

Onward Catholic Soldier

Spiritual Warfare According to Scripture, the Church and the Saints

John LaBriola

Do not be afraid of the plots and attacks of the devil who might come to pillage and take over the city of your soul. No, don't be afraid, but be like knights drawn up on the battlefield, armed with the sword of divine charity. This sword is the whip that beats the devil.

Saint Catherine of Siena

Conceived on Feast of the Annunciation

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Luke 1:38 Publishing
Printed in the United States of America

The photo on the cover is of the statue of Saint Michael the Archangel guarding the “Capilla del Cerrito,” or “Chapel of the Little Hill” on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City. The chapel was built on the spot where Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego.

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Dedication



We know the love of God in this way: because he laid down his life for us. And so, we must lay down our lives for our brothers. Whoever possesses the goods of this world, and sees his brother to be in need, and yet closes his heart to him: in what way does the love of God abide in him? My little sons, let us not love in words only, but in works and in truth.

1 John 3:16-18

This book is dedicated to Father Raymond Skonezny, S.T.L., S.S.L.

If how a man regards his mother, his spouse and his children is any indication of his character, then Father Raymond Skonezny qualifies as a man of exceptional character. As a humble and holy priest he is a loving spouse of the Church, loving son to the Blessed Mother and a loving father to his spiritual children.

His accomplishments, during his more than 45 years of priestly service, warrant a book of their own. The lives he has touched, the prayers he has enjoined, the compassion he has extended, the joy he has shared, the sacrifices he has made and the souls he has brought to God are the fruits of a life dedicated to serving God. He is an untiring witness to the truth, a man of peace and a humble servant of the Lord. He is also a courageous spiritual warrior and an inspired spiritual director.

Thank you, Father Raymond, for being a light for the world. It is easy to see the words of Saint Clare of Assisi and

Saint John of the Cross as descriptive of you. I am a far better man, husband, father, spiritual warrior and Christian for having known you.

Love God, serve God. Everything is in that.
Saint Clare of Assisi

The soul who is in love with God is a gentle, humble and patient soul.
Saint John of the Cross

Acknowledgments



For just as, within one body, we have many parts, though all the parts do not have the same role, so also we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one is a part, the one of the other. And we each have different gifts, according to the grace that has been given to us.
Romans 12:4-6a

The writing of this book was at once exhilarating and exhausting. It was made more exhilarating and less exhausting by the efforts of so many faithful members of the Body of Christ. I would like to thank the following people and organizations for their support:

Bridget Leonard, Carmen Ribera, Jon Roberts and Colleen Swiatek who each lent their unique talents to the forming of this book.

Megan Breen, Tim Kelly, John Neilsen and Lisa Steen, spiritual warriors all, who prayerfully offered their support and encouragement.

Sam Conedera S.J., Father Joseph Droessler, Father John Hampsch, Father Jerome Karcher, Father James Maltese, Father Darrin Merlino, Father Michael Philen and Father Raymond Skonezny who each served as a source of inspiration for the thoughts and ideas that came to form this book.

Lu Cortese and the volunteers at Saint Joseph Radio who provided a platform to share this information with so many people over the EWTN Radio Network.

The listeners of *Saint Joseph Radio Presents* who were effusive in their praise and strong in their support of the radio broadcasts that served as the foundation for this book.

My wife and children who sacrificed much so this book could be become a reality.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, Saint Teresa of Avila, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Saint Catherine of Siena, Blessed Miguel Pro and all the holy Angels and Saints whose words and actions serve as an inspiration for us all.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, under whose watchful eye each word of this book was typed.

I thank you. I love you. I could not have done this without you. May we together walk the pathways of love that will lead us all to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. May God be praised!

John LaBriola

July 11, 2008

Feast of Saint Benedict

Whoever reads this work will carry on with me if he shares my own certainties, search with me if he shares my own doubts, come back to me if he recognizes errors of his own, and call me to account if he becomes aware of mine. And together we will set out to walk the pathways of love.

Saint Augustine

Foreword



Amidst the mountainous profusion of movie scripts, articles, dramas and research projects dealing with the darkly fascinating subject of demonology, no Christian denomination stands out more trenchantly than Catholicism. Think of an exorcist and you almost automatically conjure up the image of a Catholic priest, ritual in hand and draped in a purple stole. Think of a tool of exorcism and you immediately visualize Catholic sacramentals like holy water or a crucifix held aloft in an oburgative blessing. When encountering a poltergeistic disturbance in one's house, the first thought (even for many non-Catholics, surprisingly) is to call a Catholic priest, just as one's first thought in an injury accident is to call 911 for paramedics. With its 20 centuries of harrowing experience in this sanguinary battlefield of spiritual warfare, the Catholic Church holds, in its doctrine and practice, the ultimate "gold standard" for confronting the underworld of demonic entities.

In this treatise on Catholic demonology, John LaBriola has gathered a remarkable sweep of occultic issues, ancient and modern, "like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Matthew 13:52). The antidote for each of these is set into the context of Catholic history, doctrine, tradition and practice. The result is a treasury of subjects germane to what has come to be called spiritual warfare; most of them are tagged and embroidered by quotations from popes, Church documents, saints, early Church Fathers or other august sources of the fathomless wisdom of the ages. Amazingly, the entire treatise is spangled with over

1000 such citations.

One cannot read this book without marveling at the vast armamentarium of specifically Catholic “weapons of our warfare...that have divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4). These weapons range all the way from the rosary and Marian devotion to sacramental confession and the Sacrifice of the Mass, from blessed salt to pious ejaculations, from a Saint Benedict medal to the monstrance-exposed Blessed Sacrament on the high altar, from a blessed oil anointing to an Ash Wednesday forehead insignia, from a fervent “deliver us from evil” to the wrenching puissance of an inexorable exorcism. Each part of the “armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13) finds multiple expressions in Catholic practices.

On closing the book after the last chapter, the reader will breathe a prayer of thanksgiving for the Gift of God, Jesus himself, who working in and through his Church, has “come to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). As we stand in the Christic glow of his serene majestic power, the forces of Hell can only recoil, cower and tremble. Secure in our Catholic armory, we can only exult in our awesome God who graciously puts in our hands such divinely protective shields and invincible weapons. Our prayer of gratitude will echo that of Paul (2 Corinthians 9:15): “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible Gift!”

Fr. John H. Hampsch, C.M.F.
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Prayer of Protection



Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me. For my soul trusts in you. And I will hope in the shadow of your wings, until iniquity passes away. I will cry out to God Most High, to God who has been kind to me. He sent from heaven and freed me. He has surrendered into disgrace those who trampled me. God has sent his mercy and his truth. And he has rescued my soul from the midst of the young lions. I slept troubled. The sons of men: their teeth are weapons and arrows, and their tongue is a sharp sword. Be exalted above the heavens, O God, and your glory above all the earth.

Psalm 56:2-6

Heavenly Father, it is only by Your grace I can even begin to pray. Lord, I give You all glory and honor and praise. Help me to adore You O Lord. Help me to love and serve You in all I do. I am truly sorry for my sins and I beg for Your forgiveness. I love You and do not desire to offend You in any way. I thank You Lord for all that You have done for me, for Your gifts and graces. I now ask You Lord for Your protection over me as I read and pray through this book.

I beg You to send Your Holy Spirit upon me, to be my inspiration, my guide and my protector. Grant me the grace to be open to Your words of truth and love. Protect me from any and all evil spirits that would seek to attack, harass or annoy me because of my desire to grow closer to You through the pages of this book.

Mother Mary, spouse of the Holy Spirit, I ask that you would also be with me in a special way as I read this book; wrap me in your mantle the entire time. May I find peace, comfort and safety within your Immaculate Heart. May your motherly intercession and protection extend to all my family and loved ones. May I receive through you every heavenly protection and grace.

Lord, may You send Your holy angels to form a hedge of protection around my heart, mind and body, keeping out all that is not of You. Arouse my guardian angel and call me to a greater awareness of my angel's role in protecting me from the wiles of the evil one.

I also call upon the intercession of the saints in Heaven. May their prayers afford me protection according to the will of God. I say all of this in the most holy and precious name of Jesus, our Lord, our King, our Savior. Amen.

Our King has now conquered. Now He has destroyed sin; now He has put down death and has subjected the devil.

Saint John Chrysostom

In the Holy Spirit we have a great ally and protector, the great teacher of the Church, our great defender.
Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

When Mary supports you, you will not fail. With her as your protector you will have nothing to fear. With her as your guide you will not grow weary.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd, leading him to life.

Saint Basil the Great

If the apostles and martyrs while still in the body can pray for others, at a time when they should still be solicitous about themselves, how much more will they do so after their crowns, victories and triumphs.

Saint Jerome

Introduction



And his disciples drew near to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” Responding, he said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of man. Now the field is the world. And the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom. But the weeds are the sons of wickedness. So the enemy who sowed them is the devil. And truly, the harvest is the consummation of the age; while the reapers are the Angels. Therefore, just as weeds are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the consummation of the age. The Son of man shall send out his Angels, and they shall gather from his kingdom all who lead astray and those who work iniquity. And he shall cast them into the furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the just ones shall shine like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Matthew 13:36b-43

During the Easter Vigil, at the renewal of baptismal promises the priest asks, “Do you reject Satan? And all his works? And all his empty promises?” “I do,” is the all too reflexive response. The spiritual battle that exists behind the need for these questions and the need to answer them with conviction is often missed. War between Creator and creature was not intended to be the normal state of creation, but it is the current reality. Satan is defeated, but he is still dangerous and

potentially deadly. His weeds still grow today, choking off the faith life of many.

The Scriptures are replete with implicit and explicit references to Satan and evil demons. For two millennia the Church and her saints have spoken of Satan as an actual entity, alive and well, seeking the eternal ruin of souls. Saints from every part of the world, from every economic background, from every culture, from every vocation, have continuously and passionately believed in and taught the reality of Satan.

The resistance to and the denial of this reality is a relatively recent phenomenon. To help get past the lie being told that Satan isn't real or is no longer relevant, in addition to the scriptural references cited, I've included over 1,000 quotes from Church documents and the saints. Quotes from the earliest saints to the most recent, from the East and West, from bishops, priests and deacons, from religious and lay men and women are used to support nearly every point. Those who are endlessly praising God have left clues as to the reality of Satan and how best to triumph over him. Their quotes are the historical, human expression of God's wisdom. It would be wise to recognize their relevance and heed their call.

Oh what remorse we shall feel at the end of our lives, when we look back upon the great number of instructions and examples afforded by God and the saints for our perfection, and so carelessly received by us. If this end were to come to you today, how would you be pleased with the life you have led this year?

Saint Francis de Sales

How will he be able to regulate his life, cultivate virtue and flee from sin if he does not know the means by which he must seek the former and avoid the latter and does not recognize the temptations and snares of the enemy?

Venerable Louis of Granada

The current climate notwithstanding, the evidence shows the Church has always, does now and will always teach the reality of Satan and evil. To ignore this reality serves only the liar. Let what G.K. Chesterton called the "democracy of the

dead” have their say. Do not believe the vocal minority, no matter how persuasive they may seem. Instead, believe the words of Jesus in Scripture, the words of His Church as guided by the Holy Spirit and the words of the saints and martyrs. Call upon those who have gone before you on earth, and are now in Heaven, to light your path to the Lord.

Whatever the less discerning theologians may say, the devil, as far as Christian belief is concerned, is a puzzling but real, personal and not merely symbolic presence. He is a powerful reality a baneful super-human freedom directed against God’s freedom.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

It is a departure from the picture provided by biblical Church teaching to refuse to acknowledge the devil's existence; to regard him as a self-sustaining principle who, unlike other creatures, does not owe his origin to God; or to explain the devil as a pseudo-reality, a conceptual, fanciful personification of the unknown causes of our misfortunes.

Pope Paul VI

When I speak on spiritual warfare, the responses I get typically fall into one of five categories. The first four categories are ignorance, ambivalence, excessive zeal and fear. All four are reasons for concern. Ignorance of the reality of spiritual warfare plays right into Satan’s hand. Ambivalence toward spiritual warfare is even worse, reminiscent of the “lukewarm” in Revelation (cf. Revelation 3:16). Excessive zeal for spiritual warfare, while seemingly noble, is often prideful. A response of fear serves only to obscure the truth and keep the chains of bondage secured. The fifth category, and thankfully the largest of them, is enthusiastic interest.

The ignorant see spiritual warfare through eyes of innocence. Not yet understanding the penetrating and pervasive nature of evil, they see it as an archaic metaphor, one that has outgrown its usefulness in these modern times. They view the whole notion of evil as personified by Satan and his demons with skepticism. The ignorant not only deny Satan’s active presence, but also his very existence. No enemy is harder

to fight than the one you think does not exist.

