteous superior.

Joseph F. Delaney wrote an answer to a question about obedience for Catholic Answers. The following are snippets of his writing:

St. Thomas Aquinas considers the obligation of obedience as an obvious consequence of the subordination established in the world by the natural and positive law. The idea that subjection of any sort of one man to another is incompatible with human freedom—a notion that had vogue in the religious and political teachings of the post-Reformation period—he refutes by showing that it is at variance with the constituted nature of things, and the positive prescriptions of Almighty God.

It is then said to be the moral habit by which one carries out the order of his superior with the precise intent of fulfilling the injunction. Amongst the moral virtues obedience enjoys a primacy of honor. The reason is that the greater or lesser excellence of a moral virtue is determined by the greater or lesser value of the object which it qualifies one to put aside in order to give oneself to God.

So it happens that obedience, which makes a man yield up the most dearly prized stronghold of the individual soul in order to do the good pleasure of his Creator, is accounted the greatest of the moral virtues. As to whom we are to obey, there can be no

doubt that first **we are bound to offer an unreserved service to Almighty God in all His commands.**

We are to obey God in all matters. We are to obey persons in authority who obey the will of God. We are to be obedient to parents, and spouses. So back to the question of “do we have to do this always”....it is a matter of whom we obey.

In Scripture, there are over 20 references to obedience. Let us look at some of them.

(Deuteronomy 7:12)

Blessings of Obedience. As your reward for heeding these ordinances and keeping them carefully, the Lord, your God, will keep with you the covenant mercy he promised on oath to your ancestors.

(1 Samuel 15:22)

But Samuel said: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord’s command? Obedience is better than sacrifice, to listen, better than the fat of rams.

(Romans 13:1)

Obedience to Authority. Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God.

(2 Corinthians 7:15)

And his heart goes out to you all the more, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, when you received him with fear and trembling.

These Scriptural references tell us that we are to be obedient to authority. The ultimate authority is our Lord God. There is no righteous authority without God.

Now to answer the question about not obeying authority.

(Acts 4:18-19)

*8 So they [the Sanhedrin] called them back and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 Peter and John, however, said to them in reply, “Whether it is right in the sight of God for us to obey you **rather than God**, you be the judges.”*

(Acts 5:27-32)

*27 When they had brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, 28 “We gave you strict orders [did we not?] to stop teaching in that name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man’s blood upon us.” 29 But Peter and the apostles said in reply, “**We must obey God rather than men.** 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. 32 **We are witnesses of these things, as is the holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him.**”*

(Romans 6:16-18)

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 Freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness.

(Romans 16:19)

For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise as to what is good, and simple as to what is evil;

These examples tell us that yes we are to obey, but we must also be wise and follow goodness and righteousness. If we follow and obey sinful behavior, we will not receive the blessings of Almighty God.

So as you go about trying to figure out this word and how to make it part of your life, remember to always, always, always, be obedient to the laws and directives of God. Be wary of the dictates of politics, and social norms that would lead us down a bad path and away from what God asks of us. Remember to “trust, but validate.” Check it out if you have questions.

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 the Catholic meaning of “obedience,” we invite you to follow the links in the reference section of the topic summary for this episode. You can obtain the topic summary by visiting <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/> and select episode 195.

Discussion:

As we concluded our last discussion, I mentioned that as we began to develop this series on Saints of Inspiration, I did not know the saints we would select to talk about. We did not set out to identify a top ten or twelve list. We set out to simply discuss some saints of inspiration. I chose Saint Therese of Lisieux and Saint Maximilian Kolbe to open the series, but the remainder were chosen by our panel. From that point on, it has been a wonderful journey of learning and discovery.

I chose to start off with Saint Therese of Lisieux, because of her “Little Way.” She taught us that great things can be accomplished through little ways of love. I was somewhat surprised when I discovered during the research for Part II of our series, that Saint Kolbe found part of his inspiration through Saint Therese of Lisieux. I should not have been surprised, then, to learn that Saint Teresa of Calcutta took her name after Saint Therese of Lisieux. Perhaps we see that inspiration in the quote attributed to the Nobel prize winning saint that, “Small things done with great love will change the world.”

We often look to the lives of the saints for inspiration, but as we discuss their lives, it is never just about them. There are always others involved; those who raised them, those who taught them, those who challenged them, those who opposed them, those who benefited from them, those who helped them, and those who loved them.

