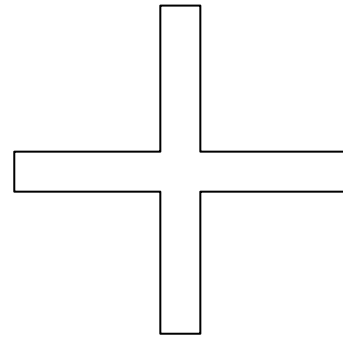


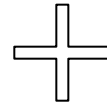
Spiritual **Weapons**



**A Basic manual
for victory in spiritual combat**

Peter Mason

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for victory in spiritual combat**

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"Resist the Devil and he will take flight" (James 4:7)

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Spiritual Weapons

Pope John Paul II, at his visit to the sanctuary of St. Michael the Archangel at Monte Gargano, Italy, in 1987, stated that "this battle against the Devil . . . is ongoing, because the Devil is alive and at this moment working in the world . . .

For this the Apostle to the Gentiles puts Christians on guard against the snares of the Devil and his many satellites, when he exhorts the inhabitants of Ephesus to clothe themselves with `the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of Devil."

Pope Paul VI once said "What are the greatest needs of the Church today? Do not let our answer surprise you as being over-simple or even superstitious and unreal: one of the greatest needs is defence from evil which is the Devil" (November 15, 1972, *Deliver Us From Evil*). In this book, the author teaches about the most important spiritual weapons that God wants us to use against the forces of evil.

We are in a war. What is at stake is the eternal salvation or loss of souls. Our enemy is strong and clever, but God is infinitely stronger and wiser. We have the mind of Christ, and we can rely on the help of God in all of our spiritual battles, no matter how fierce they may become. Learn about the spiritual weapons God has given and will give to you and use them. There is no need to be afraid: the victory is ours in Jesus Christ because in Him we are more than conquerors!

Peter Mason is a member of the Secular Franciscan Order (S.F.O.) and lives in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.

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Dedication

In memory of my departed brother
David Mason (1956-1987)
R.I.P.

T

Introduction

We live in a world at war. The daily news informs us of various military conflicts. None of these battles have escalated into World War III, but there is a global war taking place at this very moment: it is a spiritual war, a war that determines the eternal destiny of souls. It is a terrible tragedy to see the loss of human lives in war; it is an infinitely greater tragedy to witness (as God does) the eternal loss of souls in hell, where they will experience the pain of separation from God forever and endure the torments of eternal fire with evil spirits.

Some of the signs of a world-wide spiritual battle can be seen in my own city of Vancouver, B.C.: Researchers at the University of British Columbia have been "ordering" body parts of aborted babies from Vancouver abortion clinics; the Grottomaster of the Church of Satan is actively recruiting members in the Georgia Straight, a local newspaper; there are a number of psychics on television and in occult bookstores as well as the Pacific National Exhibition; occult books are being promoted in great numbers in major bookstores such as Chapters; covens of witches are spread throughout the Greater Vancouver area.

The whole area of sexuality has been distorted in our society, especially in the form of child prostitution. The spread of the grave sin of pornography on the internet is now in global proportions.

The spiritual corruption of the men and women who watch these movies is devastating. Our Lady said at Fatima that most souls go to hell because of "sins of the flesh," i.e., sexual sins. A practical way people can fight against these evils includes phoning, writing or e-mailing the Showcase channel and Rogers Cable and any other companies that are promoting pornography.

Even some children's books are being used as instruments of witchcraft and occult practices such as how to curse someone with a

spell. Other children's books talk about the positive aspects of homosexual and lesbian relationships. Pope Paul VI said "the smoke of Satan has entered the church." The smoke of Satan has also entered the school and the family home via certain books, television programs, newspapers and websites.

Organized crime is alive and well in our society, including groups such as the Hell's Angels. I once had a conversation with a member of the Hell's Angel's who was in a hospital. He said that some of the members of the motorcycle gang are indeed practicing Satanists. Illicit drugs like heroin, cocaine and marijuana are being sold on a daily basis on our streets. More and more people are dying from overdoses and lethal combinations of drugs.

Certain rock groups such as a Slayer and Marilyn Manson (the Anti-Christ superstar) extol the praises of Satan and lead countless numbers of young people into a fascination with the occult, Satanic symbols and a way of life that promotes violence, despair, hatred and death. The group Metallica plays a song about "Creeping Death" while the concert fans chant, "Die! Die! Die!" We really are witnessing a "culture of death" in our times. Behind this culture of death lies the ancient enemy of life: Satan.

Chapter 1

Know Your Enemy: Satan

When you are in a battle situation, it is of utmost importance that you know your enemy. In martial arts such as Shaolin Kung Fu great emphasis is laid upon knowing the tactics, the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy. If we know our enemy's strengths, we can better defend ourselves and avoid injury. If we know our enemy's weaknesses, we can more easily achieve final victory in the combat.

In the spiritual life, the same principle holds true: the more we know the tactics of Satan, the better we are able to defend ourselves and move into offensive tactics of our own in order to destroy his falsehoods. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a great place to start as it draws upon Scripture, Tradition and various sources of the teaching office of the Church. Paragraph Seven deals with "The Fall of the Angels:" "Behind the disobedient choice of our first parents lurks a seductive voice, opposed to God, which makes them fall into death out of envy. Scripture and the Church's Tradition see in this being a fallen angel, called `Satan,' or the `devil.' The Church teaches that Satan was at first a good angel, made by God: `The devil and the other demons were indeed created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing'" (n. 391, CCC).

The Catechism goes on to point out that the power of Satan is not infinite because he remains only a creature. Therefore he is unable to prevent the building up of God's kingdom: "Although Satan may act in the world out of hatred for God and his kingdom in Christ Jesus, and although his action may cause grave injuries - of a spiritual nature and, indirectly, even of a physical nature - to each man and to society, the action is permitted by divine providence which with strength and gentleness guides human and cosmic history. It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, but we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him' (Rom 8:28)" (n. 395 CCC).

St. Jerome said that the devil desires to keep souls prisoners but the Lord desires to set them free, and the devil leads us to do evil but the Lord leads us to do good. Clearly, the works of the devil and the works of the Lord have nothing in common. "These spirits whom we call demons," writes St. Justin Martyr, one of the early Christian apologists, "strive for nothing else than to alienate men from God their Creator, and from Christ, His first-begotten . . . they even try to trip those who rise to the contemplation of divine things, and, unless such persons are wise in their judgements and pure and passionless in their life, the demons will force them into ungodliness" (*The First Apology*).

Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan and set us free from his power, sin and death. "It was to destroy the devil's works that the Son of God revealed himself" (1 John 3:8). Jesus is the King of all nations. He is the Victor! St. Cyprian highlights the reality of the spiritual struggle we face daily: "For the rest, what else is waged daily in the world but a battle against the devil, but a struggle with continual onsets against his darts and weapons (*Morality*)?"

In another work of St. Cyprian's, *Exhortation to Martyrdom, To Fortunatus*, he describes our ancient foe: "He is an old adversary and an ancient enemy with whom we wage battle. Almost six thousand years are now being fulfilled since the devil first attacked man. All kinds of tempting and arts and plots for his overthrow has he learned by the very practice of a long time. If he finds a soldier of Christ unprepared, if untrained, if he does not find him vigilant with a solicitous and whole heart, he besets him in ignorance, he deceives him incautious, he entraps him inexperienced. But if anyone guards the precepts of the Lord, and bravely

adhering to Christ stands against the devil, he must be conquered, since Christ whom we confess is invincible."