Do not mock the Gospels and say there is not Satan. Evil is too real in the world to say that. Do not say the idea of Satan is dead and gone. Satan never gains so many cohorts, as when in his shrewdness he spreads the rumor that he is long since dead.
Servant of God Fulton Sheen

I, Sister Faustina, by the order of God, have visited the abysses of Hell so that I might tell souls about it and testify to its existence... I noticed one thing: that most of the souls there are those who disbelieved that there is a Hell.
Saint Faustina Kowalska

We cannot simply regard the devil as a symbol for evil; otherwise, we become sociologists, not exegetes. And those who suggest that we can no longer believe in such things have not thought very deeply about the twentieth century.
Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

The ambivalent see spiritual warfare through eyes of indifference. Their mistake is often equating love with acceptance, truth with tolerance. The cries of “To each his own!” and “Live and let live!” and “Judge not...!” are their common mantras. They grumble and complain that a “fair” God wouldn’t permit such an evil creature to live, let alone prey on His people. They don’t realize that earth is a battlefield and that Heaven is the reward. Because of their ambivalence toward the truth and their reluctance to take up arms, they are easily led astray.

The reason why the lukewarm runs so great a risk of being lost is because tepidity conceals from the soul the immense evil which it causes.
Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Let us always keep before our eyes the fact that here on earth we are on a battlefield and that in paradise we

shall receive the crown of victory.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

The entrances to Heaven are open and death is
subdued by life in the holy battle.
Saint Agnes of Montepulciano

The zealous see spiritual warfare through eyes of pride. They see it as a great battle, with shiny weapons, a large army at their side and an unworthy foe cowering at their very presence. They flex their muscles, admire their ability and marvel at their own magnificence as if their body and its deeds are their own. They love the imagery of slaying the dragon; they just don't like to have to prepare for it or get dirty doing it. They often write the victory speech before they understand the battle plan. They don't realize that if their battle plan is their own, or if they knowingly forge ahead without proper authority, they open themselves up to potential harm from Satan.

There is no human power that can be compared with his [Satan's], and thus only the divine power suffices to be able to conquer him, and the divine light alone to penetrate his wiles.
Saint John of the Cross

Only such victories as you have won without the cooperation of the body have been accomplished by your efforts, because the body is not yours, but a work of God.
Saint John Climacus

We are not asked to have shining armor to overcome Goliath, but simply to know how to choose a few stones, the right ones, with the wisdom and courage of David.
Blessed Pope John Paul II

The fearful see spiritual warfare through eyes of apprehension. They imagine that any attention given to demons will increase the likelihood of a spiritual attack. They believe that in some way spiritual warfare is a contagion that will spread if they acknowledge it as real. Others think that the

domain of spiritual warfare belongs only to the clergy; in doing so, they sell themselves and their baptismal rights short. Others are afraid that they are not up to the task, so they shy away from the battle and suffer the consequences. Fear and false humility play right into Satan's hand. Your fear feeds Satan and causes him to become bolder and stronger.

I am really much more afraid of those people who have so great a fear of the devil, than I am of the devil himself.

Saint Teresa of Avila

Fear not, it is but an artifice of the evil one to distract you.

Saint Anthony of Padua

Do not fear the evil snares of the enemy. In the end, he will be obliged to recognize that he is powerless where a soul that is very dear to Jesus is concerned. Therefore be calm.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

All four categories lead away from the truth and toward the lie, either through innocence, indifference, pride or apprehension. They also, although not necessarily intentionally, do Satan's bidding for him.

The last of the categories, those who respond with enthusiasm, see spiritual warfare through eyes of faith. The word enthusiasm has an interesting etymology. It derives from two Greek words "*en + theos*" or in English, "*in + god.*" Literally, enthusiasm is to be "in God." Those who are enthusiastic recognize God's victory over the evil one and their role in carrying it to its completion. They also recognize a need for liberation and protection for themselves and others. They trust in God and are open to His magnificent ways. They prepare for battle, but they don't pray for it. If it comes as part of God's will, they respond. They only seek His will, whether that places them on the frontline or the sideline. Whatever He permits they accept; whatever happens, they see the hand of God at work. Like little children, they trust in *Abba* God's promise and His power. Their strength is the Lord working

through their humility.

Be ever looking for the enemy, but do not breed a war, for this is not the attitude of a soldier but of a seditious.

Saint John Chrysostom

We should never forget the two axioms: Jesus is with me and whatever happens, happens by the will of God.
Blessed Charles de Foucauld

Humility, humility and always humility. Satan fears and trembles before humble souls. The Lord is willing to do great things, but on condition that we are truly humble.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

True spiritual warriors see spiritual warfare through the eyes of Mary, the Blessed Mother. Spiritual warfare is always accomplished by the grace of God and in accord with His permissive will. It is often hidden, quiet and anonymous. Humility, obedience, surrender and trust are the weapons of the Lord's soldier. Next to Jesus, no greater spiritual warrior is there than the Blessed Mother. Mary's "Yes," defeats Satan's "No," every time. Scripture places Mary right in the midst of the battle. From Genesis to Revelation, Mary is the New Eve who gives birth to the New Adam (cf. Genesis 3 and Revelation 12). Mary's "*Fiat*," was the beginning of the end for Satan. If you are called to engage in spiritual warfare, only do so under the protection of the Blessed Mother and in accordance with God's will.

No true devotee of Mary will be damned, because she is the terrible conqueror of the devil.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Where Mary is present, the evil one is absent.

Saint Louis de Montfort

Listen and let it penetrate your heart, do not be troubled or weighed down with grief. Do not fear any

illness or vexation, anxiety or pain. Am I not here who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not your fountain of life? Are you not in the folds of my mantle? In the crossing of my arms? Is there anything else you need?

Our Lady of Guadalupe to Saint Juan Diego

A word of caution is necessary when speaking of Satan. It is important to avoid ascribing too much power and influence to him. You must never fall victim to the notion that Satan is somehow equal to God in power and authority. God is Creator; Satan is creature, Both Satan's power and the ability to exercise his power are limited by God and are permitted only to the degree that they can serve God's will. God can, and does, use Satan's evil acts to bring about His glorious plan — if you let Him. Good or bad, it all falls within God's permissive will; it is all able to be redeemed by God.

God is stronger at restoring our salvation than is Satan at continuing to imprison us.

Saint Paulinus of Nola

Whatever good or evil befalls you, be confident that God will convert it all to your good.

Saint Jane Frances de Chantal

Souls that really love God know that everything that happens in this world is either ordered or permitted by God.

Saint Alphonsus Ligouri

Similarly, it is important to not ascribe too little power and influence to Satan. To do so is to play into his hands. You must never believe the lie that Satan does not exist; that would deny the constant teaching of the Church. Nor can you resort to the comedic phrase, "The devil made me do it." That would deny your free will and your role in your sinful acts. It would also be an obstacle to repentance and reconciliation. The truth is found, as it often is, right in the middle of these two opposing views.

The devil delights in being blamed for something. In fact he actually wants you to blame him. He is more than willing to listen to all your recriminations, as long as they keep you from making your own confession.
Saint Augustine

We do not fear the devil or his demons, because the one who fights with us is so much greater than they.
Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

With this book, I hope to shine a bold, bright light on the evil one, the light of Christ and His Church that dispels all darkness. Relying on Scripture and the saints for grounding and inspiration, the following chapters offer practical advice on how to do and how not to do battle. The realities, the cautions, the burdens and the benefits of spiritual warfare will be discussed. Satan will be spoken of, but only to the degree that it serves the kingdom of God.

It certainly gives us no pleasure to speak with you about the devil, but the doctrine which this enables me to speak of will be quite useful for you.
Saint John Chrysostom

I pass on what I have been taught and what I believe the Lord has asked me to share. Extensive use of Scripture, Magisterial documents and the wisdom of the saints back up the thoughts expressed.

Follow the saints, because those who follow them will themselves become saints.
Pope Saint Clement

These thoughts will be both offensive and defensive in nature, both preventative and curative and both moving toward virtue and away from vice.

When you come to a passage from Scripture, pray it. Pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit to reveal the full meaning of the passage to you. When you come to a quote from a saint or a Church document, meditate upon its relevance. Absorb the words of Scripture and the saints; don't just scan over them.

Lastly, for the purposes of this book, when I mention Satan, please know that I am speaking of all of the fallen angels. Whether they are called evil or unclean spirits, demons, powers, principalities, the devil or the evil one, they are all united in their hatred of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and those who love Him.

There is no need to be afraid to call the first agent of evil by his name: the evil one.
Blessed Pope John Paul II

The devil is not one person. The devil is an organized battalion of malice.
Servant of God John Hardon

It is largely due to the collective ignorance and apathy of the people of God — and the efforts of the demons — that so many within the Church would prefer to not speak of the reality of Satan and the necessity of spiritual warfare. Ignorance and apathy lead to discomfort and fear. It is important to slay these twin dragons of ignorance and apathy and the accompanying discomfort and fear. With God's wisdom, peace, grace, truth and mercy, with proper precaution and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is time to speak the truth about the battle against the evil one.

The demons do not dare to appear or exercise their deadly powers wherever the name of Mary most holy shines forth. The more frequently her name is invoked with fervent love, the more quickly do they flee and the farther off they go.
Servant of God Thomas a' Kempis

Mary is so powerful against the devil that he fears a single breath of hers more than all the prayers of the saints.
Saint Louis de Montfort

The very devils in Hell, while fearing her, [the Blessed Virgin Mary] show her respect.
Saint Louis de Montfort

Part I

Tactics of the Enemy



Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:1

In a scriptural sense, the desert is paradoxical; it is a metaphor for both life and death. It can be a place to grumble at God or grow in faith, to surrender to deep despair or yield to deep prayer. It can be seen as barren and devoid of comfort lending itself to great temptations, or it can be seen as isolated and devoid of distraction, lending itself to great graces. It is either a time to detach from the world and surrender to God, or a time to yearn for the comforts of the world and surrender to the flesh.

Satan will attempt to lure you to the desert to weaken you and to eventually lead you to death. God will attempt to lure you to the desert to strengthen you and to eventually lead you to new life. In God's plan, the desert is a time to engage in ascetical practices. In Satan's plan, the desert is a time to focus on scarcity. Used wisely, trusting in and aligned with God's will, your time in the desert will be a time of preparation for what awaits just beyond your desert experience.

As a spiritual warrior, as a soldier of Christ, desert spirituality is important. It is important that you cultivate attitudes and virtues that will serve you well in battle: courage, humility, patience, charity, etc. It is also a time to grow in

wisdom, to learn about your mission, to gain knowledge of your enemy and his ways. It is both a training ground and a proving ground.

This first part of the book can be thought of as desert training manual, to prime and prepare you for the battle. It may serve you to sit in silence and solitude after each chapter. Allow the Holy Spirit to instruct you. Learn well, for soon He will lead you out into the world that you might accomplish the Father's will.

Our Lord showed us an example of withdrawal from people and solitude when He would go alone up into a mountain to pray. In the wilderness too He conquered the devil, who dared to wrestle with Him. Naturally, He was not powerless to conquer him even among the multitude; but He acted thus to teach us that we can more easily overcome the enemy and reach perfection in silence and solitude.

Saint Antony of the Desert

We can only learn to know ourselves and do what we can: namely, surrender our will and fulfill God's will in us.

Saint Teresa of Avila

Chapter 1

The War Begins



And a great sign appeared in Heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and on her head was a crown of twelve stars. And being with child, she cried out while giving birth and she was suffering in order to give birth. And another sign was seen in Heaven. And behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail drew down a third part of the stars of Heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman, who was about to give birth, so that, when she had brought forth, he might devour her son. And she brought forth a male child, who was soon to rule all the nations with an iron rod. And her son was taken up to God and to his throne. And the woman fled into solitude, where a place was being held ready by God, so that they might pasture her in that place for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. And there was a great battle in Heaven. Michael and his Angels were battling with the dragon, and the dragon was fighting, and so were his angels. But they did not prevail, and a place for them was no longer found in Heaven.

Revelation 12:1-8

“Non serviam.” “I will not serve.” When Lucifer,

now known as Satan, uttered those words he brought evil into the created order. With those two words Lucifer ignited the mother of all battles, one that still rages today. The reality of spiritual warfare flows from Lucifer's acts of rebellious pride. It can be summed this way: God loves you and wants you to spend eternity with Him; Satan hates you and wants you to spend eternity with him. God's desire is that you join Him in the joy of His eternal love. Satan's desire is that you join him in the putrid and vile pit of Hell. God desires your eternal happiness while Satan desires your eternal separation from God. Spiritual warfare, then, refers to both the battle that took place between God and Satan and the battles that are taking place between evil spirits and human beings.