We could make the case that the life of a saint is never about one person, but on the other hand, it is. If we are to look at the one common thread for all the saints, it is the love of Jesus Christ. If we love Him, we will listen to Him and study His Word. If we believe in Him, we will live His commandments. As we examine the lives of the saints, we see they always point, just as our Blessed Mother does, to the Sacred Heart of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for He is the only way to our Father in Heaven.

Today, we are going to turn our discussion to the saint of those who suffer from cancer and other life threatening illnesses. As we examine the lives of various saints, we might note that they come from a variety of backgrounds ranging from the plight of peasants to the wealthy and politically connected. This story begins with one of political conflict, and interestingly, one saint opening the door of sainthood to another, not by preaching, but by the example of forgiveness and mercy.

We begin the story of this saint with his days as a ruffian. In 1283, Pope Martin IV sent, then, Father Philip Benizi to the city of Forli, Italy. He was sent as an ambassador to encourage the inhabitants to repent of their rebellion against the Church and return to obedience to the Apostolic See. As Father Benizi, who we now know as Saint Philip Benizi, began to speak to the people, he was heckled by a gang of anti-papists led by an 18 year-old son of the affluent Laziosi family. This young rebel confronted Saint Philip and even struck the priest in front of the approving and violent crowd.

The response of Saint Philip was not that of retaliation. There was no eye for an eye, but the turning of the other cheek and forgiveness of the brashness of the young Laziosi. The young ringleader initially rebuked the forgiveness of Saint Philip, but the confrontation and the response of the good shepherd apparently influenced the young man's heart. The young man later sought out Saint Philip to ask for the forgiveness the young ruffian had previously rebuked. These events turned the path of Peregrine Laziosi from that of anti-cleric to that of becoming one.

(Question 1: As I mentioned during the opening to this discussion, sometimes the inspiration we observe is not just about the saint, but those who influence the saint. **What might we observe here and what might it mean for our own choices?)**

- Remember the story of Saul, whom we now know as Saint Paul? (Acts 9:4-5)
- We have the choice to change our path
- We can help change the path of others, not with intimidation, but with love
- We are unlikely to change if we do not open our hearts to see
- The mercy and love we observe in the saints is possible for us

(Acts 9:4)

4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5 He said, "Who are you, sir?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

As a result of the incident, Peregrine became friends with Saint Philip. Saint Philip also became a close confidant and mentor to the young Peregrine. Tradition tells that Peregrine, in a vision, was guided by Our Blessed Mother to seek out the Servants of Mary in Sienna, also known as the Servites. This was also the order of Saint Philip.

(Question 2: We observe from the first confrontation the crossing of paths. Then we observe the guiding of paths and walking the path together. In what ways might we recognize that God is in the midst of our relationships and seeking to guide us to good paths?)

- By their fruits you shall know them. (Matthew 7:20)
- By our fruits, we might come to know ourselves
- As we listen in prayer, our hearts may be opened to see
- What we do with what we observe might reveal how well we see

(John 9:39)

39 Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."

According to accounts:

...Peregrine would return to Forli to found a new house for the Servite Order. He became renowned in the community for his preaching and holiness, along with his particular devotion for the sick and the poor. Tradition says he miraculously multiplied grain and wine during a severe shortage. He even earned himself the title "Angel of Good Counsel," for the wise advice he offered to others freely given. (Ryan)

Let's break this out a bit.

- Founded a new house for the Servite Order in Forli
- Renowned for his preaching
- Renowned for his holiness
- Renowned for his counsel and guidance
- Credited with a miracle of grain and wine

(Question 3: We still have yet to get to the story which explains why Father Peregrine was declared the patron of Cancer sufferers and those with serious illness, but in the brief description I just presented, we observe several saintly qualities from what was once a young ruffian and political bully. When we examine the lives of the saints, is there a checklist for

turning ourselves into saints? Is there a switch we can flip? What do we observe when we examine the different examples such as those I just listed?)

- Remember the words of Jesus: “By their fruits we shall know them.” (cf. Matthew 7:20)
- There are many varieties of good fruits – which shall come from us?
- There are different trials – but faith and love are common threads of victory
- The focus is not pandering to the political, but care for those in need
- Faith and morals point to the endeavors which God desires of us
- Faith, counsel, and sage advice point to the Sacred Heart of our Lord

(Matthew 7:21-23)

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them solemnly, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.’

Thought: Sainthood is not about the saint, it is about the fruits which they share as they endeavor to do the will of God. It is not the desire to be a saint which heaven rewards, it is the desire to help accomplish the will of God, which a certain saint reminds us, is love and mercy itself.