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the master of the spiritual life and former soldier, in his classic work, "The Spiritual Exercises," outlines for us three main ways that Satan works against us:

"Consider how he 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 (n. 141).

Consider the address he makes to them, how he goads them on to lay snares for men and bind them with chains. First they are to tempt them to covet riches (as Satan himself is accustomed to do in most cases) that they may the more easily attain 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 evil one leads to all other vices" (n. 142).

Another excellent source to help us understand our enemy more is the post-conciliar document "Christian Faith and Demonology (S.C.D.W., *Les formes multiples de la superstition*, 26 June 1975). "Faith tells us that evil is `a living, spiritual being that is perverted and perverts others.' Faith is also a source of confidence, for it assures us that the devil's power must stop at boundaries set for him by God. It assures us, in addition, that while the devil is able to tempt, he cannot extort our consent. Most of all, faith opens the heart to prayer, wherein it finds its triumph and crown, for prayer wins for us the victory over evil, thanks to God's grace" (VII Conclusion).

As the Catechism states so clearly, "This dramatic situation of `the whole world [which] is in the power of the evil one' (1 John 5:19) makes man's life a battle: `The whole of man's history has been the story of our combat with the powers of evil, stretching, so our Lord tells us, from the very dawn of history until the last day. Finding himself in the midst of the battlefield man has to struggle to do what is right, and it is at great cost to himself, and aided by God's grace, that he succeeds in achieving his own inner integrity'" (n. 409, CCC).

Pope Paul VI made the following declaration about the devil: "What are the greatest needs of the Church today? Do not let our answer surprise you as being over-simple or even superstitious and unreal: one of the greatest needs is defence from evil which is the devil" (November 15, 1972, *Deliver Us From Evil*.) In the same address, he also said: "We know that this dark and destructive being really exists and is still active; he is the sophisticated perverter of man's moral equipoise, the malicious seducer who knows how to penetrate us . . . It would be very important to return to a study of Catholic teaching on the Devil and the influence he is able to

wield, but nowadays little attention is paid to it."

Saint Maximilian Kolbe once said that "modern times are dominated by Satan and will be more so in the future." "Consider that the devil does not sleep," says St. Angela Merici, "but seeks our ruin in a thousand ways." St. John Bosco was always aware of the need for spiritual alertness: "First tell the Devil to rest, and then I'll rest too."

In 1987 Pope John Paul II echoed Paul VI's teaching on the Devil: "The evil that exists, the disorder that lives in society, the incoherence of man, the interior breakdown of which mankind is victim is not only the result of original sin, but also the effects of the dark and nefarious actions of Satan, that destroyer of the moral equilibrium of humanity, whom St. Paul did not hesitate to call 'the god of this world'" (2 Cor 4:3), (1987 *address at Monte Gargano*).

We are indeed in a spiritual battle. We have a strong enemy: Satan and all the other evil spirits. Charles Baudelaire, the French 19th Century poet is credited with the saying that "the Devil's cleverest wile is to convince us that he does not exist." The truth is, he does exist and he is out to get us to fall from grace, just as he choose disobedience to God for his own selfish will. God has not left us alone. He is with us in many ways. He is present in his word. He is present in the Holy Eucharist. He has provided many spiritual weapons for us to use against the forces of evil.

Now is the time for us to choose to live in the kingdom of light and battle against the kingdom of darkness. G.K. Chesterton once wrote: "The Christian way is to believe there is a positive evil somewhere and fight it; for then everything else will be really jolly and pleasant . . . Roses will be twice as red if you believe in the Devil. Skies will be twice as blue if you believe in the Devil." Who do you say the Devil is? Do you believe in him, or have you been led astray by certain modern thinkers who dismiss him as an ancient myth?

Jesus wants you to choose him and reject the Devil. During the Easter vigil we renew our Baptismal promises and reject Satan, sin and all evil. There is no middle ground. We are either for Christ or against him. God has called us by our baptism to be his

adopted children. By our confirmation we have become soldiers for Christ. The time has come to enter into the battle and take up all the weapons of light that the Lord provides us with.

"I saw Satan fall from the sky like lightning"

(L uke 10:18)

Chapter 2 Four Basic Weapons

Before we consider the great variety of weapons available to us, it is important to begin with the basics, the attitude we must have before engaging in spiritual combat with the devil. We need to remember that, in addition to our enemy Satan, we also have two others: the world and the flesh.

The "world" does not mean the people of our planet, rather it refers to an attitude of hostility towards the kingdom of God. The "flesh" does not mean our physical bodies, but an attitude of rebellion against God's reign in our lives, body and soul.

Dom Lorenzo Scupoli, in his book "The Spiritual Combat," lists four weapons without which it is impossible to gain the victory in this spiritual combat:

1. Distrust of self
2. Confidence in God
3. Proper use of body and mind
4. Prayer

Scupoli says, "Now that you know what Christian perfection is and that, in order to attain it, you must resolve on a perpetual war with yourself, begin by providing yourself with four weapons without which it is impossible to gain the victory in this spiritual combat" (p. 7, The Spiritual Combat).

1. Distrust of self

We must not trust in our own strength because, apart from Christ, we can do nothing. Unaided by God's grace, we are no match for Satan. St. Alphonsus Liguori said that "he who trusts in himself is lost." We must have a continual attitude of trusting in God's power, not our own.

2. Confidence in God

"Jesus, I trust in you," is the beautiful and powerful short prayer that Jesus taught Blessed Faustina Kowalska to pray and place on the image of Divine Mercy. "Confidence" literally means "with faith" (con - fide). We can have total confidence in God because God is all-powerful and faithful. His strength is infinitely greater than all the forces of evil combined.

3. Proper use of body and mind

This weapon is really a call to obey God's will in how we were created. We are to glorify God in our bodies and with our minds. We should put good things in both in order to be healthy both physically and spiritually.

4. Prayer

Prayer is a conversation with God. It is remaining in a loving relationship with our Beloved Father, Savior and Spirit of love. We must pray if we are to advance in the spiritual life and engage in spiritual warfare. The power of prayer is greater than any nuclear weapon because it draws down upon us the power of God.

These four basic weapons form a foundation for all of the other weapons. If we neglect these four, we will never have spiritual victory and we will be no match for the forces of evil. We should never forget these preliminary weapons. We should memorize them and call them to mind on a regular basis as a form of examination of our spiritual growth.

The fundamental virtue of the spiritual life is humility: knowing the truth of who we are in relation to God. We must know that, apart from God, we *are* nothing, we *have* nothing, and we *can do* nothing. A priest-friend of mine, Fr. Guglielmo Lauriola, O.F.M., told me that Padre Pio had some short, but potent advice for him as he was leaving San Giovanni Rotondo for mission work: "Remember, you are nothing."

When we truly believe that, apart from God, we are absolutely nothing, God will be able to act through us in mighty ways, shining His glorious light through us in the darkness of this world. This is the wisdom of the saints. Now that we have considered some of the foundations of effective spiritual warfare, we are ready to learn about more of the powerful weapons that God gives to us in our spiritual battles

Chapter 3

The Sword of the Spirit

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). The most powerful weapon we have is the word of God. Jesus is our Master, and the greatest example of how to fight spiritual battles. Jesus fought Satan in the desert with the word of God. Every temptation Satan presented to Jesus was refuted by Jesus quoting God's word. Jesus also prayed and fasted during his time in the wilderness.