You are united to Me; fear nothing. But know my child that Satan hates you; he hates every soul, but he burns with a particular hatred for you because you have snatched so many souls from his dominion.

Our Lord to Saint Faustina Kowalska

Satan's initial declaration of war was a calculated decision on his part. Believing it to be beneath his dignity to serve, he freely chose to rebel against God and separate himself from God's love for eternity. Because Satan and the other fallen angels committed their sins with clear knowledge, a determined will and an absence of repentance, their sins eternally ruptured their relationship with God. Heaven is lost to them forever; they do, however, retain their natural angelic powers because sin does not change the nature of the sinner.

Although the devil lost the dignity of his previous rank, he did not lose his knowledge which he possesses for the testing of the good and for his own confusion.

Our Lord to Saint Bridget of Sweden

They remain eternally separated from God, miserable and malicious, yet powerful and potent. As misery loves company, Satan opened a second front in his war against God, attacking God's creatures. Satan finds twisted delight in opposing God. He relishes in snatching souls away from God. No longer capable of experiencing joy, he nonetheless

experiences an evil glee in “seeking the ruin of souls.” He is motivated by malice and misery to expand his crumbling empire. He’ll spread partial truth intertwined with subtle deceit to try and convince you of his lies.

The devil is allowed sometimes to speak true things, in order that his unwonted truthfulness may gain credit for his lie.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Thus the evil spirit tries to transplant into man the attitude of rivalry, insubordination and opposition to God which has become, as it were, the motivation of his entire existence. This does not, however, signify the elimination of man's free will and responsibility, and even less the frustration of the saving action of Christ.

Blessed Pope John Paul II

The reality is the moment you were conceived, you were thrust into a battle for your immortal soul. When you were born, you were born into a war zone. When you were baptized, you were fitted with combat boots. You also, in that precise moment, became a redeemed child of God and an enemy of Satan. Your baptism, which set you apart for God, set you apart from Satan. The stain of original sin, the enemy's camouflage, is wiped away. In baptism, God, the author of life, has cleansed your soul. After baptism, Satan, the hater of life, wants to stain your soul and steal your birthright.

You may be saying to yourself, “But I didn't sign up for this. I don't want to do battle, I'm not a fighter.” Welcome to the Church Militant. By virtue of your baptism, you are a soldier. And you are either a soldier of and for Christ or you are a soldier against Him. “But spiritual warfare, I'm not equipped for that. Can't I just watch from the sidelines? I mean, I could get hurt!” First of all, there is a saying, “God doesn't call the equipped; He equips those whom He calls.” Secondly, you can't bargain with Satan. He is a liar from the beginning. Besides, if you attempt to do less or try to ignore Satan so he won't harm you, hasn't he already won? Thirdly, as a Christian, you are a soldier, whether you think you are or not. It is your part of your baptismal legacy.

The Christian must be a militant; he must be vigilant and strong.
Pope Paul VI

Few souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to abandon themselves unreservedly to Him and if they were to allow His grace to mold them accordingly.
Saint Ignatius of Loyola

As we do battle and fight in the contest of faith, God, His Angels and Christ watch us. How exalted is the glory, how great the joy of engaging in a contest with God presiding, of receiving a crown with Christ as judge.
Saint Cyprian of Carthage

As a Christian, you are all called to do battle at some point, in some manner. You may be called to be a frontline soldier or you may be more on the supply side, typically supplying prayer so others may do battle. You may be called to be a leader in Christ's army or to care for the wounded. You may be called to be a stealth soldier or a highly visible one, to do battle now and to retreat later. And where the Lord calls you to serve today may not be where He calls you to serve tomorrow.

But as a baptized, confirmed believer in Christ Jesus, you are called. The truth is spiritual warfare exists whether you believe in it or not. Like gravity, you can't see it but you know it exists because you can see the effects. You can attempt to deny and defy gravity but eventually you will be subject to its pull. Spiritual warfare is much the same way. It exists even if you desire to remain ignorant of it.

Do not let willful ignorance be your downfall. The best way to pass a test is to study. The best way to make a team is to practice. When it comes to spiritual warfare a consistent, committed effort is necessary.

Time is short. Don't let the moment pass. Satan is active, perhaps now more than ever. Now is the time to recognize that the enemy wants to take you hostage and destroy your life of grace. The battle is inevitable. There is no

escape, no hiding. He knows the war is lost, but that doesn't prevent him from picking off a few last stragglers. Don't be one of them. Don't fall for his traps; don't stumble into his snares. With joy in your heart and Mary's name on your lips, prepare for victory.

O Virgin, in the hour of my death, rescue me from the hand of the demons, and the judgment, and the accusation, and the frightful testing, and the bitter toll-houses and the fierce prince, and the eternal condemnation, O Mother of God.
Saint John Damascene

The chief of all the enemy summons innumerable demons and scatters them. Some to one city and some to another throughout the whole world, so that no province, no place, no state of life, no individual is overlooked. He goes around to lay snares for men to seek to chain them.
Saint Ignatius of Loyola

My joy is by no means foolish, for in the combat there is a crown to be won, and the better the fight put up by the soul, the more numerous the palms of victory.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Despite the ugly reality of spiritual warfare, there is hope and victory in Christ Jesus. Any discussion of spiritual warfare must begin and end with these two certainties: the battle and victory belong to the Lord (cf. 1 Samuel 17:47b and Proverbs 21:31b). This is to be your focus, your strength, your peace. It is not to be an excuse for not being prepared to battle. If you truly believe and trust in these truths, then nothing the enemy can do to you will matter. If all Christians actively lived these truths, the light would overcome the darkness and Satan would whimper and whine his way back to Hell.

If that is true and the battle belongs to the Lord, then why not just sit back and watch? The answer is love. Love is at the heart of spiritual warfare. It is the love of Christ that props you up, propels you forward and provides you with the spiritual energy necessary to do battle. Love is both the means and the

end for the spiritual warrior; it is to be your passion, purpose and promise. It is the love of Christ that conquers all. It is the love of Christ that will sustain you and compel you to act.

But thanks be to God, who has given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57

But in all these things we overcome, because of him who has loved us. For I am certain that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor the present things, nor the future things, nor strength, nor the heights, nor the depths, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:37-39

For the charity of Christ urges us on.

2 Corinthians 5:14a

Even Satan knows that the battle and victory belong to the Lord. He knows that he was defeated 2000 years ago on Calvary. He knows he is no match for the precious blood of Jesus. He also knows there are many followers of Christ who don't believe or who are lukewarm in their belief. He is counting on their collective ignorance and lack of commitment. He is counting on them not recognizing the power and authority granted them upon their baptism. He is counting on them to ignore his slow and subtle advances for he knows their lack of passionate, committed faith is what helps his cause.

All the evils of the world are due to lukewarm Catholics.

Pope Saint Pius V

In baptism your soul was cleansed from the stain of original sin, gained immortal life with God and became a mortal enemy to Satan. Once baptized, you become a known and noted adversary of the evil one. In fact, Satan receives a greater sense of satisfaction in capturing a soul set apart for good than he does in gaining a soul never set apart for God

through baptism. Satan works harder to take down souls who set themselves apart for God because they are the ones who can do the most damage to his plans. God does not, however, give Satan free reign. God always provides for His people, especially those who are under assault because of their love for Him. His grace is sufficient to overcome any assaults Satan may attempt.

Jesus permits these assaults of the devil, because Jesus' compassion makes you dear to Him, and He wants you to resemble Himself in the torments He endured in the desert, in the garden and on the cross.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Satan stations more devils on monastery walls than in dens of iniquity for the latter offer no resistance.
Servant of God Fulton Sheen

It is characteristic of the divine goodness to protect with greater wisdom whatever the devil assaults with greater violence.
Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Spiritual warfare is suffering; it is cross-carrying; it is burden-bearing. It is heavy duty intercession, filled with intense prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Spiritual warfare is imitative of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. It is from Christ that you are to draw your strength, through Christ that you are able to endure. In obedience, through love and suffering, Christ triumphed over evil. This is to be your model, Jesus Christ crucified. By the power of His blood you have been redeemed. Through temptation and trial comes eternal glory.

Spiritual warfare really is this: is Satan going to kill you or are you willing to die to self? Are you willing to climb up on the cross of your own accord in imitation of Jesus or will you crucify yourself by your pride? To the degree that the self dies, the Lord can live and reign in you and help you overcome your temptations and trials. For it is the life of God in you that Satan wants to destroy.

The devil tempts us, not so much to do us harm, as to destroy the God in us. His aim is death, not so much

you or I; we are nothing. It is about God, a hatred of God.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

There are trials that God sends you as part of His perfect will; He authors them. These trials, or tribulations, should be embraced and endured in imitation of Jesus. There are also trials that God sanctions as part of His permissive will; He allows them. These trials or temptations are to be resisted and overcome. Both of these trials are designed for your edification and are a stepping stone to your eternal glory.

Tribulations and temptations can only occur according to the will of God, who can redeem evil to bring about good. So, even though you might suffer various afflictions, you are not forgotten by God. Even though you may be tempted or harassed by Satan, you are not destined to turn from God. God, in His infinite mercy, offers you bountiful graces to counteract both tribulations and temptations. From your woundedness, from Satan's temptations or harassments, can come glory — if you cooperate with God's grace.

I exhort you to confide more in divine mercy, humbling yourself before the mercy of our God, and thanking Him for all the favors He wants to grant you. By doing this you will defy and overcome all the anger of Hell.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Calm yourself and be quite certain that these shadows are not a punishment proportioned to your wickedness. You are not wicked, nor are you blinded by your own malice. You are merely one of the chosen ones who are tried like gold in the furnace.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Your temptations are from the devil and from Hell; but your sufferings and afflictions are from God and Heaven. The mothers are from Babylon, but the daughters are from Jerusalem. Despise temptations and embrace tribulations.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Chapter 2

The War Rages On



And answering, Jesus said to them: “Pay attention, lest someone lead you astray. For many will come in my name saying, ‘I am the Christ.’ And they will lead many astray. For you will hear of battles and rumors of battles. Take care not to be disturbed. For these things must be, but the end is not so soon. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be pestilences, and famines, and earthquakes in places. But all these things are just the beginning of the sorrows.”

Matthew 24:4-8

There seems to be a marked increase in the incidence and intensity of spiritual warfare in the world. Certainly, part of the blame can be placed on Satan’s shoulders because of his ongoing disobedience and disdain for God and His followers. Pointing fingers at Satan without also taking a good, long look in the mirror, though, would be disingenuous and prideful. The first step in becoming a strong spiritual warrior is to recognize your weaknesses.

Never fight evil as if it were something that arose totally outside of yourself.

Saint Augustine

First let us purify ourselves from our sins and escape from the bondage of Satan, and then we can talk about God.

Saint Catherine of Siena

Nor did demons crucify Him; it is you who have crucified Him and crucify Him still, when you delight in your vices and sins.

Saint Francis of Assisi

In today's church, too many are reticent when it comes to proclaiming the truth, especially regarding the reality of the existence of Satan. This reticence only serves to further Satan's kingdom. In many ways the relative strength of Satan can be directly linked to the collective fear and feebleness Catholics have of living and proclaiming their faith. For example:

Belief in the Eucharist has been diminished. Yet, in this sacrament is the power and presence of Jesus Christ: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. It is God, right here, right now; still, many shrug. In His blood is redemption. There is infinite power in the Body and Blood of Jesus. A soul nurtured on and strengthened by the Eucharist is demoralizing to Satan.

The Eucharist has been one of the principal causes of the holiness of martyrs, confessors, and virgins, because it was the primary source of their courage and strength in overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Venerable Louis of Granada

Where they see the blood of the Lord, demons flee while angels gather.

Saint John Chrysostom

Let us return from that Table like lions breathing out fire, terrifying to the devil.

Saint John Chrysostom

Relatively few Catholics avail themselves of the Sacrament of Penance. Yet, there exists a power in this sacrament to strengthen the will and break the power of the

evil one that is not possible otherwise. Unrepented and unconfessed mortal sin not only leaves the door wide open for Satan, but it lights a path to your door. If you fall, get up. If your will is compromised, you can strengthen it by the grace offered to you through sacramental confession.

