

## **Spiritual Warfare**

### **Opening Prayer**

*Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise, and ever rejoice in His Consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

[Begin with a few moments for silent recollection.]

### **Understanding the Breach**

1) In the “Spiritual Warfare” episode, Ryan Young warns us that “There is a war for our souls.” Father Charles Goraieb says, “Every single person who wants to serve the Lord finds themselves at war with Satan—not because we ask for it, but because that is the nature of Satan. He detests what a good Catholic man stands for.”

- *Do you think of yourself as constantly in a spiritual war? Do you live your life as a spiritual warrior or do you find yourself pretending it is peacetime?*
- *Father Goraieb goes on to state that temptation is our most universal experience of spiritual warfare. What are some of the common temptations Satan uses to attack men today?*
- *What are some quick strategies men can employ to combat temptation whenever it strikes?*

2) In the episode, the Eucharist, Confession, prayer and the rosary are all called “weapons.”

- *What sort of “weapons” are things like the Eucharist or the rosary? What is the sources of their power?*
- *How “skilled” are you in wielding these weapons? How can you grow in your ability to use them?*
- *What does the nature of these weapons tell us about the battle we are in?*

3) Steve Greene tell a story where he went to Confession and the priest looked at him and said, “The devil wants to destroy your family, but he has to come through you to get them.”

- *Bishop Thomas Olmsted says, “Not only does God have a plan for your life, so does Satan.” What is Satan’s plan for your life? What is God’s plan?*
- *How is the devil trying to destroy your family? What specific things is he trying to accomplish? How is he trying to accomplish them?*
- *Do you take this threat seriously? If so, how? If not, how can you better address this reality?*
- *How is the devil attempting to defeat you to get to your wife and children? How does a father and husband protect his family against Satan’s attacks?*

4) Matthew James Christoff says, “What’s the role of a Catholic man? The only duty that’s going to matter at the end is if he gets his family to heaven.”

- *As a husband and father, how do you fulfill this role of helping your wife and children get to heaven?*
- *Bishop Thomas Olmsted says in the episode that “The devil wants us constantly to think that we can’t really live this vocation”—our vocation to holiness, our vocation to marriage and family. Have you ever struggled with self-doubt about your ability to be a good husband and father? How did you deal with that doubt?*
- *Desire for the things of this world—even the good things—can interfere with our true goal of getting ourselves and our family to heaven. How can a man prepare himself to put first things first and seek first the kingdom of heaven?*

5) Don O’Mara, who in this episode tells his story of recovery from abuse and addiction, credits his prayer life and the sacraments for giving him strength in the spiritual battle.

- *How committed are you to regular prayer? How do you pray?*
- *O’Mara says, “When you have a prayer life, you can take a storm and survive.” What does this mean? How can a prayer life help a man survive the “storms” he may be faced with?*
- *O’Mara likens sins to stones that we carry on our back until we unload them in Confession. How frequently do you “unload” your burden of “stones” in Confession? How do you prepare yourself for receiving the grace of this sacrament?*

6) This episode describes how the devil uses pornography as a tool to attack men. Father Burke Masters describes how some men who view pornography excuse it by saying it is “just a weakness that I have” or that a lot of other men also struggle with it.

- *How widespread is the viewing of pornography among men?*
- *Why has the use of pornography grown in our society? What sort of damage does it do to men, women, families, and society?*
- *What concrete actions can men take to avoid temptation toward pornography and related sins?*

### **Bricks for the Breach**

*“Satan is like a military strategist or commander that will prowl outside the walls of your fortress, being your soul. And he’ll look at where your defenses are weakest—you know, is it the pride, is it the anger, is it the lust—because where the defenses are weakest, that’s where he wants to break in to get into the fortress itself.” (Jason Evert)*

*“As Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati said, ‘To live without faith, without a patrimony to defend, without a steady struggle for truth – that is not living, but existing.’ Are you and I merely existing? Or are we living our Christian faith as men fully alive?” (Into the Breach: An Apostolic Exhortation to Catholic Men)*

*“If we think of soldiers who do not remain in strong physical and mental shape and who fail to practice the essential combat arts, we know they will not be ready for battle and will be a danger to themselves and their comrades in arms. The same is true for Catholic men; those who do not prepare and strengthen themselves for spiritual combat are incapable of filling the breach for Christ.” (Into the Breach: An Apostolic Exhortation to Catholic Men)*

*“Be bold. Know that this is real. Don’t be fearful, because Jesus Christ is far more powerful than Satan. If Jesus is the platform on which we stand, we are victorious. But there is a fight, and there’s no getting around it.” (Father Charles Goraieb)*

### **Sword of the Spirit**

*Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for battle, my fingers for war.*  
(Psalms, 144:1)

*Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for [someone] to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings. (1 Peter 5:8-9)*

*“The Lord says to you: Do not fear or be dismayed at the sight of this vast multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s.” (2 Chronicles 20:15)*

*Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. 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. 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. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all [the] flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:11-17)*

*But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)*

### **Call to Battle**

**Go to Confession monthly.** Jesus called upon all men to repent. The powerful grace of the sacrament of Confession provides us with his grace to help in our spiritual struggles. Taking advantage of this grace with a good confession monthly (or more often) is an invaluable tool for staying on the right path.

**Learn more about the Medal of St. Benedict.** One of the most powerful sacramentals for spiritual combat is the St. Benedict Medal. This medal is rich in symbolism and meaning and a powerful weapon against evil. Consider wearing a St. Benedict Medal, and make sure you have a priest bless the medal with the Blessing of the Medal of St. Benedict. Part of the blessing reads, “In the name of God the Father + almighty, who made heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them, I exorcise these medals against the power and attacks of the evil one.”

**Make St. Michael your friend.** As part of your daily prayer, or perhaps with your family at the dinner table, pray the Prayer to St. Michael for the intention of protecting your family from Satan’s influence.

### **Closing Prayer**

[Request intentions from the group and conclude with the Prayer to St. Michael.]

#### **Prayer to St. Michael**

*St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.*