God's word is living and active. It is a two-edged sword that we can use in our struggles with evil. We should have a Bible and be familiar with it, reading and meditating upon its divine words every day. Scripture warns us to be alert because the devil is always at work: "Stay sober and alert. Your opponent the devil is prowling like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Jesus illustrated for us the importance of receiving God's word and allowing it to produce good fruit in us through his parable of the sower: "The seed on good ground are those who hear the word in a spirit of openness, retain it, and bear fruit through perseverance" (Luke 8:15).

Always carry the sword of the spirit with you in your heart. It is also very helpful to carry with you a small bible in your pocket. I have found it useful in praying with others because we can read God's word and draw light and strength from it. The sword of the spirit is a powerful weapon for both defense and offense against evil. Use it frequently, use it well, and use it with great reverence. It is a living sword which pierces the hearts and souls of those who hear it.

The Catechism teaches us the uniqueness of Sacred Scripture: "The Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God's Word and Christ's Body.

"In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, but as what it really is, the word of God' (1 Thes. 2:13). In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them" (n.103-104).

The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council (*Dei Verbum*) reminds us of the importance of *prayer* when reading God's word: "Let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together."

Pope John Paul II proclaims that "all Christians must refer always and everywhere to Scripture for all their choices, becoming like children before it.

They should seek in it the most effective remedy against all their weaknesses and not dare take a step without being illumined by the divine rays of those words."

In Ephesians chapter 6 we find a good summary of defensive armor against the devil: "Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. Our battle is not against human forces but against the principalities and powers, the rulers of this world of darkness, the evil spirits in regions above.

"You must put on the armor of God if you are to resist on the evil day; do all that your duty requires, and hold your ground. Stand fast, with the truth as the belt around your waist, justice as your breastplate, and zeal to propagate the gospel of peace as your footgear. In all circumstances hold faith up before you as your shield; it will help you extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, the word of God"(Eph 6:10-17).

Finally, St. Paul emphasizes the important role of God's word in his letter to Timothy: "All Scripture is inspired of God and is useful for teaching - for reproof, correction, and training in holiness so that the man of God may be fully competent and equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Jesus quoted Scripture to Satan in the desert, but Satan also used Scripture in his temptations of Christ. He misused and twisted God's word, while Jesus corrected his false interpretation of it. We also can misuse God's word if we are not careful and use it to promote our own agenda and not God's will. We must always submit our interpretation of Scripture to the authority of the Church and never place ourselves above the proper authority that God has established. We are not fundamentalists. Scripture must be read and understood in the light of Tradition and the Magisterium or teaching office of the Church.

The Church highlights the importance of reading the word of God by granting a partial indulgence to the Christian faithful who read sacred scripture with the veneration due God's word and as a form of spiritual reading. The indulgence will be a plenary one when such reading is done for at least one-half hour (no. 50, Indulged Grant).

If you would like a good guide in reading the Bible, read the Word Among Us, which follows the daily Mass readings and contains solid articles that will help you grow in faith, hope and love. You can subscribe by calling 1-800-775-WORD. Let God's word remain in your mind, in your heart and on your lips. Use this two-edged sword in all your spiritual battles and you will never lose.

Chapter 4 Prayer and spiritual gifts

Prayer is a powerful weapon which goes hand in hand with the sword of the spirit, God's word. Prayer is what keeps us united with the Lord. It is the means of drawing strength from God. Without prayer, our spiritual lives would dry up and we would bear no good fruit in our lives.

Scripture reminds us of the centrality of prayer: "At every opportunity pray in the Spirit, using prayers and petitions of every sort. Pray constantly and attentively for all in the holy company. Pray for me that God may put his word on my lips, that I may courageously make known the mystery of the gospel - that mystery for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may have the courage to proclaim it as I ought" (Eph 6:18-20).

The Catechism teaches us beautifully about the importance of persevering in prayer: "*It is always possible to pray*: The time of the Christian is that of the risen Christ who is with us always, no matter what tempests may arise. Our time is in the hands of God:

"It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or sitting in your shop . . . while buying or selling . . . or even while cooking" (St. John Chrysostom).

"*Prayer is a vital necessity*. Proof from the contrary is no less convincing: if we do not allow the Spirit to lead us, we fall back into the slavery of sin. Nothing is equal to prayer; for what is impossible it makes possible, what is difficult, easy . . . For it is impossible, utterly impossible, for the man who prays eagerly and invokes God ceaselessly ever to sin" (St. Alphonsus Liguori).

"Prayer and *Christian life* are *inseparable*, for they concern the same love and the same renunciation, proceeding from love; He 'prays without ceasing' who unites prayer to works and good works to prayer (Origen)" (n.2743-2745 CCC).

With prayer we can obtain all things and win every spiritual battle that we are faced with. Pray always. Pray with perseverance. Pray

with love. One of the most well-known quotes from Padre Pio is "pray, hope and don't worry."

Using the name of Jesus in prayer and spiritual warfare is very important, as St. Irenaeus points out: "Through the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, Satan is cast out from men, and wherever anyone shall call upon Him, invoking Him, of those who believe in Him and do His will, He comes and stands close by, accomplishing the petitions of those who invoke Him with a pure heart" (*Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*).

In Evening Prayer, Week IV of the Liturgy of the Hours there is a wonderful prayer for spiritual warfare:

"Lord, God of strength, you gave your Son victory over death. Direct your Church's fight against evil in the world. Clothe us with the weapons of light and unite us under the one banner of love, that we may receive our eternal reward after the battle of earthly life." This prayer reminds us that we are not in this spiritual battle on our own: we are united with each other under the banner of love.

The power of prayer can be seen in the example of Saint Faustina Kowalka. One day she found herself taken by the Lord to the bedside of a dying elderly man who was suffering greatly. A large amount of demons were around him, as well as his family. When Blessed Faustina started praying, the evil spirits left and were hissing and uttering threats at her. The man's soul was at peace and trusting in God. Then she found herself back in her own room. (cf. 1798 Diary of Blessed Sister M. Faustina Kowalska).

We should be open to all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Another word for the gifts of the Holy Spirit is "charisms". The Church teaches us to receive and use these precious gifts with love: "Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms" (CCC, 800).

In spiritual warfare, the gift of discernment of spirits and the gift of tongues are especially important. "Discerning of spirits," writes Fr. Peter Coughlin, the Chair of Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services of Canada (anglophone), "is a most necessary gift given to the Church, and the Christian who exercises the gift supernaturally perceives something that is taking place in the spirit world, as Jesus would have discerned it. To discern, one must recognize what force is at work. Is it the Holy Spirit, the evil spirit, or the human spirit? To know the Lord, to know the enemy and to know yourself (and others) makes the process of discernment of spirits an easy one. Some examples of discernment found in the Scriptures are: Micaiah and the lying spirit (1 Kg 22:19-23), Jesus and the demoniac (Mk 5:1-20), and Paul and the fortune teller (Acts 16:16-18)" (*Understanding the Charismatic Gifts*, p. 65).

Sherry Weddell, in her book "The Catholic Spiritual Gifts Inventory (Third Edition), writes: "Discernment of spirits is the ability to immediately and intuitively `grasp' the spiritual source of certain behavior or ideas or the nature of a spiritual presence in people, places, or things. Exercising ordinary discernment is usually a process involving extended prayer, the gathering and contemplation of facts, and the consultation of others. A Christian with a charism of discernment of spirits usually `knows what she [or he] knows' very quickly and may not be able to explain how she knows it. He or she may recognize a demonic or divine presence immediately upon first encountering the person or place that houses it"(p. 27).

The gift of tongues is a prayer language and a means of growing in union with God. Tongues can also be a form of prayer for deliverance from evil for others or oneself. If you have received the gift of praying in tongues, you will find it a very effective weapon against evil spirits. When the Holy Spirit prays through you in tongues, you are allowing him to intercede through you.