The devil has only one door to enter, and in your soul that door is called will. There are no hidden doors.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

The devil never runs upon a man to seize him with his claws until he sees him on the ground, already having fallen by his own will.
Saint Thomas More

The Liturgy has, in the hands of some, gone from the sublime to the profane. Personal agendas have led to liturgical abuses; secular has replaced sacred. The resulting confusion has led to separation, sin and scandal — all trademarks of the evil one. It is only when you worship God as the Church prescribes that you are strengthened in your faith and in battle against the evil one.

The holiness of the sacred is despised; the majesty of divine worship is not only disapproved by evil men, but defiled and held up to ridicule. Hence sound doctrine is perverted and errors of all kinds spread boldly.
Pope Gregory XVI

One who offers worship to God on the Church's behalf in a way contrary to that which is laid down by the Church with God-given authority and which is customary in the Church is guilty of falsification.
Saint Thomas Aquinas

I am convinced that the crisis of the church which we are living through today was largely caused by the disintegration of the liturgy.
Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

Today there arises the risk of a serpentine

secularization even within the Church, which can convert into a formal and empty Eucharistic worship, in celebrations lacking this participation from the heart that is expressed in veneration and respect for the liturgy.

Pope Benedict XVI

The Blessed Mother is often relegated to the status of cultural icon. Yet, it is Mary's "*Fiat*," that counters Eve's "No." It is Mary's "*Fiat*," that stands in contrast to Satan's "I will not serve." Satan hates and fears Mary above all creatures because of her humility. Simple, humble, holy Mary defeated Satan and his entire army with a single word. Satan's arrogance and pride far exceed his powers. He is truly a coward, especially when it comes to the Blessed Mother and her children.

He who neglects her [the Blessed Virgin Mary] will die in his sins.

Saint Bonaventure

When my soul shall be released from the bond with the flesh, intercede for me, O Sovereign Lady that I may pass unhindered through the princes of darkness in the air.

Saint John Damascene

The devils tremble if they only hear the name of Mary.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Traditional devotionals such as the Rosary are more likely to be worn as fashion items than to be prayed. They are even mocked as antiquated and superstitious. Yet, devotion to Mary, through the Rosary is a powerful means of protection. It is also a sure and safe passageway to Heaven, one that has been well trodden by the saints and martyrs.

It is easy to see that they have absorbed the poison of Hell and that they are inspired by the devil. Nobody can condemn devotion to the holy Rosary without condemning all that is most holy in the Catholic faith.

Saint Louis de Montfort

If you say the Rosary faithfully until death, I do assure you that, in spite of the gravity of your sins you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory.

Saint Louis de Montfort

The Rosary is my weapon.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Sacramentals such as scapulars, relics, icons, medals, holy water, blessed salt, etc., seem to have lost their luster. They are relegated to the top shelf of the rarely used closet. They are seen as remnants of a bygone era. Yet, it is these very same blessed items that Satan fears. It is these same blessed items that can strengthen your will and remit venial sin.

Whosoever dies clothed in this Scapular shall not suffer eternal fire.

Our Lady to Saint Simon Stock

The episcopal blessing, the aspersion of holy water, every sacramental unction, prayer in a dedicated church, and the like, effect the remission of venial sins, implicitly or explicitly.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

These relics do you receive with a joy equivalent to the distress with which their custodians have parted with them and sent them to you. Let none dispute; let none doubt. Here you have that unconquered athlete. These bones, which shared in the conflict with the blessed soul, are known to the Lord. These bones He will crown, together with that soul, in the righteous day of His requital.

Saint Basil the Great

Those who adhere to and promote traditional Catholic moral values are ridiculed as unenlightened and old fashioned. Gospel truths are no longer tolerated and in some cases are becoming illegal. Satan's attack on the traditional biblical concept of marriage and family is so strong because he knows that if he can redefine marriage and break up the family, he

can destroy society. True progress can only be achieved in accord with God's will.

Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family.

Saint Angela Merici

The collapse of morality involves the collapse of societies.

Blessed Pope John Paul II

Naturally, the crisis of the family presents a great challenge for the Church, as it places in question conjugal fidelity and, more in general, the values on which society is based.

Pope Benedict XVI

Charity is preached at the expense of truth, as if you could separate one from the other. Love of neighbor has been replaced by acceptance of neighbor, as if the highest good is tolerance. Love of self is seen as dogmatic, but love of God is optional. Reverence and piety have been replaced with the informal and the ordinary. Scandal and dissent dissuade some from proclaiming what is true; yet, truth never changes. Some unwittingly follow the false path laid out for them by the enemy, when they should be heading down the path of truth.

The soul which desires to benefit itself in the spiritual life ought always to proceed the contrary way to what the enemy proceeds.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

No one in the world can alter truth. All we can do is seek it and live it.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe

While those who give scandal are guilty of the spiritual equivalent of murder, those who take scandal, who allow scandals to destroy faith, are guilty of spiritual suicide.

Saint Francis de Sales

Often humility, zeal for souls, courage, fear of the Lord, etc., are seen as quaint virtues from a bygone era instead of gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Yet these very virtues are essential if you are to imitate Jesus and spread His Gospel to the world. All Christians, but especially those who embrace their call as a spiritual warrior, need access to each of God's gifts and grace.

To practice humility, it is absolutely necessary for us at times to suffer wounds in this spiritual warfare.

Saint Francis de Sales

No sacrifice is more acceptable to God than zeal for souls.

Pope Saint Gregory the Great

Great courage is required in spiritual warfare.

Saint Teresa of Avila

Do not fear the devil. By fearing the Lord you will gain mastery of the devil, for there is no power in him.

The Shepherd of Hermas

Suffering and sanctity seem useless in this post-modern world of instant fixes and impatient attitudes. Lost in the shuffle is the suffering the Lord endured for the sake of humanity and the manner He endured it. His suffering opened the flood gates of grace and mercy. Your suffering in union with His allows you to drink in that grace and mercy. Embrace the cross. Hold it high as you enter into battle.

We must suffer to go to God. We forget this truth far too often.

Saint Madeleine Sophia Barat

It is suffering, more than anything else, which clears the way for the grace which transforms human souls. The Church feels the need to have recourse to the value of human sufferings for the salvation of the world.

Blessed Pope John Paul II

The highest gift and grace of the Holy Spirit that Christ concedes to His friends is to conquer one's self, and out of love of Christ, to endure willingly sufferings, injuries, insults and discomfort.
Saint Francis of Assisi

All of these reasons have left the door open for Satan. An open door is an invitation for the thief of souls. A closed door is a simple, yet effective, defense against him. A closed door allows you to remain filled with God's grace and to respond in accord with His will. A closed door will keep grace in your soul and the demons outside.

Truth, when it is acknowledged and accepted, closes the door. The simple truth is Satan is real. He wants to kill your immortal soul. There is no reason for fear, no reason to feign ignorance, no reason to deny what is true. Bring the truth to the light. The battle is won, the victory is the Lord's and you have been delivered from the power of darkness. Do not be discouraged, help is on the way. You are not alone. Many Catholics remain faithful to the Church and its sacred traditions. Many are willing to engage their baptismal obligations and to do battle against sin and evil. Now is the time. You are the soldier.

What are the Church's greatest needs at the present time? Don't be surprised at Our answer and don't write it off as simplistic or even superstitious: one of the Church's greatest needs is to be defended against the evil we call the devil.

Pope Paul VI

We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the Anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel.

Karol Cardinal Wojtyla

Chapter 3

Temptation



Watch and pray, so that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Mark 14:38

For he has rescued us from the power of darkness, and he has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in him was created everything in Heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers. All things were created through him and in him. And he is before all, and in him all things continue.

Colossians 1:13-17

Spiritual warfare typically takes the form of temptation, obsession or possession. Temptation is when the devil entices you to sin, either externally through the excitement of the sense or internally through the corruption of the intellect or will. Obsession is when the devil attacks the body from the outside. Possession is when the devil takes control of a soul. All three have as their goal the hindrance or prevention of a spiritual good.

Temptation is the most common weapon in Satan's arsenal; all are subject to and familiar with it. Obsession can be divided into several subcategories (aggression, oppression, infestation, etc.). For the purposes of this book, these various categories will be lumped together and termed harassment. True possession, the third category, requires an exorcism. It is very rare and beyond the scope of this book.

I do not say there are no people possessed by the devil, for I know there are, but what I say is they are few.

Saint Anthony Mary Claret

Temptation is an enticement to sin. Sin, in the strictest sense, is not a tool of Satan. Rather, sin is the result of giving into temptation, whatever the origin of the temptation might be. Temptation is the one shared reality of all humans. It was not intended by God, but it is permitted by Him. Temptation, it must be noted, is not synonymous with sin. As long as there is not the consent of the will, temptation is not sinful.

In all temptation the mechanism is the same; there are three components. First is the suggestion of some evil. This is followed by an imagined pleasure. The conclusion of the temptation process is the decision of the will. If the decision is made to consent to the temptation, the temptation has led to sin. If the decision is made to reject the temptation, the temptation has not led to sin. It is important to keep this process in mind. There is no sin in the initial temptation. Temptation can lead to sin though, and sin leads you away from God. So at all times, be attentive, but never anxious.

The first impulse does not belong to us, but the second does.

Saint Bernadette Soubirous

Man is tempted in three ways, by the world, the flesh and the devil. The flesh aims for control over your body, the world aims for control over your body and spirit, the devil aims for control over your body, spirit and soul. The flesh tempts from the inside, the world from the outside and the devil from a combination of the two. The temptations of the world and the flesh are expressed in this verse from Scripture.

For all that is in the world is the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and the arrogance of a life which is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1 John 2:16

The desire of the flesh, desire of the eyes and a pride of life are the main temptations of the world and the flesh. These temptations were the same three that Adam and Eve succumbed to and that Jesus triumphed over. In both cases, who was doing the tempting? It is the third source of temptation, the devil who is the prime tempter, then and now.

Peter Kreeft, in *Back to Virtue*, says, “It is said that there are three sources of evil, the world, the flesh and the devil; but the world and the flesh would be innocent were it not for the devil.” This is not to pardon the flesh and the world, because both are guilty. It is to clarify that the real enemy is Satan.

Saint Thomas Aquinas states in the *Summa Theologica* that Satan is the “occasional and indirect cause of all of our sins” via his conquering of Adam, but Satan is not “the direct cause of all the sins of men.” Sometimes your sin is just that, your sin. Sometimes there is more to it. A brief look at how the world and the flesh tempts is next, followed by a much more extensive look at how the devil tempts.

Our own evil inclinations are far more dangerous than any external enemies.

Saint Ambrose

See, you blind ones, you who are deceived by your enemies; by the flesh, the world, and the devil; because it is sweet to the body to commit sin and it is bitter for it to serve God.

Saint Francis of Assisi

Not every sin is committed by the instigation of the devil, but certain sins are from our own free will and the bodily corruption.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Temptations of the Flesh

For I do not do the good that I want to do. But instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do.

Romans 7:19

Temptations of the flesh are fueled by concupiscence, the propensity of human nature to sin. Concupiscence is a lingering effect of original sin. You are, in a very real way, at war with your own flesh. You are tempted by the flesh in two ways; it incites you toward evil and entices you away from good. An unholy curiosity and inordinate attachments are formed to earthly pleasures and treasures. Selfish pursuit of pleasure numbs your desire to seek God's love.

Disordered sexuality is a signal to Satan that he is winning a particular battle. Indulging in the legitimate pleasures of the flesh can keep the devil at bay. Engaging in activities that pervert the legitimate pleasures of the flesh opens the door to Satan's master plan regarding sexuality. He wants to separate fertility from sexuality and sexuality from fertility. He is bidding you to become, in effect, your own god and is using God's gift, your human sexuality, to bring about his plan. (Unfortunately, he has been highly successful in the implementation of this plan. Witness the high incidence of contraception, abortion, homosexuality, in-vitro fertilization, cloning and infant stem cell research.)

Curiosity about the ways of the world, especially through the eyes, tends to excite the flesh nature. Custody of the eyes helps to maintain a chaste heart and a pure soul. Allowing the flesh to indulge and immerse your eyes in the stuff of the world leads to unhealthy attachments and allegiances. The flesh tempts you to materialism, greed, excess and self-indulgence. Doing this furthers Satan's goal of grounding you in his kingdom as opposed to God's. Lack of attachment allows room for God to take root in your life.

Until a man is purged of his attachments he will not be equipped to possess God.

Saint John of the Cross

The devil rules over lovers of temporal goods belonging

to this temporal world, not because he is lord of this world but because he is ruler of those covetous desires by which we long for all that passes away.

Saint Augustine

Self-love is the mirror of death. Satan is never happier than when you emulate him by engaging in his sin of pride. The flesh tempts you to power, prestige, position and self-reliance. It tempts you to use your fleshy appetite in earthly ways. This leads to gluttony, lust, envy, etc. The longer you gaze into the mirror of self-reliance and are captivated by the image you see, the less you are able to see God. The less you see God, the more you are subject to Satan's conniving ways.

