

I. EPHESIANS 6:10-18 – THE ARMOR OF GOD

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in The Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of GOD, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of The Devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of GOD, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of The Gospel of Peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of The Wicked One.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of The Spirit, which is The Word of GOD;

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in The Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. ¹

¹ NKJV, EPHESIANS 6:10-18.

II. OUR LENTEN STRUGGLE TOWARDS HOLINESS

The Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, Archbishop William Lori, in an article titled “Spiritual Combat” cites Saint Paul in EPHESIANS 6:10-18 in the Feb/2020 issue of Columbia,

“Lent is not merely a season for self-improvement. It is a time for laying aside illusions of self-reliance,” for putting on the full Armor of GOD in CHRIST, for relying first “in The Grace of The HOLY SPIRIT,” for “sharing in The Victory of JESUS over sin and death”² done for us.

In this Lent, as we offer up our prayers, fasting and alms, we are reminded of the spiritual combat we must fight in the daily deserts of our own temptations. But we prevail in CHRIST, for He has already won the victory! And He has given us the tools to do so.

Pope Francis also reminds us, that in being united with “...CHRIST’s Passion, Death and Resurrection..., [He] calls us yearly [in Lent] to undertake a journey of preparation [to celebrate Easter], in the knowledge that our being conformed to CHRIST is a priceless Gift of GOD’s Mercy.”³

² article, “Spiritual Combat.” Archbishop William Lori, KofC, Supreme Chaplain. Columbia, 2/2020, p 4, last paragraph.

³ Homily, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God,” para 2. Pope Francis’s Message for Lent, 2019. The Vatican, 10/04/2018, on Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi. <https://www.thepopespeaks.com/pope-franciss-message-for-lent-2019/>

So we are neither totally self sufficient, nor totally helpless, in our spiritual combat. He gives us The Grace needed to wield the armor of GOD. And in our own 40 days of Lent - like JESUS Himself in the desert - we prepare to welcome The coming Easter Passover by asking for GOD's Help to grow in greater holiness, knowing The Victory is ours because of Him:

As Saint John says in I JOHN 5:4
For whatever is born of GOD overcomes the world.
And this is The Victory that has overcome the world -
our faith. ⁴

⁴ NKJV, I JOHN 5:4.

III. TOOLS OF OUR LENTEN COMBAT

First, prayer: to seek our Lord JESUS CHRIST in prayer, in The Scriptures, in The Sacraments, in the wonder of everyday life, in creation and in His Providence great and small;

Second, fasting: to abstain from and give up some worldly comfort or distraction that turn us away from our awareness of GOD's Love. So we seek to mortify the body, so that our souls may be drawn closer to His Passion and Love for us.

Third, alms: to make offerings of good works in His Name in Spiritual & Corporal (Physical) Works of Mercy. From The Catechism: "instructing, advising, consoling, comforting..., forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently...; feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead"⁵

⁵ Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 2447, Spiritual and Corporal (Physical) Works of Mercy. <http://scborromeo.org/ccc/para/2447.htm>

IV. CHALLENGES FOR LENT

I leave us with two questions: How does The HOLY SPIRIT speak to each of us this Lent of our spiritual combat towards greater holiness, as faithful Knights of Columbus and servants of Mother Catholic Church? Have we put on The Full Armor of GOD?

Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. ⁶

Vivat JESU!-JESUS lives! Siempre!-Always & Forever! ⁷

⁶ article, “Our Principles. - 4 Reasons, 4 Principles – Charity, Unity, Fraternity, Patriotism.” Knights of Columbus.

<https://www.kofc.org/en/todays-knights/our-principles.html>

⁷ article, “How ‘Vivat Jesus’ became the Knights of Columbus Motto.” Knights of Columbus, Queen of The Knights, Council # 8386. 5/31/2018. <http://www.8386.kofc-usa.org/?p=1590>