Taking a Life in the Spirit Seminar or a similar experience is often the best way to yield to the reception of this charismatic gift. Ask the Lord to baptize you in His Holy Spirit and fill you with His power that you already received in your own Baptism and Confirmation and give you the gift of tongues. Let go of any fear you may have of looking or sounding foolish before others. Remember, we are called to be fools for Christ!

Fr. Peter Coughlin provides us with a short but excellent explanation of the gift of tongues: "The prayer language given to a believer by the Holy Spirit but it has never been learned and is not known by the speaker. It is a love-language between the individual and the Lord in which the Spirit within expresses the prayer of praise, petition or deliverance. It is the ability to pray when we no longer know the words to say as we praise or intercede" (*Ibid.*, p. 9).

We should also be open to the gift of prophecy as a spiritual weapon as well as words of knowledge from the Lord. St. Irenaeus, in his work *Against the Heresies* (c.175-195), writes about the importance of prophecy for the church: "They are truly unfortunate who, realizing there are false prophets, take this as a pretext for expelling the grace of prophecy from the Church." Fr. Peter Coughlin gives us a short description of the gift of prophecy: "The speaking forth of the mind and heart of God, to encourage, exhort, comfort, build up or strengthen. It is the appropriate Word of God being communicated to people at this particular time in this particular set of circumstances" (*Ibid.*).

We should not limit God to what He desires to do through us. If we are open vessels in His hands, He will pour out many wonderful gifts through us to build up His Body, the Church. Pray this special prayer that Our Lady taught Fr. Gobbi: "Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Your well-beloved spouse."

Words of knowledge are also very special gifts the Lord gives us when no other means are available to accomplish God's purposes in certain situations. As Fr. Coughlin points out, a word of knowledge is "a revelation of a word or information for a person or a situation that could not have been known by any natural means. It could be a revelation that reveals the secret thoughts or intent of a person, a word of healing or freedom being accomplished by the Lord, or simply God's diagnosis of a problem" (Ibid., p. 8).

We must, as scripture says, "pray always," i.e., we must strive to live a life where our spirits are always immersed in the love and presence of God. We should read the lives of the saints for inspiration and examples of how to pray, especially St. Therese of the Child Jesus, Blessed Padre Pio, Saint Faustina Kowalska, and others. We should say to Jesus, as his disciples once said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The greatest vocal prayer we can pray is the Our Father. This is the prayer that Jesus Himself taught us. Pray it from your heart and ponder the meaning of each phrase. I believe the second greatest is the Hail Mary. This beautiful prayer also comes partially from God's word. The Archangel Gabriel greeted our Lady with "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you!" The Rosary contains both these prayers, which is one of the reasons why the Rosary is such a beautiful and effective prayer.

The word "pray" comes from an old English word meaning "please." When we pray we are simply entering into a holy dialogue with the Living God, who remains an Eternal Mystery which we can only plunge ourselves into and allow ourselves to be consumed by the fire of His Love. Let yourself become a burning flame of Love, fanned by the flames of merciful Love pouring forth from the open Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. God loves us and wants us to pray, not for His good, but for our good. As St. Alphonsus Ligouri once said, "He who prays will be saved. He who does not pray will be damned."

I wrote the following prayer as a response to the universal call to holiness. God wants us all to be holy. Pray it every day and the Lord Jesus will help you to grow in holiness

Prayer for Sanctity

Lord Jesus, fill me with the burning merciful love of Your Sacred Heart and the power of the Holy Spirit, that I may be holy and

arrive at complete sanctity. May I live in peace and joy as I follow You, doing our Father's will with simplicity. May I be docile, diligent and self-disciplined to root out all my imperfections with Your grace. May I always follow your example, and boldly proclaim the Gospel with zeal for the salvation of souls as a messenger of merciful love. Amen.

Chapter 5 Confession and Communion

Sacraments are grace-filled encounters with Christ. All of the sacraments are important in the spiritual life, but Confession and Holy Communion are especially powerful in assisting us in the spiritual battles we all face. Confession sets us free from our sins, brings spiritual healing, and an increase of grace, the life of God, in our lives. Holy Communion is our spiritual food: the Body and Blood of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

St. Anthony of Padua called Confession the gate of heaven, through which penitents kiss the feet of the Divine Mercy. The devil hates Confession because it sets souls free from his power and from the guilt of sin. A good spiritual practice is to go to the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, such as on the first Saturday of the month.

Whenever St. John Vianney experienced more severe attacks from the devil (e.g., his bed shaking violently, his curtains on fire, etc.) he knew that he would have a "big fish", i.e, a big sinner come to him for confession the next day. It was the Devil's way of showing his anger at the priest and his hatred for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Another priest, who passed away recently, was a friend of our family and had some amazing spiritual battles in his parish of Holy Name of Mary in Bella Coola, B.C. I am speaking of Fr. Desire Potanko. I drove Fr. Potanko to his parish one summer. On the way a large stone was thrown from a passing truck and smashed our windshield. Then a terrible storm broke out and the lug nuts fell off the truck and one of our wheels fell off just before a series of steep cliffs! At that point, he lit up a cigar and looked at me and said,

"I think the Devil is trying to get us."

Fr. Potanko told me that one time he entered his confessional in the church and then he saw his prayer book being lifted up and thumping down in a violent manner. He sensed the presence of the Devil and started to pray and the book stayed in its place again. He took it as a sign that the evil spirits were angry about him hearing confessions.

In 1983 I went to confession after neglecting it for twelve years! I was a little afraid of going because I didn't know what to say exactly and I thought the priest would be upset with me for being such a great sinner. I had a wonderful experience in confession and the priest was very kind and loving. I felt a wonderful sense of freedom and new life. I felt as though I was floating as I was walking home, because of the joy of being forgiven and united in love with the Lord! One of the reasons Satan hates confession is that it frees us from his grasp. As long as we remain in serious sin, we are really living in the kingdom of darkness. When we repent of our sins and experience God's mercy in the sacrament of confession, we are cleansed spiritually and live in the kingdom of light.

Speaking of Holy Communion, St. Anthony of Padua said that we are filled with every good and our temptations are overcome. Satan also fears Holy Communion because it is Jesus Himself coming into our souls to free us from sin and strengthen our union

of love with Him. Holy Communion is the greatest of all the sacraments because it is God Himself coming to us in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

St. Ignatius of Antioch describes the power of the Eucharist in spiritual warfare in his Letter to the Ephesians: "Try to gather together more frequently to celebrate God's Eucharist and to praise Him. For when you meet with frequency, Satan's powers are overthrown and his destructiveness is undone by the unanimity of your faith. There is nothing better than peace, by which all strife in Heaven and earth is done away."

Frequent Communion will help us to do good, avoid evil and live as dedicated Christians. We should receive Communion with great love and fervor. Every Sunday we are blessed to be able to receive our Lord in the Eucharist. Some may be able to attend daily Mass as well. Priests are blessed to be able to celebrate Holy Mass every day and be nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ.

If we are serious about spiritual warfare, we will take the sacraments seriously, especially the sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. The Mass is the greatest and most powerful prayer on earth. It is the very sacrifice of Christ, renewed in an unbloody manner on the altar.