You are not to stand idly by and let your flesh take over. You must resist the temptation to allow the flesh to control you. You must mortify the flesh and subjugate it to your will. You are to render the fleshy form, the sinful self, the "old man," dead. You are to die to self and live for Christ in word and deed. You need to nail the corrupt and carnal old man to the cross so that you can become a "new man" in Christ Jesus (cf. Colossians 3:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20). You are to seek purity, not perversity. You need to leave your evil inclinations behind. As a spiritual warrior you live by dying. You do so by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus. You must pray for this grace. Pray hard. Pray long. Pray often.

Self-love is the cause of all our miseries, and renders us unworthy to receive the favors of divine love.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Not the goods of the world, but God. Not riches, but God. Not honors, but God. Not distinction, but God. Not dignities, but God. Not advancement, but God. God always and in everything.

Saint Vincent Pallotti

Holy Purity, the queen of virtues, the angelic virtue, is a jewel so precious that those who possess it become like the angels of God in Heaven, even though clothed in mortal flesh.

Saint John Bosco

Temptations of the World

And the world is passing away, with its desire. But whoever does the will of God abides unto eternity.

1 John 2:17

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

1 Corinthians 3:19a

The temptation of the world is the collective and cumulative poor example of Christian living proffered by occupants of what Saint Augustine terms the “City of Man” (as opposed to the “City of God”). Satan, the leader of this city, inspires the non-believers, the ignorant, the lukewarm, the immoral, the sin promoters, etc., to export his doctrine to all corners of the world. Like a deadly virus, left unchecked and untreated, many deaths will follow.

The temptation of the world is often a temptation toward passive evil rather than a temptation toward active evil. It is more often a sin of omission rather than a sin of commission, at least at the start. The City of Man is tumbling down the slippery slope of worldly temptation one compromise, one tolerance, one look the other way at a time. Political, corporate, ecclesial, and familial leaders are leaping into dangerous and rising waters. Like lemmings, many are following them off the cliff. You must resist the urge to blindly follow, to blame others and to lose hope. Though you’re temporarily a citizen in the City of Man, your permanent residence is destined to be in the City of God.

As citizens of two cities, we are to strive to discharge our earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit.

Gaudium et Spes

Truly, matters in the world are in a bad state; but if you and I begin in earnest to reform ourselves, a really good beginning will have been made.

Saint Peter of Alcantara

We must never lose sight of the fact that we are either

saints or outcasts, that we must live for Heaven or Hell; there is no middle path in this. You either belong wholly to the world or wholly to God. If people would do for God what they do for the world, what a great number of Christians would go to Heaven.

Saint John Vianney

My previous book, *Christ-Centered Selling*, details the struggle of trying to work in the world without being seduced by it. Early on it stresses that the Gospel message is not a “Sunday only” experience; its message is to be lived all day, every day. “The challenge is to not only live Christ’s message on Sunday morning, but Monday morning and Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening and Thursday afternoon, and Friday and Saturday, too. You are to live in this world without being seduced by it. You are, as Christ points out, to live in the world, but not belong to it.”

As a spiritual warrior you cannot lead a compartmentalized life: work here, family here, faith there and fun there. God’s business should be your business. Faith is not a whim; faith is to be the foundation that undergirds all you do. Inconsistency is an open door through which Satan easily gains entrance. Inconsistency is a weakness of the will that strengthens Satan’s grip.

Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday, and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs? Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death?

Pope Benedict XVI

In our time more than ever before, the chief strength of the wicked lies in the cowardice and weakness of good men and all the strength of Satan’s reign is due to the easy-going weakness of Catholics.

Pope Saint Pius X

Let us look about God's business and He will look after ours.

Saint Vincent de Paul

Living the way of the world breeds uncertainty, uncertainty breeds fear and fear breeds judgment. The world is unrelenting, it has no mercy; it offers no future, no hope. Its end is death. Those who have been seduced by the world live in fear — a fear of their own mortality. That is why the most prideful spend so much time focused on external appearances and erecting monuments to themselves.

The truth is the world hates Christians. It always has; it always will. It may not be polite, politically correct or prudent to speak so bluntly, but it is, nonetheless, true. The standards that the world proffers are in radical opposition to the truths of Christianity. Do not accept the world's standards. Carefully choose your role models. Surround yourself with those who aspire to the City of God, the city of faith, hope and love. Do not surround yourself with worldly companions, let alone evil ones. Don't be foolish when it comes to choosing your friends; be a fool for Christ. The world's wisdom and ways is foolishness to those who follow Christ.

The world hates Christians; so why give your love to it instead of following Christ who loves you and has redeemed you?

Saint Cyprian of Carthage

Fly from bad companions as from the bite of a poisonous snake. If you keep good companions, I can assure you that you will one day rejoice with the blessed in Heaven; whereas if you keep with those who are bad, you will become bad yourself, and you will be in danger of losing your soul.

Saint John Bosco

According to Sacred Scripture, and especially the New Testament, the dominion and the influence of Satan and of the other evil spirits embraces all the world. The action of Satan consists primarily in tempting men to evil, by influencing their imaginations and higher

faculties, to turn them away from the law of God.
Blessed Pope John Paul II

When the devil is called the god of this world, it is not because he made it but because we serve him with our worldliness.
Saint Thomas Aquinas

Consider seriously how quickly people change, and how little trust is to be had in them; and hold fast to God, Who does not change.
Saint Teresa of Avila

Temptations of the Devil

And when all the temptation was completed, the devil withdrew from him, until a time.
Luke 4:13

Satan is an opportunistic parasite. Once you are baptized, he can only live on in you to the degree that you allow him to do so. Outside of your consent, he has no authority to take up residence in your soul. Your will is the gate through which Satan passes, but only by your consent. Mortal sin is your consent; it is your “No,” to God and your “Yes,” to Satan. While Satan is permitted to tempt and harass you when you are in God’s grace, he is never permitted to override your free will. He cannot capture your soul without your consent, whether implied or deliberate.

A demon spirit cannot reign by itself if it is not united with the free will of man.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

We have been born again in holy baptism and have been released from slavery and become free so that the enemy cannot take any action against us unless we of our own will obey him.
Saint Symeon the New Theologian

It is important to remember you can avoid many

problems by simply subjugating your mind to the mind of God, your will to God's will. When you freely say "Yes," to God, you are saying "No," to Satan. While this might increase the level of temptation or harassment, at least initially, as long as your will does not give consent to the evil spirit, you remain free of demon parasites. By the grace of God, Satan can do you no harm.

Our minds govern both soul and body beneath the protection of sacred armor, for the mind which subjects itself to God obtains the armor of salvation.

Saint Paulinus of Nola

Satan is sly and resourceful in his attempts to destroy you. He seeks out your weakness to tempt you exactly there. He is an expert in observational intelligence. He observes your tendencies and tempts you accordingly. He'll either incite you to do evil, encourage you to do more of a particular good — at the expense of another — or he'll manipulate you into perceiving a good where there is none. Whether tempting you to pride or vanity or passion, he is a deceiver. First he deceives, then he ensnares.

Like a skillful general about to besiege a fortified city, he seeks out the weak points in the object of his assault and tempts a man in those things in which he sees him to be weak.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Our infernal enemy observes with malignant attention what the stamp of our conscience is, whether it is delicate or relaxed. If delicate, he tries to render it more susceptible still; he endeavors to reduce it to the last degree of trouble and anguish, so as to stop our progress in the spiritual life.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

In his efforts at deception, Satan is exceedingly clever. He is happy to exploit the temptations of the world and the flesh to make you more susceptible to his temptations. The effect of the combination of these three temptations working

together is not simply cumulative; it is exponential. Because of concupiscence the impact that the three sources of temptation have collectively is greater than their harm individually. All of this is further fueled by Satan's absolute hatred for God and all those who love God.

It [the temptation of the devil] is stronger than those of the world and the flesh, because the devils reinforce themselves with these other two enemies, the world and the flesh, in order to wage a rugged war.

Saint John of the Cross

No one hates God more than the devil, so he puts hatred for God in action by destroying us, by making us commit sin.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

For example, imagine a person who is allergic to bee stings. This predisposition is not, nor was it meant to be, the natural state of his humanity. It is, perhaps, a genetic weakness that has been transmitted from one generation to the next. Think of this inherited weakness as similar to the idea of concupiscence.

The allergic reaction caused by one or two bee stings would be cause for medication and monitoring of the situation. Properly and promptly treated this would not usually be a life-threatening situation. Yet, even though treatment has been successfully applied, a residue remains. This residue can cause future bee stings to have a cumulative and, therefore, a more serious reaction. Of course, left untreated, even a singular bee might be deadly.

The actual sins we have committed, whether mortal or venial, even though forgiven have intensified our base desire, our weakness, our inconsistency and our evil tendencies and have left a sediment of evil in our soul.

Saint Louis de Montfort

Satan doesn't sting like a regular bee; he stings as killer bees would, in a relentless and swarming pattern. He doesn't just throw darts; he throws fiery darts. He also likes to

set traps. These traps, seemingly harmless at first, lure you ever deeper into darkness. Like a gentle rolling hillside that leads to a cliff, Satan's traps are deceiving. What feels like a good may actually be a trap, one that Satan has set. He sets his traps with the bait of temptation to be bad, bored, busy or boastful. Don't take his bait and you'll avoid his traps.

The devil can bark, but he cannot bite, unless a person lets himself be bitten.

Saint Augustine

The devil only tempts souls that wish to abandon sin and those in a state of grace. The others belong to him: he has no need to tempt them.

Saint John Vianney

The devil's snare does not catch you unless you are first caught by the devil's bait.

Saint Ambrose

Bad

Most beloved, do not choose to sojourn in the passion which is a temptation to you, as if something new might happen to you. But instead, commune in the Passion of Christ, and be glad that, when his glory will be revealed, you too may rejoice with exultation.

1 Peter 4:12-13

Satan's first temptation tactic is to try and make you bad. He is not overt. Rather, he is usually sly and subtle. He deviously suggests to you those sins to which you already have an inclination toward or a desire for (he's been watching and taking notes). He starts with the lesser sins, perhaps even with something that isn't even sinful. He is patient. As you respond favorably to his promptings, at least from his perspective, he will increase the pleasure associated with the temptation. After he has progressed from a toehold into a foothold, he will increase the pressure of the temptation, hoping to take it from an occasional act to an ongoing one. Bad is deadly for you as a spiritual warrior. It compromises your life and the lives of those

around you.

Instead of tempting you to an adulterous affair, he'll initially tempt you with a seemingly harmless flirtation. Instead of tempting you to embezzle money, he'll initially tempt you to cheat on your income taxes. Instead of tempting you to abuse your position of authority, he'll initially tempt you to bend the rules just a little bit.

After your initial misstep, he'll return later to further induce you to greater missteps. A doubt is raised where none had been before, a truth is shaded or a lie is defended. Perhaps it is an act of omission, a virtue is not protected, a word of truth is not spoken or a good deed is left undone. Slowly, but surely, you're on your way to being bad. Once you start to justify, excuse and rationalize your behavior, you are well on your way to separating yourself from a life of grace. Don't let him bait you into being bad, not even a little. Remember, your free will lives between the temptation and the sin. Focus your mind on Christ.

Occupy your mind with good thoughts or the enemy will fill them with bad ones. Unoccupied, they cannot be.
Saint Thomas More

Only the free will is capable of good or evil. But when the will sighs under the trial of the tempter and does not will what is presented to it, there is not only no fault but there is virtue.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

The soul possesses freedom; and though the devil can make suggestions, he doesn't have the power to compel you against your will.
Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

Bored

For we have heard that there are some among you who act disruptively, not working at all, but eagerly meddling.
2 Thessalonians 3:11

But what if he can't make you bad? Well, then he'll gladly make you bored. Boredom is disordered. Whether it falls under the heading of apathy, sloth, indifference, idleness, dreariness or lethargy the end result is a dulling of the senses and a loss of interest in the seeking of truth. This dulling of the senses often leads to sin by way of boredom. Boredom, an act of the will, comes from the inside. It is caused by a lack of action on the inside, not the outside. It is like a drug; it sets an ever increasing stimulus threshold. Boredom is deadly for a spiritual warrior because it kills the prayer life, the warrior's source of strength.