And so, as the moments of our show are waning, we finally get to the connection of Saint Peregrine to cancer. At the age of 60, Saint Peregrine had developed an infection which revealed he had cancer in his right leg. The amputation of his leg was considered to be the only option to save the elderly friar's life. According to various accounts, the night before the operation, Saint Peregrine dragged himself in front of a painting of the Crucifixion and began to pray the will of God be done. During his prayer, he saw a vision of Jesus descending from the cross to heal the friar's leg.

The next morning, the surgeon was amazed to find there was no sign of the infection or the cancer. The leg was completely healed. The healing hand of the Lord rested on Saint Peregrine and the friar was allowed to continue his work for the sick and the poor. Saint Peregrine passed 25 years later at the age of 85. Over the centuries, many testimonies have been given of healing attributed to the intercession of Saint Peregrine, which is why he has become known as the patron of cancer sufferers and those who suffer serious illness.

(Question 4: Something I should point out here. While we look to various saints as patrons for this challenge or that, we must remember, it is not their power which lifts our burden, it is the power of God. Some testify to healing as a result of their prayers, while the prayers of others appear to go unanswered – or are they? So, let me ask the hard question we all must have for ourselves. What happens to our faith when the outcomes for which we pray are not as we expect; especially when the outcome is that we lose a loved one?)

- We only see the context of our senses and our feelings
- We only see small moments of time
- God sees across all of heaven, creation, and time
- We are joyous when the outcome to our prayer aligns with our expectation
- We are confused and maybe even angry when the outcome is a heavy loss
- We do not always know in the tragedy of a moment, what the future shall bring
- We must trust, whatever God allows is for a greater good to come
- Let us always pray, as did Saint Peregrine, for the will of God to be done

For a novena in honor of the Saint of Cancer Sufferers, we recommend visiting novenapray.com and search for Saint Peregrine. <https://novenapray.com/?s=St+Peregrine>

Feastday: 1 May

Patron: Cancer sufferers and other life threatening illnesses

Death: 1 May 1345

Canonized by: Pope Benedict XIII

Quotes:

– *Saint Augustine of Hippo*

There is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future.

– *Prayer asking for the intercession of Saint Peregrine*

St. Peregrine, whom Holy Mother Church has declared Patron of those suffering from Cancer, I confidently turn to you for help in my present sickness. I beg your kind intercession. Ask God to relieve me of this sickness, if it be his Holy Will. Plead with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, whom you loved so tenderly and in union with whom you have suffered the pains of Cancer, that she may help me with her powerful prayers and loving consolation.

But if it should be God's Holy Will that I bear this sickness, obtain for me courage and strength to accept these trials from the loving hand of God with patience and resignation, because he knows what is best for the salvation of my soul. St. Peregrine, be my friend and patron. Help me to imitate you in accepting suffering, and to unite myself with Jesus Crucified and the Mother of Sorrows, as you did. I offer my pains to God with all the love of my heart, for his glory and the salvation of souls, especially my own. Amen.

Final Thoughts:

I must confess, while I was aware of the patron saint of cancer sufferers, I did not know his history until we began this series. The story which touched me was not the healing from the cancer of the body at the age of 60, but the healing of the cancer of the mind at the age of 18.

What do I mean by “the cancer of the mind?” It is that cancer of political arrogance and lusts for worldly power. It is that cancer that manifests itself through deception, intimidation, and violence. It is that cancer which seduces us away from what God asks of us, or worse, causes us

to rebel against the ways of our Creator. It is the cancer of poor reasoning which yields poor choices. It is the one contagious cancer which infects minds and corrupts reasoning and judgment. It is the cancer of evil which yields the death of spirit and soul.

Yes, we may ask Saint Peregrine for his intercession to help us obtain physical healing for ourselves and loved ones, but we may want to consider the more difficult realm; the realm of mind and spirit. In addition to our prayers for those who suffer from cancer and serious illness, let us ask Saint Peregrine to help lift our prayers to the Lord which petition for the healing of souls from the scourges of the ideological cancers which plague our world and threaten our spiritual health.

There is so much more we could share about the Saint of Cancer Sufferers, but again, we have so little time. If you would like to learn more about Saint Peregrine, 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 195.

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 conclude our series on Saints of Inspiration as we discuss the Saint of Lost Things.

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.

And let us share the Flame of Love Prayer:

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
spread the effect of grace of thy Flame of Love over all of humanity,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Saints of Inspiration – Part XII: Saint of Lost Things

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