St. Francis de Sales called the Mass the sun of the spiritual exercises and the center of religion. All of our activity should be directed towards the Eucharist and should flow from the Eucharist as a fount of grace and mercy. "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," writes Rev. Randall Paine, ORC, "is the supreme terror of hell . . . And of course, the Mass is potent because the Victim offered is the Flesh and Blood of Our Lord, both gifts of Mary to our salvation" (*His Time is Short: The Devil and His Agenda*, p. 55). In addition to receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, we will gain great spiritual benefit through Eucharistic adoration.

"The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship," writes Pope John Paul II, "Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease" (*Dominicae cenae*, 3). Love Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Adore Him. Prostrate yourself before Him. Tell him your troubles and ask Him for healing. He is truly present and desires to touch and bless us all. Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar!

Mother Teresa of Calcutta prayed this prayer daily after Holy Communion with her sisters. It would be a beautiful prayer for you to pray at Mass as well:

Dear Jesus,

Help us to spread Your fragrance everywhere we go. Flood our souls with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess our whole being, so utterly, that our lives may only be a radiance of Yours. Shine through us, and be so in us, that every soul we come in contact with may feel your presence in our soul. Let them look up and see no longer us but only Jesus! Stay with us, and then we shall begin to shine as You shine; so to shine as to be a light to others; the light, O Jesus will be all from you, none of it will be ours; it will be you, shining on others through us. Let us thus praise You in the way You love best by shining on those around us. Let us preach You without preaching, not by words but by our example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what we do, the evident fullness of the love our hearts bear to you. Amen.

We are indeed called to shine the light of Jesus in the darkness of this world; a darkness caused by the world's rejection of Christ, our own sinful passions, and the Prince of Darkness, Lucifer. As Scripture says, the light overcomes the darkness (1 Pt 2:9), so we need not be afraid of the dark because we have the Light of Life within us, the Spirit of Truth that proceeds from the Father and the

Son, given to sanctify, heal, inspire and guide us during our journey to our homeland in Heaven. We also receive the Bread of Life, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus, which is our spiritual food and drink.

Chapter 6

Fasting

Fasting is a powerful weapon against demons. Jesus highlighted this fact when his disciples approached him and asked him why they were unable to cast out a demon from a possessed boy. Jesus told them, "this kind does not leave but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:18). St. Athanasius, in the fourth century, said that fasting "cures diseases; it dries up all morbid discharges of the body. It repels devils and drives out unclean thoughts. It renders the spirit more lucid and purifies the heart. It sanctifies the body and transports man to God's throne. Fasting is a powerful force and leads to great spiritual triumphs."

The Jews traditionally fasted twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. The early Church changed the days to Wednesdays and Fridays as Christian fast days. Friday was chosen because that was the day that Jesus suffered and died for us. An old tradition holds that Wednesday was the day during Holy Week when Judas arranged with the Pharisees to betray Jesus for a sum of money. Wednesday, then, is an opportunity to fast in a spirit of love and reparation towards Our Lord.

Whenever St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, wished at all costs to obtain some divine favour, he would fast for several days on end. "I then obtained from the good God," he tells us, "everything I sought."

In the reported apparitions of Our Lady at Medjugorje, the following statements are attributed to Mary: "I would like people to pray with me these days in the greatest number possible. Also I would like them to fast strictly on Wednesdays and Fridays . . . Let prayer and fasting blossom in your hearts. The best fast is on bread and water. Through fasting and prayer, one can stop wars, one can suspend the laws of nature." Fasting will transform your spiritual life in a wonderful way and empower you to fight evil.

Pope Paul VI refers to fasting in the final section of his talk during a General Audience on November 15, 1972: "To the other question: what defense, what remedy is there against the action of the Devil, the answer is easier, even if it remains difficult to carry

out. We could say: everything that defends us from sin shelters us for that very reason from the invisible enemy.

"Grace is the decisive defense. Innocence takes on the aspect of a fortress. Everyone remembers how often apostolic teaching symbolized, in the armour of a soldier, the virtues that can make the Christian invulnerable. The Christian must be militant; he must be vigilant and strong; and he must sometimes have recourse to some special ascetic exercises to stave off certain diabolical attacks. Jesus teaches this, indicating `prayer and fasting' as the remedy. The Apostle suggests the main line to follow: `Resist evil and conquer it with good (Rom 12:21)." (*Deliver Us from Evil*).

Jesus fasted for forty days and overcame Satan's temptations. As the Catechism states, "Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfils Israel's vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God's servant, totally obedient to the divine will. In this, Jesus is the devil's conqueror: he `binds the strong man' (Mk 3:27) to take back his plunder. Jesus' victory over the tempter in the desert anticipates victory at the Passion, the supreme act of obedience of his filial love for the Father" (n. 539, CCC).

Jesus overcame the tempter *for us*. He can sympathize with our weaknesses because he was tested in every way that we are, yet he never sinned (cf. Heb 4:15). During the forty days of Lent the Church unites herself every year to the mystery of Jesus' experience in the desert (Cf. n. 540, CCC). Jesus teaches us the value of fasting combined with prayer and reflecting on God's word in Scripture.

In addition to fasting from food and drink, we can also fast from other things. Television, for example, is something we can fast from. There are so many programs that are either without any value or are contrary to our faith. More and more we are seeing shows that promote sexual immorality, rebellion against authority, crime and involvement in the occult. Even many cartoons feature all sorts of occult activity such as spells and curses, luring our children into something forbidden by God. Parents can no longer leave their children alone with the television set.

The Church encourages us to practice self-denial: "A partial indulgence is granted to the Christian faithful who, in a spirit of penitence, voluntarily abstain from something which is licit for and pleasing to them" (III General Grant). We should hold our appetites in check and learn to obtain mastery over our bodies and conform ourselves to the poor and suffering Christ. Fasting will give greater power to your prayers and help you to resist the Devil more easily and give you more spiritual discernment.

Chapter 7 The Rosary

The rosary is a very powerful weapon against the devil. Blessed Padre Pio viewed the rosary as "the weapon" and "scourge of the devil." The rosary is the pulpit of the Gospel. The rosary is the Gospel cast in prayer. Meditation upon the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary is at the heart of the rosary.

"Christian prayer," states the Catechism, "tries above all to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, as in *Lectio divina* or the rosary. This form of prayerful reflection is of great value, but Christian prayer should go further: to the knowledge of the love of the Lord Jesus, to union with him" (n. 2708, CCC).

In another section, the Catechism says that "the Church rightly honours the 'Blessed Virgin with special devotion' . . . the liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayer, such as the rosary, an 'epitome of the whole Gospel,' express this devotion to the Virgin Mary" (n. 971, CCC).

Tradition holds that Our Lady gave the rosary to St. Dominic in 1206 as a form of preaching the Gospel and popular prayer. Our Lady gave Blessed Alan of Rupe, who founded the first rosary confraternity in 1470, fifteen promises to those who devoutly recite the rosary. The third promise is as follows: "The rosary shall be a powerful armour against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies." The fifth promise is: "The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the rosary, shall not perish."

St. Dominic once cast out one hundred and fifty demons from a man who had blasphemed the Blessed Virgin Mary and her Rosary. St. Dominic threw his Rosary around the man's neck and the evil spirits were forced to speak the glorious of the Mother of God as they were cast out of the man.

At Fatima, Our Lady asked us to pray the rosary every day for peace in the world. An angel appeared to the three visionaries and taught them to pray the following prayer after each Mystery of the rosary: "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of hell. Lead all souls into heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy." Try to pray the rosary every day and carry one with you. It is indeed a powerful weapon that we should make use of frequently.

The Rosary is so effective in destroying the influence of evil because it is a meditative reflection on the entire life of Jesus in company with Mary. We pray the Lord's prayer and the Hail Mary with our lips, while our minds and hearts ponder, with Mary, the great mysteries of our faith and our redemption by Christ. It is a simple prayer, but it is also profound and can never be fully exhausted.