Walker Percy, a twentieth century Catholic novelist, once noted that there is no word for boredom in any pre-modern language. It was an invention of necessity, born of the postmodern search for a meaningful, happy life apart from God. The truth is that there can be no meaningful, happy life apart from God. Jesus is infinitely fulfilling; He is the answer to every fruitless search for meaning and purpose. When you give in to boredom, you move away from God. When you give in to boredom, you give Satan a foundation upon which to begin building his evil empire.

Everyone is ready to run after the latest novelty. But as for Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, He is deserted and forsaken.

Saint John Vianney

How often does boredom lead to sin in your life? The maxim, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop" is true because when you are idle the will is not directed or focused. If you don't direct your will, someone else will do it for you. As boredom is not a natural state, your body seeks to rid itself of it, almost at any cost. Through the abuse of drugs, alcohol, sex, sports, shopping, work, etc., endless amounts of time and money are spent trying to fill the God-shaped hole inside with anything and everything but God. Stop seeking temporal solutions to an eternal equation. Do not let boredom be a contributor toward evil; let it be a catalyst toward good. Allow the restlessness you feel to motivate you toward seeking God's will.

Be ever engaged, so that whenever the devil calls he

may find you occupied.
Saint Jerome

Idleness is Hell's fishhook for catching souls.
Saint Ignatius of Loyola

The principal trap the devil sets for the young people is idleness. This is the fatal source of all evil.
Saint John Bosco

Busy

Now Martha was continually busying herself with serving. And she stood still and said: "Lord, is it not a concern to you that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, speak to her, so that she may help me." And the Lord responded by saying to her: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled over many things. And yet only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the best portion, and it shall not be taken away from her."
Luke 10:40-42

But suppose he can't make you bad or bored? He'll then try and make you busy. Did you ever wonder why, with all the modern time saving devices available, there seems to be less time, not more? Schedules are more complicated, commitments more numerous and time more precious. And too often it is God who is omitted from the calendar. Busyness is deadly for you as a spiritual warrior because it distracts you from what is most important, God and His will for you. You come to know Him in the stillness, not in the craziness.

Have you ever had the experience of doing a great work for God? After you were done, did you ever wonder how you accomplished so much in such a short amount of time? It's like the story of the loaves and fishes; God multiplies your efforts and seemingly time itself when you serve Him. When you are in His will your every act is a prayer and somehow prayer seems to multiply time. Conversely, it seems that a lack of prayer creates a lack of time. Feelings of being rushed, always trying to meet deadlines and a sense of constant anxiety can often be traced back to a weak or infrequent prayer life.

If you have too much to do, with God's help you will find time to do it all.
Saint Peter Canisius

The great thing about this temptation, again, from Satan's perspective, is this is the easiest way to tempt good people. Many instances of doing more can be for a good end, but if the focus on God is lost in the busyness, Satan has a grip. If God's will for you is lost in the busyness, then the good that is done is tainted. And busy doesn't always imply physical activity. If Satan can keep your mind filled with a constant barrage of thoughts and ideas and noise he can prevent you from hearing God's voice. If your soul feels disturbed because you are not doing something, if you are anxious when you're not busy, if you are more focused on doing and not being, then Satan has helped you to choose the lesser portion. If Satan gets you to set aside charity in the name of expediency and efficiency, what have you really accomplished?

Be very careful of your health. The devil employs a trick to deceive good souls. He incites them to do more than they are able in order that they may no longer be able to do anything.
Saint Vincent de Paul

While I am busy with little things, I am not required to do greater things.
Saint Francis de Sales

We can do no great things; only small things with great love.
Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Boastful

But now you exult in your arrogance. All such exultation is wicked.
James 4:16

Satan is not particular about what method he uses to tempt you or ensnare you; he takes what he can get, any way

he can get it. He is flexible and patient in his approach, always keeping focused on his goal, separation of your soul from God's grace. If bad, bored or busy doesn't work, then he'll try to make you boastful, perhaps even about your ability to resist him. He'll leverage your goodness, attempting to turn it into pride, bringing you from grace into sin.

As pride is Satan's sin, he knows his way around flattery. As intelligent and watchful as Satan is, he knows how best to strike at you with the poisonous venom of pride. He doesn't come at you directly and forcefully; he comes at you indirectly and almost imperceptibly. Stroking your ego, he gets you to pay homage to your sinful self. Stoking the flames of self-importance, he diverts your attention from God's will. Satan attempts to use your strengths against you, puffing you up, enticing you to go it alone. One step at a time, he encourages you down the path of conceit.

God, who is Creator to Satan who is creature, is infinitely wiser than Satan. God uses your weaknesses (of which there are many) to bring about His plan for you; He knows that you tend toward your weaknesses (cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9). God, because He is God, is able to use your faults and weakness for your good and His glory. It is in your weakness, your littleness, that you place your total trust in Him. He, in turn, will shield you from the deceit of the evil one. Trust in God, not in yourself.

He who trusts in himself is lost. He who trusts in God can do all things.

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Pride is denial of God and an invention of the devil.

Saint John Climacus

God will not permit him [the evil one] to deceive a soul which has no trust whatever in itself, and is strengthened in faith.

Saint Teresa of Avila

Satan's temptations are real, powerful and compelling. Yet, God's grace is more real, more powerful, more compelling. Never take Satan's temptations lightly and never use Satan's

temptation as a pretext to do evil. Jesus' death and resurrection has brought you out of the darkness and into the light. Seek the Father's will in all things and you'll never give in to the temptation to be bad, bored, busy, boastful or any other strategy Satan may employ.

The devil comes and tempts all the servants of God. Those who are strong in the faith resist him and he goes away from them, because he cannot find entrance. So then he goes to the empty and, finding an entrance, he goes into them. In this way he does in them whatever he pleases and makes them his slaves.

The Shepherd of Hermas

Water that does not flow and comes to a halt in holes becomes stagnant and filled with impurities. In the same way, the body that is worn down by prolonged idleness produces and fuels the fire of covetousness and illicit pleasure.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

In all the efforts by which we try to please God, the demons dig three pits. First they try to obstruct our good undertaking, second they try to make our work not according to God. If that doesn't work, they then steal noiselessly to the soul and flatter us.

Saint John Climacus

First they [the demons] are to tempt them to covet riches, as Satan himself is accustomed to do in most cases, that they more easily obtain the empty honors of this world and then come to overweening pride. The first step then, will be riches, the second; honor, the third; pride, from these three steps the one leads to all other vices.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

You must ask God to give you power to fight against the sin of pride which is your greatest enemy — the root of all that is evil, and the failure of all that is good.

Saint Vincent de Paul

Chapter 4

Harassment



And lest the greatness of the revelations should extol me, there was given to me a prodding in my flesh: an Angel of Satan, who struck me repeatedly.
2 Corinthians 12:7

One of the sufferings a faithful follower of Christ will undergo is harassment. Though Satan would rather tempt you to be bad, bored, busy or boastful, he will alternately harass, distract and annoy you. (Temptation and harassment are not mutually exclusive. He may at times tempt and harass you simultaneously.) Did you ever wake up grouchy, with no peace in your soul? Did you ever pick a fight with your spouse for seemingly no reason? Did you ever pester or annoy or aggravate someone else just to do it? Ever been sitting minding your own business when suddenly an evil thought pops into your head? Perhaps for no reason you begin to doubt the goodness of others. Or maybe you're suddenly overwhelmed by a sense of depression? Did you ever react to someone totally out of character? Perhaps you ridiculed them or picked on them. Later on, when you reflected about some of these incidents, you probably felt terrible. Did you ever wonder why you did what you did?

Certainly, there could be legitimate physiological and physical reasons for all the above. Some can even be freely chosen. But there can also be hidden spiritual influences at

work. The evil one revels in sneak attacks and in not playing by the rules. He'll gladly kick you when you're down. He'll exploit whatever weakness or predisposition to sin he recognizes in you, especially when you are seeking to do what is right and holy and true, for he find such things repugnant.

It is characteristic of the evil spirit to harass with anxiety, afflict with sadness and raise obstacles backed by fallacious reasoning to disturb the soul. The enemy of human nature, roaming about, looks in turn at all our virtues, theological, cardinal and moral; and where he finds us weakest and most in need for our eternal salvation, there he attacks us and aims at taking us.
Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Everything honorable, everything holy, they [the demons] find repugnant.
Pope Saint Leo the Great

Satan's harassments typically take the form of intimidation or retaliation. Intimidation is an attack that occurs just before you are about to serve the Lord in some capacity. The timing of these attacks is designed to instill in you a sense of fear or anxiety or to distract you with a sensual pleasure so as to prevent you from proceeding as planned. Retaliation is an attack that occurs just after you serve the Lord in some capacity. The timing of the attack is designed to discourage you from the continuance of your good work.

Often I am asked, "If I do this spiritual warfare stuff, won't it make Satan mad? Won't it open me up to further attacks?" Satan would certainly appreciate you thinking that; fear of him makes his job that much easier. Like any bully, Satan's means of maintaining his image is through intimidation. Your response of fear gives him the power and permission to continue.

Do you trust more in God's love or Satan's fear? If you trust more in Satan's fear, you trust more in Satan. Fear of Satan is faith in Satan. Trust in God instead. If God permits an increase of temptations and harassments, then who are you to say no? Satan is already causing as much harm as is permitted. More than that, every harm of Satan directed toward you can

be used for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. In that light, Satan's temptations can be seen as an extension of God's mercy and His omnipotence. Even evil is used to bring about God's will if you cooperate with Him. Fear not; God is in control.

If the devil could do everything he wanted, there would not remain a single living human being on the earth.
Saint Augustine

If this Lord is powerful as I see that He is and I know that He is and if the devils are His slaves, what evil can they do to me since I am a servant of this Lord and King? Why shouldn't I have the fortitude to engage in combat with all of Hell?
Saint Teresa of Avila

You must turn to God when you are assaulted by the enemy; you must hope in Him and expect everything that is good from Him. Don't voluntarily dwell on what the enemy presents to you.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

As a spiritual warrior, expect to be subject to both intimidation and retaliation. Expect it, but don't fear it. Just before (intimidation) or just after (retaliation) you do a work for the Lord, you might notice an increase in the intensity and frequency of temptations. Satan is hoping to ensnare you in sin.

Much like your Guardian Angel can have a positive influence upon you, the fallen angels can have a negative influence. Whether these harassments are mental, emotional, physical, social or spiritual, they are equally real and equally able to get underneath your spiritual armor if you provide an opening.

Mentally

The evil one attempts to afflict you with the spirits of past sins, especially those of the flesh. Suddenly, you'll be assaulted with unpleasant memories, words or images from the past in an attempt to prove your present unworthiness. Spirits of games, mockery, confusion, guilt, shame and doubt are active

here. He may even inspire those who “knew you when” to remind of your past sin and make claims of hypocrisy against you.

Equally, he’ll try and cause an internal dissonance regarding your prior bad acts and your present desire to serve the Lord, convincing you that somehow they are incompatible. He’ll try to make you doubt the reality of God’s mercy and the forgiveness of your sins, especially as you, by God’s grace, increase in sanctity.

Have courage, then, and conquer by your generosity the shame that the devil magnifies so much in your mind.
Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Calm the tormenting anxieties of your heart, and banish from your imagination all those distressing thoughts and sentiments which are all suggested by Satan in order to make you act badly.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

As soon as worldly people see that you wish to follow a devout life they aim a thousand darts of mockery and even detraction at you. The most malicious of them will slander your conversion as hypocrisy, bigotry, and trickery. They will say that the world has turned against you and being rebuffed by it you have turned to God. Your friends will raise a host of objections which they consider very prudent and charitable. They will tell you that you will become depressed, lose your reputation in the world, be unbearable, and grow old before your time, and that your affairs at home will suffer. You must live in the world like one in the world. They will say that you can save your soul without going to such extremes, and a thousand similar trivialities.
Saint Francis de Sales

Emotionally

The evil spirit might attempt to afflict you with spirits of agitation or aggravation. He will either try to excite, exaggerate or deaden your emotions. All at once you find yourself irritable and angry for seemingly no reason. Or you

may find yourself flat and devoid of feeling. Spirits of pride, false humility, anger, envy and overwhelm are active here.

Spirits of hypercriticism or hypersensitivity may attack you negatively impacting your relationships with others. He'll play with your emotions and push your buttons to the point of distress and distraction, agitation or apathy. He'll use either end of the spectrum to try and lure you into the sins of despair or presumption. Mired in either, he can lay a trap for your soul.

Sometimes the devil inspires souls with an inordinate zeal for a certain virtue or some special pious exercise, so that they will be motivated by their passion to practice it more and more. This temptation is more to pride rather than virtue. Sometimes, on the other hand, the devil coaches souls to do less than they can really do. This temptation is more to false humility. In both cases, the devil's goal is to make the soul discouraged when the virtue is found to be unattainable; and to be wearied and disgusted if his efforts are below his abilities. The soul ends up neglecting everything. It is necessary to overcome the one snare as the other.

