Father Siler’s Sharings: The Spiritual Battle is real, once we are aware we can attain victory!

In the Scriptures, the most dominate image of the relationship between God and us is that of family. We use familial terms such as groom/bride, son/daughter/father/mother, and brother and sister to describe the relationships that are supposed to exist between God and us and among ourselves.

However, when the Scriptures speak of the relationship between good and evil, between God and the devil, and between us and the devil, war and battle imagery is almost exclusively used.

The Scriptures understand that the battle lines are drawn and the fighting has been fierce. In his pride, the devil truly believes he will win this battle. He has waged war on billions of battlefields: each and every human heart.

His weapons are deadly. He trains his soldiers well how to use his armaments. He uses pride, fear, greed, sloth, lust, gluttony, wrath, envy, and indifference to arm his foot soldiers. His soldiers cannot hurt God so they attack that which God loves: us.

The devil has managed to wage war successfully, tearing apart every civilization, every human enterprise, even to do significant damage among God’s holy people. He has us battle one another. He has us inflict the brutality of sin on each other as frenzied soldiers in the heat of battle. The devil and his minions mean us not merely harm but an eternal destruction as well.

As the father of lies, he has deluded himself with the ultimate lie: that he will win.

But we know that God wins.

The created cannot defeat the creator. Jesus Christ, by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection has defeated the devil. The devil cannot win. His war on humanity only deepens. However, Christ does not send his followers unarmed into the battle that life is.

In Ephesians 6:10-20, St. Paul uses this image of war to explain the defenses and weapons Christ gives us to do battle every day. He reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood (each other) but against the powers of darkness. We are given the armor that is righteousness, the Gospel, faith, and salvation. We are given the Word of God as a weapon to combat the devil. These God offers us.

But how do we use them?

In the military, no professional fighting force is given weaponry and sent out on the field the nanosecond they sign up. Basic training takes place.

A regimen of education and discipline takes place. The new soldier is taught how to use his weapons effectively, what to do when hit, and the basics of warfare. To simply hand weapons to a new soldier, pat them on the head, and send them into battle is to basically create cannon fodder. No general who wants to win would be so foolish. No king who wants to win would be so haphazard.

When God gives these weapons and armor, He also has a plan on how to teach us to use them. Without instruction, both the armor and weapons are relatively useless. How are the armor and weapons given us? Cont’d page 3
Parish Directory
Holy Cross
37860 Kings Highway
Beaver Island, MI 49782
231-448-2230

Sacramental Minister
Parish Administrator
Fr. Jim Siler
Pastoral/Finance Council
Bev Cantwell
Jacqueline LaFreniere
Tina Morgan
Jim Wojan

NOTES
Are you aware that you can request copies of the Sunday Homily? If you would like a copy e-mail us at HolyCross@tds.net.

Also bricks for the Memorial Garden are available for sale, the forms are next to the entrance of the Church.

Anyone who wishes to receive this bulletin via email, please contact Jacque LaFreniere at jacquel@tds.net

Anyone wishing a complete financial report, contact Fr. Jim at HolyCross@tds.net

Holy Cross Financial Report
The financial year for Holy Cross is July 1 to June 30 of the following year. If anyone wants to see a complete financial report please send an e-mail to holycross@tds.net.

For the month of November
Income: Offertory and Loose, Hall, Convent Rental and Cemetery Income, mass stipends....$7208.91
Expenses......includes Hall, Convent, Church, Rectory and Cemetery.. $10,679.54
Net Income-(-3470.63)
Balance Sheet Assets: $217,493.34
Liabilities.... $11,728.06
Fund Balance.... $205,765.28

Please read the Sunday Scriptures a week ahead of time, pray and discern in your heart throughout the week before you come to Mass. Then when you come to Holy Mass you can hear the Word proclaimed and not focus on just reading along.

Below is a list of the Sunday Readings for January 2018

Sunday January 7 Epiphany: Isaiah 60:1–6, Psalm 72, Ephesians 3:2–3a, 5–6 Matthew 2:1–12


Prayer List
Caitlin Boyle Pam O’Brien
Dick Burris Phyllis Moore
Kelton Hunter Pat Antaya
Becky and Dennis Sowatzke Mary Monroe
Todd Lounsberry Jeannie LaFreniere
Rick Elms Dave Chandler
Don Bouchard Chuck Carpenter
Nate Brenton Tom Rouch

****Beginning in January, this list will be updated monthly. If you wish for a name to remain on this list, please call Fr. Jim before the 25th of each month.
We Catholics believe that the armor and weapons are given us from the moment of baptism forward. It is God’s transforming grace that deposit these gifts within us. The seeds are all there. Like any armor and weapon, we do need to know how to use them. The purpose of education in the Catholic Church is merely to teach us the same classes that can be taught in the secular world, but to teach us how to use these weapons and armor given us by God’s gracious action in the sacraments. For we believe than in the proper reception of the sacraments, the Holy Spirit is deposited within us to breath into us the grace of God.

When we are sloppy about the training, we create not soldiers for Christ, but cannon fodder for the devil. This is why a woeful education apparatus is leaving so many of our brothers in arms easy to pick off in battle. This is why bland intellectual entertainment from the pulpit is akin to poisoning the troops.

Christ gives us the armaments of humility to conquer pride, faith, hope, and love to conquer fear, generosity to combat greed, industry to combat sloth, justice to combat lust, temperance to combat gluttony, forgiveness and patience to combat wrath, thankfulness to combat envy, and mercy to combat indifference. Furthermore, because all of these are bound in the Holy Spirit, we also are given the boldness of courage and fortitude to use these arms effectively. The use of these weapons and armor does require a deep discipline and cognition of what we are doing.

That said, there are going to be times, especially in that period where we are unsure about how to use our armor and weapons effectively, where we will be injured (usually by our own hand) and the wounds created will need to be addressed. The medicinal value of Reconciliation (Confession) is at the heart of the healing. The medicinal value of Anointing of the Sick (formerly known as Last Rites) also can be used in some circumstances, when life has inflicted a bodily blow.

God will not leave us on the field of battle to die. His Church acts as not merely a means of preparing for battle, but as a field hospital for the wounded. It is horrifying that any priest would limit or close these field hospitals by limiting access to Confession or eliminating them altogether.

At the end of the day, though, we must choose a side. We cannot fight for both sides. We cannot fight on God’s side when it suits us and the devil’s side when it suits us. We will side with the side that we think will win. We can share in the delusion the devil has and believe he wins and so drop our armor and weapons and pick up his. We can believe that God wins and pick up our armor, our weapons, and engage in the battle. There is no middle ground. In fact, trying to stake out a claim in the middle ground between two armies is probably the deadliest place to be.

Jesus Himself says that “you are either with me or against me.” He compels a choice. Whose side you are on determines whose camp you stay in for eternity. The battle wages on whether we want to acknowledge it or not. Too much ground has been lost because we dropped our guard, our armor, and our weapons. We can either surrender in defeat or rally the troops and retake the field.

We will have to decide whose side we are on – to whose army do we belong.

(Credit Fr. Bill Peckman)
Fr. Jim will be available to hear confessions on Saturdays 3 p.m. and Sundays prior to mass. You may also make an appointment for him to hear your confession.

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