The spiritual treasures we may obtain from the Rosary are endless, because we are immersing ourselves in the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. "A plenary indulgence is granted when the rosary is recited in a church or oratory or when it is recited in a family, a religious community, or a pious association. A partial indulgence is granted for its recitation in all other circumstances" (no. 48, Indulged Grant). Do your best to pray at least five decades of the Rosary every day. If you are able, try to pray the complete Rosary, fifteen decades, every day. Pray the Rosary for peace in the world, an end to abortion, and the conversion of sinners.

The Rosary is the key to open Mary's heart. In her Immaculate Heart are treasures of love and mercy and an infinite storehouse of graces, as all graces come to us from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit through the Immaculate Heart and hands of Our Blessed Mother Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. She is the Mediatrix of all graces. Let her lead you by the hand and form you into the image of her Son. Pray, "Mary, I love you. I consecrate myself and all that I have to your Immaculate Heart. Use me as you will, to spread the Word of God and lead others to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Saviour and you as the Queen of all hearts and the Queen of peace. Mold me, Mary, into Jesus. I renounce myself, I give myself to you, my Blessed Mother. Amen."

The history of the Church clearly shows that when people gather together to pray the Rosary, amazing things happen. The battle of Lepanto in 1571 was won because the Catholic navy all prayed the Rosary and asked Our Lady for victory in what seemed like a hopeless war. Through Mary's help, they were able to win victory against the Turks who greatly outnumbered the Christian fleet. This battle marked a turning point of Moslem power in Europe.

In most of her apparitions, Mary comes to the seers holding a beautiful Rosary, praying along with them. The Rosary is so important because it draws us into the heart of the Gospel through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Just as Mary pondered God's word when it was revealed to her that she was to be the mother of the Messiah, so too she helps us to ponder God's word in our hearts and gradually transforms us into more clear images of Jesus her Son.

The Brown Scapular and the Medal of St. Benedict

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a powerful protection against the devil. Our Lady made the following promise to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251: "Whosoever dies clothed in this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire." Satan hates the Brown Scapular because it snatches souls from him. Satan wants to lead as many souls as possible to hell. Our Lady wants to lead as many souls as possible to heaven. The gift of the Brown Scapular is one way that Mary seeks to help us go to heaven.

"Just as men take pride in having others wear their livery [special uniform]," says St. Alphonsus Liguori, "so the most holy Mary is pleased when her servants wear her scapular as a mark that they have dedicated themselves to her service, and are members of the family of the Mother of God."

The brown scapular is a sign of consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a silent declaration that we are committed to living a Christian life after the perfect example of Mary. Our Blessed Mother will protect those who wear the brown scapular, not only at the hour of death, but throughout life as well.

Saint Claude de la Colombiere had a great love for Our Lady and the brown scapular: "I wanted to know if Mary really and truly interested herself in me, and in the scapular she has given me the most tangible assurance. I have only to open my eyes. She has attached her protection to this scapular: 'Whosoever dies clothed in this shall not suffer eternal fire.'"

I once read about a priest who was performing an exorcism. At one point, he ordered the evil spirit to tell him the three things he feared the most. The demon replied: "First, the Name of Jesus; second, the name of Mary; third, the Brown Scapular, which snatches so many souls who should have been damned from us."

The following is a formula of enrollment and blessing. Only Catholics may be enrolled in the Brown Scapular. Non-Catholics may wear the Scapular and will receive many graces if they do, but they must become Catholic if they wish to be enrolled in the Brown Scapular and receive the many blessings of being a member of the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel.

Ceremony of Enrollment in the Brown Scapular

Priest: Show us, O Lord, Your mercy.

Response: And grant us Your salvation.

Priest: O Lord, hear my prayer.

Response: And let my cry come to You.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

Response: And also with you.

Priest: Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind, by Your right hand sanctify + these Scapulars (this Scapular) which Your servants will devoutly wear for the love of You and of Your Mother, the Blessed Virgin of Mt. Carmel; so that, by her intercession, they may be protected from the wickedness of the enemy and persevere in Your Grace until death, You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

The priest now sprinkles the Scapular(s) with Holy Water, after which he places the Scapular on each one, saying:

Priest: Receive this blessed Scapular and ask the most Holy Virgin that, by her merits, it may be worn with no stain of sin and may protect you from all harm and bring you into everlasting life.

Response: Amen.

Priest: By the power granted to me, I admit you to a share in all the spiritual works performed, with the merciful help of Jesus Christ, by the Religious of Mount Carmel; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Response: Amen.

Priest: May Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and earth, bless + you whom He has been pleased to receive into the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. We beg her to crush the head of the ancient serpent in the hour of death, and, in the end, to obtain for you a palm and the crown of your everlasting inheritance. Through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen.

The priest now sprinkles those enrolled with Holy Water.

Join the ranks of some of the greatest saints who wore the brown scapular, including St. Louis de Montfort, and St. Therese of the Child Jesus. It will be your personal sign of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Think of the scapular also as a spiritual flak jacket that will protect you from the burning arrows of the Enemy. Our Lady wants you to wear her garment. In a number of recent reported apparitions of our Lady to certain visionaries Our Lady is reminding us the importance of wearing the Brown Scapular. Always wear your Brown Scapular. You will receive many graces, especially at the hour of death.

Religious medals are intended to increase our devotion. The custom of wearing holy medals is ancient, going back even to the times when Christians had to live in the catacombs. Some of these ancient medals are preserved in museums and are often marked with the "Chrisma", the Greek monogram of the name of Christ. Other ancient medals had portraits of the Apostles Peter and Paul, or representations of the martyrdom of certain saints. The Medal of St. Benedict is unofficially known as the "most powerful" medal of the Catholic Church. It is indeed a formidable weapon against evil, as we shall see.

St. Benedict (c 480-543), the founder of the famous Benedictine Order, is known as the father of Western Monasticism. He often used the Sign of the Cross to drive away demons and protect himself from being poisoned. His medal is one of the oldest and most highly Indulgenced medals used by the Church. Due to the great number of miracles, both physical and spiritual, attributed to this medal, it became popularly known as the "devil-chasing medal."

The front of the medal bears an image of St. Benedict standing before an altar. In his right hand is a cross, beside which are the words "Crux S. [Sancti] Patris Benedicti" ("The Cross of the Holy Father Benedict"). He had a profound veneration for the Cross of our Savior and performed many miracles through this sign of our salvation.

In his left hand is the book of the Benedictine rule. At his feet are represented a chalice and a raven, symbols of the priesthood and of hermit life. Around the edge are the words "Ejus in Obitu Nostro Praesentia Muniamur" ("At our death may we be fortified by his presence").

Below the feet of St. Benedict are the words "Ex S M Casino, MDCCCLXXX" ("From the Holy Mount of Casino, 1880"). It was in 1880 that Monte Cassino, the Great Arch-abbey of the Benedictines in Italy, was given the exclusive right to produce the medal of St. Benedict. This form of the Benedictine medal (with St. Benedict on the front), commemorates the 1400th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict, which was celebrated in 1880. The medal of St. Benedict was first approved by Benedict XIV in 1741, and further indulgences were granted by Pius IX in 1877 and by Pius X in 1907.

The back of the medal shows a cross, the sign of our redemption. On the upright bar of the cross are found the letters:

C.S.S.M.L.; and on the horizontal bar of the cross: N.D.S.M.D. These are the initial letters of the words:

Crux Sacra Sit Mihi Lux,
 Non Draco Sit Mihi Dux.
 "The Holy Cross be my light,
 not the dragon be my guide."