Saint Catherine of Bologna

Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden light, so we should not allow the enemy to creep into our hearts and rob us of this peace. The devil who is well aware of this makes every effort to have us lose our peace. We should be on the alert for every slightest sign of agitation.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Physically

You may notice an unusual sense of weariness or lethargy. This may be the result of a draining spirit or a spirit of fatigue attacking you. You may also notice other manifestations such as nausea, headaches and other unexplained aches and pains. Here the spirits of mockery, infirmity, depression, fatigue, overwhelm and pain are active.

Evil spirits can mimic symptoms of disease and cause actual pain. They can even imitate symptoms of a disease or disorder that has been cured in an attempt to bring you to question and doubt your faith and hope in the Lord. The pain

may be fleeting or long lasting, intense or dull, internal or external. Rarely, but it can happen, you may even feel an actual physical presence oppressing you. Whether it is experienced as heaviness on the chest or throat, the smell of smoke, an overwhelming stench or some other manifestation, evil spirits can cause physical sensations.

Let us be clear about this; the fiend must be taken into account. Anyone beginning this work of contemplation is liable to feel, smell, taste or hear some surprising effects concocted by this enemy in one or another of his senses. So do not be surprised if it happens.

Anonymous, *The Cloud of Unknowing*

It is possible that in certain cases the evil spirit goes so far as to exercise his influence not only on material things, but even on man's body.

Blessed Pope John Paul II

Socially

The evil spirits might inspire others to petty attacks against your name, your work or your ministry. The evil spirits will even use those closest to you to do their bidding, so as to add salt to the wound. Spirits of division, retaliation, jealousy, suspicion, mockery, lies and judgment are active here. He revels in dividing marriages, destroying friendships and disrupting work environments.

Anything or anybody that he can use to disturb your peace, he will use. Often, those used did not consent to be Satan's mouthpiece, nor were they necessarily aware of the implications of the words or actions. They unwittingly became Satan's cohorts. Even knowing this, the sting is no less painful. Let humility be your response to any and all provocations and the sting of the words spoken will be minimal.

The demons either tempt us themselves or incite against us people who have no fear of God. They tempt us themselves when we go into seclusion from men, as the Lord was tempted in the wilderness. They tempt through people when we have dealings with them, again as they tempted the Lord through the Pharisees.

But if we keep our eyes fixed on our example, that is, the Lord, we shall repulse them alike in each case.
Saint Maximus the Confessor

Has someone vilified you? Do not hate him; hate the vilification and the demon which induced him to utter it. If you hate the vilifier, you have hated a man and so broken the commandment. What he has done in word you do in action. To keep the commandment, show the qualities of love and help him in any way you can, so that you may deliver him from evil.
Saint Maximus the Confessor

Let all act as they like; you are to act as I want you to. If someone causes you trouble, think what good you can do for the person who caused you to suffer. Do not pour out your feelings. Be silent when you are rebuked.
Our Lord to Saint Faustina Kowalska

Spiritually

A decreased desire to pray often goes hand-in-hand with an increase in mental fatigue, emotional anguish or physical lethargy. In such a state confusion or arrogance about spiritual truths can easily lead to doubt and despair. This is tied to spirits of disobedience, pride and false religion. These spirits, three of Satan's favorites, are strong in their desire to undermine your very foundation of faith. If they can interrupt your desire to pray, they can interrupt your life of grace. This is Satan's goal, to cause you to commit spiritual suicide. As prayer is vital to a healthy relationship with God and is the antidote to the poisonous attacks of the evil one, any attack on your desire to pray is a definite cause for concern. Soldiering on in the name of the Lord is the best advice.

Empty out all poisons from your hearts by calling on the name of the savior.
Saint Augustine

If you encounter different kinds of struggles in your prayer, or if you experience confusing darkness of mind (this is the devil making the soul feel that her prayer is

not pleasing to God) you ought, nevertheless, never give up on account of struggles and darkness, but rather to stand firm with courage and perseverance, remembering that the devil does this to draw you away from your mother, prayer.

Saint Catherine of Siena

The more you are tempted the more you must persevere in prayer.

Blessed Angela of Foligno

The fiend selects for his most furious attacks the time when we feel most unable to pray.

Saint Nilus Sorsky

These are just a small sampling of spirits that are out there seeking to cause you harm. Despite that, there is nothing to fear. Trust in the Lord and His mercy. Give Him praise even in these circumstances of temptation and harassment. Be humble. Beg God's grace upon the situation. Pray for your enemies. Resolve to let nothing disturb your peace. When you feel like Satan is pushing you to the limit trust in Jesus with all of your heart, mind and strength.

If God is for us, who is against us?

Romans 8:31b

You say you are anxious about the future, but don't you know that the Lord is with you always and that our enemy has no power over one who has resolved to belong entirely to Jesus?

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Do not worry about me; I am in God's hands. I want to assure you that I feel His help at every step. Despite the present situation, I am happy and completely at peace. At every step I feel the power of God. Wherever I am, whatever happens to me I am in the hands of Divine Providence which watches over nations and over every individual.

Blessed Joseph Kowalski

As Satan is a coward, his acts of retaliation are often cowardly. He attacks you, or rather the image of God in you, because he knows he cannot directly hurt God. He attacks the image of God in you because of your desire to know, love and serve God. Even more cowardly, rather than retaliate against you directly, he'll often retaliate against those whom you love and are, perhaps, more vulnerable. Whether his acts of revenge target a spouse, a child, the family pet, an elderly parent, an unsuspecting friend, etc., his goal is the same, to prevent you from continuing in God's work and His grace. Be not afraid; be not surprised. Expect the evil one to do what he does, but do not fear it.

Expected darts wound us less severely.
Saint Thomas Aquinas

Show us, then, O our good master, some way in which
we may live through this most dangerous warfare
without frequent surprise.
Saint Teresa of Avila

In many ways, harassment (and temptation) from the evil one are a badge of honor, a back-handed compliment. The more temptation and harassment you face from him, the more you know you are doing God's will. Satan doesn't need to bother with those who are lukewarm; he already has them under his sway. The presence of temptation and harassment in your life is a sign of closeness to God and the means by which He can mold you to fit His most perfect will. Keep in mind, there is nothing Satan can do that God cannot use for His own glory. Temptation and harassments can even serve to bring about humility, the hallmark of every saint. By God's grace (and Satan's consternation) God doesn't allow Satan to act upon you without the seed of a greater good also present. Cooperate with God's grace and Satan's efforts will draw you closer to God.

The devil, in spite of himself, becomes, as it were, an
instrument and coefficient of holiness.
Saint John Chrysostom

Bear in mind that the more the enemy assaults you, the

closer God is to your soul. Think about, and penetrate this great and comforting truth.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

We always find that those who walked closest to Christ were those who had to bear the greatest trials.

Saint Teresa of Avila

God did not inspire your enemy with the will to harm you, but He gave him the power to do so.

Saint Claude de la Colombiere

If God causes you to suffer much, it is a sign that He has great designs for you, and that He certainly intends to make you a saint. And if you wish to become a great saint, entreat Him yourself to give you much opportunity for suffering; for there is no wood better to kindle the fire of holy love than the wood of the cross.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Chapter 5

DID IT



...so that we would not be circumvented by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his intentions.
2 Corinthians 2:11

To repeat, spiritual warfare really is this: is Satan going to kill you or are you willing to die to self? Will you surrender your life to the will of the Father or will you die clinging to the will of the evil one. Will you, with intention and purpose, die for the Lord or apart from Him?

Christ was crucified between two men, one who died with the name of Jesus on his lips and one who didn't. One "stole Heaven" because he acknowledged Jesus as God; one refused. Though both were brought to the cross because of their sins only one gave up his life for the Lord. One reached for truth and life, the other clung to sin and death.

The Lord wants you to be an intentional soldier for His Kingdom. To the degree that the self dies, the Lord can live and reign in you. To the degree that you surrender your will, the Lord can render it pure in its intention and purpose. Thus your battle becomes His battle.

Do everything for the love of God and His glory without looking at the outcome of the undertaking. Work is judged, not by its result, but by its intention.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Satan's intentions, diametrically opposed to God's, are clear and simple. He wants to extinguish your life in God. Through temptation and harassment he seeks to destroy your life of grace by any means necessary. Though evil, he is efficient. He has a plan in place to best serve his evil plot. A spiritual warrior should know Satan's plan so as to best defend against it.

In terms of harassment, the acronym DID IT can help you understand what tools Satan uses to get at you. Each letter of the words DID IT stands for a series of words related to how Satan likes to harass. Often Satan will employ a few different attributes from a few different categories to maximize his malicious intent

DID IT Division, Dissension, Discord

The most common, and typically the first of Satan's attempts, is to create division, dissension and discord. Understated, not obnoxious, is Satan's manner here. He plays to the ego, hoping it will turn a spark into a flame. He is like an opportunistic arsonist. When the fields are overgrown and dry, he strikes. He likes to start a couple of different fires at once to compound the effect.

Division is the devil's calling card and often his initial tactic. "Divide and conquer" is a phrase on the lips of every demon. Satan attempts to create division inside yourself, between you and others and between you and God. If he can create even a tiny division, he can later rip it open with one of his many crowbars, like guilt, shame or humiliation. Division is different than a separation or cleaving or pruning done by God for your own good. Division in this sense seeks to divide what is good and holy and true: the Church, marriages, families, friendships, etc.

Dissension is one of Satan's favorite games because it flows from his sin, pride. Dissension's goal is to weaken and destroy proper order. By fanning the flames of dissent, Satan can topple the strongest organizations and families quickly. Appealing to people's baser instincts, he whispers words of rebellion, false logic and inflammatory lies about others in your ears. Just enough truth is contained in the whispers to make them sound plausible. He is a master at utilizing fears, worries and anxieties as leverage.

Discord is lack of harmony, a sense of being off-balance with oneself and others. More subtle than division or dissension, it often shows itself as an uncomfortable or uncertain feeling about a spiritual good or a spiritually good relationship, for seemingly no reason. You may feel a certain agitation or anxiety, especially toward someone or something good, which disturbs your soul. When there is no legitimate basis for feeling negative toward someone or something good, don't deny that Satan might just be involved. In fact, if discord occurs without any obvious factors, especially while you are in a state of grace, it is likely from the evil one.

How unhappy we are, my children, thus to be the sport of demons? They do whatever they please with us; they suggest to us evil-speaking, calumny, hatred, vengeance: they even drive us so far as to put our neighbor to death.

Saint John Vianney

In the face of such strong attacks by the enemies of the Church of God, are we to remain inactive? Is that all we can do — complain and cry? No! Every one of us has a holy obligation to build a trench and personally hurl back the assaults of the enemy.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe

DID IT Instigate, Inflamm, Intoxicate

Another level of Satan's attacks is to instigate, inflame and intoxicate. Here Satan adds fuel to the fire, the stoking of your emotions, to ensure that the fire has abundant fuel to burn well.

Instigation is a critical tool in Satan's arsenal. Satan is the accuser; he is a liar and a murderer. He loves to whisper in people's ears. It is what he did in his first encounter with humans, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He loves to shade the truth in such a way as to start trouble where previously there was none. You can almost see him slithering from one person to the next, egging them on to increased levels of anger, hatred and violence. His forked tongue flickers with delight as his half-truths gain traction among the people of God.

Inflammation of your emotions is Satan's next step. Once he instigates he tries to arouse you to evil action. Feelings of pride, anger, envy and lust are easily manipulated by his seductive words and his subtle lies. Thoughts of rage and revenge pollute the soul. This is a dangerous time as you're heading close to the point of no return, the point at which the decision making process is hijacked by your emotions. Once the emotions take control of the will, the rational part of the soul yields to the animal part and inflamed emotion takes the lead. Though still culpable for your actions, there is little chance for resistance. That is why it is essential to deny Satan even the smallest of entry points.

Intoxication of the will leaves you with little or no restraint. If he can arouse you to the point of intoxication, most of his work is done. It may be a continuation of the inflaming process where the emotions take full control of the will or it may be a separate process altogether. Much like consuming too much alcohol in too short of a time leads to inebriation and a loss of control, emotional intoxication works the same way. Your emotions take over, courtesy of Satan's wiles and you're no longer in control of your ability to assent or decline. Highly inflamed passions do not make prudent decisions.

