

Battle During the Journey

I needn't spend much time enumerating the various examples of the battles with evil that we are experiencing at this time in history... The battle with one side hell-bent on destroying marriage and family... the battle with those seeking to displace religion in the world with government ... the battle which seeks to relativize all our core beliefs and practices... I was listening to Catholic radio Tuesday, and a doctor was giving his testimony about how he was formed during the period in which society and even many in the Church raised social justice as the most important of the concerns for Catholic Christians... and so here he was, this doctor from Chicago who in the 1980's rationalized a Catholic Faith that saw his performing of abortions as helping women... It was so inspiring to listen to his conversion story... He came back from that darkness into the light of truth... but he admits he was almost lost in the battle...

Today's first reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians shares perhaps the clearest definition of the great spiritual war then, as now.

(Ephesians Chapter 6:12 & 13)

For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the

principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this

present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens.[h](#)

Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to

resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your

ground.

He assures us that there is a spiritual war, but he also warns us

that apart from utilizing the weapons which God has provided for

us, we are hopelessly underpowered. Roman soldiers wore things

like helmets, breastplates, shields and swords as part of their

effort to keep the Roman Empire and its citizens, including Paul

and his Ephesian readers, under Caesar's bloody boot. Roman

armaments were among the instruments of terror that the Caesar

and his forces used to intimidate and suppress people. Today's

passage informs us as to what our divinely weapons are. First, we

must agree to resist the devil and he will flee. But the evil one is

known to return with even more helpers. And so, we need to pick

up the shield of the rosary and use it daily. Put on the breastplate

of the scapular and have our pastor enroll you in it.

Frequent Confessions demonstrate our humility and our need for grace in forgiveness. Ingest the Food which is the 'Source and Summit' of our life and faith. The weapons which God has provided for us are those weapons which best repel the attacks of Satan.

For those of us who are consumed by worry and fear with all that is wrong in our Church and in the world... remember that in today's Gospel, Jesus was on the last stage of His earthly journey -- headed towards the greatest act of military battle... the act of atonement on the cross. Yet, even in that, he refuses to be distracted from his mission of exorcism and healing. Lord, help me to be utterly attentive to my duties and responsibilities even in the midst of uncertainty and fear.

No matter how bad things are, no matter how confusing it can be... Jesus our Savior can identify with our experience. Because of this, we can take comfort in the knowledge that he is both the Way and the Wayfarer.

He is the light in the darkness. He is the answer to every question we face. Here are a few words from the Breastplate of St. Patrick:

I arise today through Christ's strength to pilot me; Christ to shield me today; Christ before me; Christ behind me. Christ on my left; Christ on my right. Christ above me; Christ when I lie down, Christ with me when I arise... St. Patrick, pray for us.

BLESSINGS!