The four large letters in the arm of the cross, C.S.P.B., stand for: Crux Sancti Patri Benedicti, ("The Cross of the Holy Father Benedict). At the top of the cross is the word Pax, meaning "Peace", which is the purpose and final fruit of the Benedictine way of life.

Around the margin we find the letters: V.R.S.N.S.M.V.; S.M.Q.L.I.V.B. These are the initial letters of the words:

Vade Retro Satana; Nunquam Suade Mihi Vana. Sunt Mala Quae Libas; Ipse Venena Bibas.
 "Get behind me, Satan; never suggest vain thoughts to me. Evil is the cup you offer; drink the poison yourself!"

In addition to wearing the medal of St. Benedict, you can also place it in places where you know that evil spirits concentrate their efforts such as pornographic ("adult") video stores, areas where prostitution, crime and drug use are common, bars that offer "exotic" dancers and other places in your particular area. In San Francisco there are at least two parks where local Satanists meet to worship the devil.

Use this medal as a spiritual hand grenade and wage warfare against the wicked spirits. The medal, as you know, contains powerful prayers of exorcism. It is, therefore, a sort of constant prayer of exorcism where it is worn or placed. If you have children, give them one each to wear. The medal of St. Benedict offers you great spiritual protection. The following is a ritual for the blessing of St. Benedict medals:

BLESSING OF MEDALS OF ST. BENEDICT.

The medals are blessed as follows. Any priest may now give this blessing (Instr. Sept. 26, 1964).

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.
 R. Who made heaven and earth.

In the name of God the Father Almighty + who made heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them, I exorcise these medals against the power and attacks of the evil one. May all who use these medals devoutly, be blessed with health of soul and body. In the name of the Father + almighty, of His Son + + + Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the Holy + Spirit the Paraclete, and in the love of the same Lord Jesus Christ, who will come on the last day to judge the living and the dead, and the world by fire.

R. Amen.

Let us pray,

Almighty God, the boundless source of all good things, we humbly ask that, through the intercession of St. Benedict, you pour out your blessings + upon these medals. May those who use them and earnestly strive to perform good works, be blessed by you with health of soul and body, the grace of a holy life, and remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. May they also, with the help of your merciful love, strive to exercise true charity and justice toward all, so that one day they may appear sinless and holy in your sight. This we ask, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Chapter 9 Holy Water

Water is a pure and simple substance that cleanses and brings life. In almost every ancient religion its use was common as a sign of interior purification. The Greeks and Romans used the sprinkling of water as an important part of religious ceremonies. It was used on cities, fields and armies setting out for battle. Holy Water, which has a special quality to it because of the prayers of the Church, is a great weapon against the devil because of its power over him.

The Jews were instructed by the Lord, through Moses, to use water for purification of the people, the sacrifices, the sacred vessels and other items. The books of Exodus and Leviticus contain regulations regarding water. The Jews purified themselves with water

before entering the Temple. The Church imitated this practice by providing water at the doors of the church so that the faithful could wash their hands and faces in preparation for Mass. The Church took many of the details of her ritual in regard to holy water from these practices of the Mosaic law.

It is a tradition that St. Matthew recommended the use of holy water in order to attract converts from Judaism by using a rite with which they were familiar in their former faith.

Holy water derives its power from the prayers and blessing of the Church. When holy water is used with the proper intention and disposition it confers actual graces; remits venial sins; restrains the power of Satan; defends against temptations; secures temporal blessings, such as bodily health and protection against temporal evils and obtains relief for the holy souls in purgatory.

During a 23-day exorcism of a woman in Earling, Iowa in 1928, Satan displayed a great fear of holy water. Whenever he was approached with holy water he screamed: "Away, away with it, away with that abominable dirt! Oh, that burns, that scorches!"

A priest from central Canada once had a man come into his office for an appointment. Shortly after the man sat down, his face began to change into the horrible face of a demon, who said, "I'm going to kill you!" Immediately, the priest took a container of holy water and threw it on the man. The devil fled and the man was back to normal again. Never underestimate the power of holy water!

Every Catholic home should have a supply of holy water as well as a small font that can be used daily. Parents can sprinkle each bedroom in their home with holy water before going to bed. Anyone can bless themselves with it, especially when retiring for the evening.

The following prayer may be used while making the sign of the cross with holy water:

"By this holy water and by Your Precious Blood, wash away all my sins, O Lord, and console the holy souls in purgatory."

Blessed salt can also be mixed with holy water or even used on its own. Salt is a symbol for wisdom. The custom of putting salt into holy water comes from the prophet Elisha's use of salt to purify the spring waters for the miraculous cure of the poisoned water (2 Kings 2:19-22). The following prayer comes from the ritual for the blessing of holy water: "Humbly and fearfully do we pray to you, O Lord, and we ask you to look with favor on this salt and water which you created. Shine on it with the light of your kindness. Sanctify it by the dew of your love, so that, through the invocation of your holy name, wherever this water and salt is sprinkled it may turn aside every attack of the unclean spirit and dispel the terror of the poisonous serpent. And wherever we may be, make the

Holy Spirit present to us who now implore your mercy. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Holy water has many uses. When you feel tempted to sin, bless yourself with it and make the sign of the cross. Use it also whenever you suspect evil spirits are at work and at prayer meetings. You could think of yourself as the Lord's fireman called to extinguish the fires that the devil is setting in our world: the fires of sin, falsehood, corruption, hatred and all that is evil. Carry a small bottle of it with you wherever you go and douse the devil's fires. Sprinkle it on yourself as well for spiritual cleansing and protection.

Holy Water brings healing as well. St. Maximilian Kolbe had his thumb healed, which was due for amputation, by sprinkling holy water on it! God healed him because of his great faith in the power of holy water. The doctor was amazed, to say the least. When we use holy water with faith, we can see great signs and wonders and spiritual refreshment. Some people even drink holy water to receive an "interior" cleansing. Lourdes water is well known for its miraculous healing power. Don't let your home be spiritually dry: let the rivers of living water flow on you and your loved ones with God's great gift of holy water.

Chapter 10

St. Michael the Archangel Prayers

St. Michael the Archangel is the Prince and Captain of the heavenly hosts. He led the victorious battle against Lucifer and the rebellious angels and cast them into hell (Rev. 12:7-9). St. Michael is a powerfully ally in our warfare against Satan. Lucifer, in his pride, wanted to be equal with God: "I will be like unto the Most High" (Is. 14:14). St. Michael, raised the battle-cry by saying "who is like unto God?" The name Mi-cha-el, is Hebrew for "who is like unto God."

St. Lawrence Justinian spoke of the importance of St. Michael: "Although we must honor all the angels, we ought to invoke in a very special manner the glorious St. Michael as the prince of all the heavenly spirits because of his sublime dignity, his pre-eminent office, and his invincible power, which he proved in his conflict with Satan, as well as against the combined forces of hell . . . Let all acknowledge St. Michael as their protector, and be devout to him, for he cannot despise those who pray to him . . . But he guards them through life, directs them on their way, and conducts them to their eternal home."

On several occasions I have seen the power of St. Michael's intercession. Once I was with a young man I met during a pilgrimage to Denver, Colorado, for the visit of Pope John Paul II. A group of us were praying in a small room in a Catholic parish. The young man shared his feelings of despair and fear: he had been a Satanist for quite a while before his conversion.