Do you really know the living Jesus, not from books but from being with Him in your heart? Have you heard the loving words He speaks to you? The devil may try to use the hurts of life, and sometimes our own mistakes to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you, is really cleaving to you. This is a danger for all of us. And so sad, because it is completely the opposite of what Jesus is really wanting, waiting to tell you. Not only that He loves you, but even more, He longs for you.
Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

Close your ears to the whisperings of Hell and bravely oppose its onslaughts.
Saint Clare of Assisi

DID IT Doubt, Discouragement, Despair

The next level of Satan's plan is to ratchet up the level of doubt, discouragement and despair. He started the fire, but

he wants you to take the blame for it. He started the fire, which at this point is still containable, yet he wants you to think that any effort to control and extinguish it would be futile.

Doubt whispered in your ear is one of Satan's favorite means of attack. It is a simple, yet effective means of achieving his goal of drawing souls away from God and into his web of suspicion and uncertainty. Questions run through your mind, your imagination takes off and suddenly you ascribe guilt to the innocent and fault to the blameless. Doubt is insidious in that it is not an overt attack; it is subtle toxin. Its poison is low acting, but still deadly. Doubt is an attack on the virtue of faith; it is what gripped the apostle Thomas.

Discouragement is another weapon in Satan's arsenal. Etymologically, it is a "lack of" or "away" from the "heart." Essentially, it is a lack of faith and hope. It usually involves judgment and the shifting of blame to others. Sins of vanity or pride can easily appear alongside discouragement, as can feelings of unworthiness and futility. A lack of progress in the spiritual life is common. Discouragement is an attack on the virtues of faith and hope; it is what gripped the apostle Peter.

Despair is giving in and giving up. It is Satan distorting and manipulating your reality toward achieving his goal. It is the rope with the noose on the end of it that Satan throws to those in need. Despair is a sin against the Holy Spirit, not trusting in God's infinite supply of mercy. It is a dangerous place to be; it's like being high up on a cliff with a strong wind and a weak stomach. Unchecked, despair can lead to depression and death. Despair is an attack on the virtues of faith, hope and love; it is what gripped the apostle Judas.

Do not listen or pay any attention to what the enemy suggests to you, telling you that God has rejected you, or that because of some hidden failure, God is punishing you and wants to chastise you until you eliminate those things from your soul. This is by no means true.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Just as the Lord is concerned about our salvation, so does the devil, the slayer of men, concern himself about bringing the soul of man to despair. Judas the betrayer

was faint-hearted and inexperienced in struggle, which is why the devil, seeing him in a state of despair, attacked and persuaded him to hang himself. Peter, the formidable rock, falling into great sin and experienced in struggle, did not despair and did not lose the presence of the spirit, rather he shed bitter tears from a warm heart and, seeing that, the devil fled from him as though burned by fire.

Saint Seraphim of Sarov

DID IT **Ignorance, Indifference, Isolation**

To maximize his efforts, Satan tries to inspire feelings of ignorance, indifference and isolation. He continues his assault against the senses, trying his best to dull them into submission, and you, into death. He wants you to do nothing while the flames are burning all around you.

Ignorance is one of Satan's preferred weapons for two reasons. In order for it to be effective, he doesn't have to get you to do anything, just have you remain as you are. Secondly, a lack of knowledge of God can keep you away from doing His work in your life, which is one of the primary goals of Satan's attacks. By your ignorance, you are doing Satan's work for him. If he can simply get you to grow no more in wisdom, understanding and knowledge of your faith he has claimed a small but important victory. The good side to this weapon is that it is easily repelled through the growing in knowledge and use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit received at baptism.

(The Church teaches of invincible ignorance which is distinct from the ignorance spoken of here. Invincible ignorance is when you aren't even aware that you don't know something. True invincible ignorance is not culpable, nor is it a tool of the devil.)

Indifference is related to ignorance in that it tends toward apathy, not action. It is different in that very often those who are indifferent are not ignorant about their faith, they are apathetic. Indifference kills inspiration; it stifles spiritual growth and it poisons potential. The argument could be made that if you truly knew your faith you couldn't help but be inspired and grow to God's full potential for you. That is why indifference is so deadly. When you allow indifference to reign in your life, intentionally or otherwise, Satan is enthroned as

king, at least temporarily.

Isolation is another leverage point of Satan. If he was unable to ensnare you previously, he will do his best to isolate you from community, either physically, emotionally or spiritually. As humanity is made for community, isolation is an abnormal condition. Solitude, a necessary pillar of the spiritual life, is good for the soul. Isolation, Satan's mockery of solitude, weakens the faculties of the soul. By isolating you and then surrounding you with evil, he hopes you begin to doubt your sanity and your faith. If he can get you to think you're alone in your efforts to resist him, he can often get you to give up on or at least compromise your commitment to God and His church.

These three giants of the evil one, who seem to be strong, are ignorance, forgetfulness and indifference.
Saint Mark the Ascetic

The evil spirits, because of their pride, anger and envy will attempt to turn your gaze away from God through either temptations or harassment. They seek to surround you with their temptations and harassments so that every thought and action you engage in might be in opposition to what the Lord desires for you.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

DID IT Turmoil, Terror, Torment

The least frequent, and typically the last resort of Satan's attempt at harassment, is to create turmoil, terror and torment, to set you aflame. All three represent a new level of active animosity on Satan's part, but equally they typically represent a new level of intimacy with God, hence the attacks. If God permits you the burden, He will provide you the grace to overcome or endure it.

Turmoil can be internal or external. It can manifest as illness ranging from headaches, backaches, breathing problems, etc. It can also manifest as feelings of anxiety, stress, overwhelm, etc. Externally, Satan can create turmoil at home, at work or at play. Satan will often enlist others to help him carry out his plan. Some do so willingly. More often than not, people are deceived into doing Satan's dirty work for him. He often uses those closest to you, family, friends, spouses and

children to maximize the impact of his poisonous barbs. Perhaps he “inspires” a spouse to speak a mean spirited word or a colleague at work to share a private, unflattering comment you made about the boss. Be on guard, especially when you are preparing to do a mighty work for Him. And don’t ever take it personally. Remain humble, trust in God, forgive those who were used.

Terror is an attempt to incite you to fear and panic. It is also a sign of Satan’s frustration and futility. The terror does temporarily frighten, but it is fleeting and easily overcome. Whether it occurs in the form of a nightmare or a night terror or aural harassments, such as noises in the dark, understand it is Satan’s pathetic attempt to scare you away from God. (Imagine the humiliation Satan must feel in such an advanced creature having to resort to such infantile scare tactics.) A quick way to end the fear is to bring the Blessed Mother to mind through prayer. Satan is cowardly around Mary and those who are devoted to her. He fears her.

Torment is the final category. It is the rarest form of harassment. Only a privileged few ever get to experience the pain and suffering that Satan is permitted to inflict. It is permitted by God for the purposes of His glory and the salvation of souls. It may be physical, mental or emotional, direct or indirect, temporary or ongoing. It may even seem like defeat is imminent or inevitable. The truth is that Satan is nearer defeat the more he attacks. In carrying out these torments, he has become, in effect, a spiritual bully. Much like an earthly bully, his need to resort to such measures speaks far more to his frustration and fear than to any position or power. The saints knew this and responded accordingly.

If you are harassed and afflicted with every kind of privation, temptation, and trials by the devil and his followers, raise your eyes on high, redouble your courage. The Lord is with you and there is no reason to fear.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Now the will of God manifests itself by the events He ordains or permits; let us adore His designs and submit to them with love, persuaded that all will be for our

greater good.
Saint Therese Couderc

Saint Catherine of Siena was both terrified and tormented. As a holy one of God, her humility was a source of frustration for the demons. Her humble submission to God caused the demons more suffering than they caused her.

And then after a little the terror of the demons began so that I seemed to be stupefied. They were mad with rage, as though I, a worm, had been the cause of their having had the Holy Church which they were holding so long, snatched from their hands. And so great were both the terror and the physical pain that I wanted to fly from the study into the chapel.
Saint Catherine of Siena

Saint John Vianney had numerous encounters with Satan, or “Grappin,” as he nicknamed him. Satan was permitted to physically beat and torture the Cure of Ars. Saint John Vianney gladly endured the attacks for he knew that the next day’s “catch,” the souls who would show up at confession, would be great.

At first I used to be afraid, I did not know what it was all about, but now I am happy. It is a good sign, the next day the catch is always good.
Saint John Vianney

Saint Teresa of Avila experienced visions of Satan designed to terrify her. God did not permit Satan to physically harm her, but he permitted Satan to attack her spiritually. By God’s grace, and through prayer, the great saint of Avila was able to remain at peace despite the devil’s best efforts.

I feared them so little, that the terrors, which until now oppressed me, quitted me altogether; and though I saw them occasionally, I shall speak of this by and by, I was never again afraid of them. On the contrary, they seemed to be afraid of me. I found myself endowed with a certain authority over them, given me by the Lord of

all, so that I cared no more for them than for flies.
Saint Teresa of Avila

Satan possessed a particularly personal and intense animus toward Saint Faustina Kowalska because of her love for Jesus and her zeal for souls. As Jesus' "Secretary of Mercy" she infuriated Satan with every soul she reclaimed for His kingdom by her works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

At about eleven o'clock Satan shook my bed. I awoke instantly, and I started to pray peacefully to my guardian angel.
Saint Faustina Kowalska

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina was violently assaulted by the evil one. Often, he would be beaten bloody from evening to early morn, being able to sleep for just a few minutes before he was to awake. By God's grace, he was beaten and bloodied, but never defeated.

That wicked thing beat me continuously from about ten o'clock, when I went to bed, until five o'clock in the morning. I thought it was going to be the last night of my life.
Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Saint Gemma Galgani was assaulted by Satan physically and aurally. Through it all she kept her faith, never giving in to fear or despair. Her sense of "holy indifference" in the face of the demon's assaults bears witness to her love of God.

Once more I have passed a bad night. The demon came before me as a giant of great height and kept saying to me "For you there is no more hope of salvation. You are in my hands!" I replied that God is merciful and therefore I fear nothing. Then, giving me a hard blow on the head in a rage he said "accursed be you!" He began again to strike me with a knotted rope, and wanted me to listen to him while he suggested wickedness. I said no, and he struck me even harder,

knocking my head violently against the ground.
Saint Gemma Galgani

Though terrifying, these encounters are rare and permitted by God for His greater good. So, do not fear.

There is an immense number of ways that Satan can harass you. These are some of the more common ones; the list is far from exhaustive. Know that anything that God permits, He can redeem. The very acts of harassment that seem to weaken you, God can use to strengthen you - if you unite your soul with His. Any act of harassment that God permits Satan to engage in can be used to bring about God's plan in your life and the lives of others.

God suffers the demon to rage against you that you may learn by trial the force of your strength
Saint John Chrysostom

The soul that is united with God is feared by the devil as the one who is where God Himself is.
Saint John of the Cross

They seem to me such cowards, as soon as they see that anyone despises them they have no strength left. They are enemies who can make a direct attack only upon those whom they see as giving in to them, or on servants of God whom, for their greater good God allows them to be tormented.
Saint Teresa of Avila

The more doors and windows you leave open the more access Satan has to tempt and harass you. The more fear, pain, wounds, frustration, envy, shame and anger you cling to, the more vulnerable you become. The more time you absent yourself of God's grace, the more of a claim Satan has on you. The more time you spend away from prayer and the sacraments, the harder it becomes to remain strong. The more you run to Jesus and cling to Him, the more you will be covered in His grace.

At each new occasion of combat, when my enemies provoke me, I conduct myself bravely. I turn my back on my adversaries without once looking them in the face and I run to my Jesus.

Saint Therese of Lisieux

Now, if by the grace of God Satan can't tempt you or harass you into his snare, he usually will back down and not bother you for awhile. When he returns, and rest assured he will, maintain your faith and focus on God; for God's grace, which abounds in the presence of evil, is sufficient. Pray and have confidence in God who is greater than any demon.

After you have made a decision that is pleasing to God, the devil may try to make you have second thoughts. Intensify your prayer time, meditation, and good deeds. For if Satan's temptations merely cause you to increase your efforts to grow in holiness, he'll have an incentive to leave you alone.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

There is no tribulation or temptation whose limits God has not appointed as to serve not for our destruction but for our salvation.

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Believers know that the presence of evil is always accompanied by the presence of good, by grace. Where evil grows, there the hope for good also grows. In the love that pours forth from the heart of Christ, we find hope for the future of the world.

Blessed Pope John Paul II

In my opinion there is hardly anything else that the enemy of our soul dreads more than confidence, humble confidence in God. Confidence in God is the very soul of prayer.

Servant of God Solanus Casey

My weapons are prayer and sacrifice.

Saint Bernadette Soubirous