I led the group in prayer and included the powerful prayer to St. Michael by Pope Leo XIII: "St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle..." The young man experienced a powerful deliverance from his afflictions and was filled with deep peace from the Lord.

The story behind how Pope Leo XIII composed the prayer to St. Michael is truly amazing: After celebrating Mass one day he was with the Cardinals in conference. Suddenly he fell to the floor. A doctor was called and several came at once. There was no sign of any pulse-beating, the very life seemed to have drained away from his already weakened and aged body. Suddenly he recovered and said: "What a horrible picture I was permitted to see!" He saw what was going to happen in the future, the misleading powers and the ravings of the devils against the Church in all countries. But St. Michael had appeared in the nick of time and cast Satan and his cohorts back into the abyss of hell. The Pope then composed the prayer to St. Michael, as well as a prayer for exorcism. The prayer to St. Michael was ordered to be recited throughout the entire world at the end of the Mass.

St. Francis de Sales once wrote that "veneration of St. Michael is the great remedy against despising the rights of God, against insubordination, skepticism and infidelity." The feast day of Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels, is on September 29th. The following prayers are an excellent means of calling upon St. Michael for his help in all of our spiritual battles:

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the battle, that we perish not in the fearful judgement.

St. Michael, first champion of the Kingship of Christ, pray for us. Amen.

Chaplet of St. Michael the Archangel:

This chaplet was given to a devout servant of God, Antonia D'Astonac, in an apparition by St. Michael. To all who should recite the nine salutations every day, before receiving Holy Communion, he promised that an angel of each of the nine choirs would be assigned to accompany them to the altar. He also promised continual assistance during life, and after death, and the deliverance of their souls and their relatives' souls from the pains of Purgatory.

The chaplet is said by starting with the Our Father bead nearest the central joining and leaving the last 4 beads nearest the medal

for the end. You should be able to get a chaplet from your Catholic bookstore. You may order one from St. Andrew's Book, Gift and Church Supply at 1-800-663-7161 in Vancouver, B.C.

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, Make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father . . .

First Salutation: One Our Father and three Hail Mary's in honor of the first Choir of Angels. (This is repeated for the remaining Choirs of Angels). By the intercession of St. Michael and the Celestial choir of Seraphim, may the Lord make us worthy to burn with the fire of perfect charity. Amen.

Second Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Cherubim, may the Lord vouchsafe to grant us grace to leave the ways of wickedness and run in the paths of Christian perfection. Amen.

Third Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Thrones, may the Lord infuse into our hearts a true and sincere spirit of humility. Amen.

Fourth Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Dominions, may the Lord give us grace to govern our senses and subdue our unruly passions. Amen.

Fifth Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Powers, may the Lord vouchsafe to protect our souls against the snares and temptations of the devil. Amen.

Sixth Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Virtues, may the Lord preserve us from evil, and suffer us not to fall into temptation. Amen.

Seventh Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Principalities, may God fill our souls with a true spirit of obedience. Amen.

Eighth Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Archangels, may the Lord give us perseverance in faith

and in all good works. Amen.

Ninth Salutation: By the intercession of St. Michael and the celestial Choir of Angels, may the Lord grant us to be protected by them in this mortal life and conducted hereafter to eternal glory. Amen.

At the end say 4 Our Fathers on the four large beads nearest the medal:

The first in honor of St. Michael,
 The second in honor of St. Gabriel,
 The third in honor of St. Raphael,
 The fourth in honor of your Guardian angel.

Then say the following invocation:

O glorious Prince St. Michael, chief and commander of the heavenly hosts, guardian of souls, vanquisher of rebel spirits, servant in the house of the divine King, and our admirable conductor who does shine with excellence and superhuman virtue, vouchsafe to deliver us from all evil, who turn to you with confidence, and enable us by your gracious protection to serve God more and more faithfully every day.

V. Pray for us, O Glorious St. Michael, Prince of the Church of Jesus Christ.

R. That we may be made worthy of His promises.

Prayer:

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who by an act of Goodness and a merciful desire for the salvation of all people, has appointed the most glorious Archangel St. Michael, Prince of Your Church, make us worthy, we beseech You, to be delivered by his powerful protection from all our enemies, that none of them may harass us at the hour of death, but that we may be conducted by him into the august presence of Thy Divine Majesty. This we beg through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The following exorcism prayer comes from Pope Leo XIII's *Motu Proprio*, Sept. 25, 1888 and may be used by priests or lay faithful:

"O glorious Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael the Archangel. defend us in the battle and in the fearful warfare that we are waging against the principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the evil spirits. Come to the assistance of men, whom Almighty God created immortal, making them in His own image and likeness and redeeming them at a great price from the tyranny of Satan. Fight this day the battle of the Lord with your legions of holy angels, even as of old you fought against Lucifer, the leader of the proud spirits and all his rebel angels, who were powerless to stand against you, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And that apostate angel, transformed into an angel of darkness who still creeps about the earth to encompass our ruin, was cast headlong into the abyss together with his followers. But behold, that first enemy of mankind, and a murderer from the beginning, has regained his confidence. Changing himself into an angel of light, he goes about with the whole multitude of the wicked spirits to invade the earth and blot out the Name of God and of His Christ, to plunder, to slay and to consign to eternal damnation the souls that have been destined for a crown of everlasting life. This wicked serpent, like an unclean torrent, pours into men of depraved minds and corrupt hearts the poison of his malice, the spirit of lying, impiety and blasphemy, and the deadly breath of impurity and every form of vice and iniquity.

These crafty enemies of mankind have filled to overflowing with gall and wormwood the Church, which is the Bride of the Lamb without spot; they have laid profane hands upon her most sacred treasures. Make haste, therefore, O invincible Prince, to help the people of God against the inroads of the lost spirits and grant us the victory. Amen."

In St. Michael we have a very powerful angelic friend. Our modern world is getting more and more fascinated with angels. We see them on television, movies, album covers, and so on. Sometimes there is a distortion of angels, as in John Travolta's portrayal of "Michael," which makes a mockery of St. Michael the archangel. Call upon St. Michael in your time of spiritual need and you will receive his help. His sword is swift and his aim is sure. Demons tremble and flee at his presence, for he represents the Most High God. He is holy, pure and strong with God's own power to uproot and cast into hell all those evil spirits who would dare to challenge the Majesty of Almighty God.

*S t. Michael the Archangel,
protect us!*

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Chapter 11

Joy and Laughter

Joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit when the disciples came back and reported that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name. Jesus rejoiced that God revealed His wisdom to "little children" and kept it hidden from the "learned and the clever."

The Lord wants us to be people of joy and holy laughter. Laughter can be a very healing experience. Joy and laughter together form a powerful weapon against Satan and one of his most deadly weapons: depression and low self-esteem. If we learn to rejoice and laugh, we are on the way to spiritual victory.

"Rejoice in the Lord always," the word of God tells us. When I was in Rome for the first world youth gathering, one of the speakers said joy is Jesus, Others, and You. Joy comes from putting Jesus first in our lives, then seeking to help others and finally looking after our own needs. One of my favourite songs is "The joy of the Lord is my strength." When we rejoice in God we are clothed with an incredible power: the power of salvation. This power is stronger than any depression that the world or Satan can throw our way.

"Rejoicing is the Christian response to spiritual warfare," says Fr. George Kosicki, C.S.B., "because we know we have the victory in Jesus Christ. An abiding ability to rejoice should be a characteristic of Christian communities. Rejoicing in the Lord

dispels fears and sadness brought on by Satan's efforts. Rejoicing is an expression of trust in the Lord." "So rejoice you heavens, the accuser of our brothers is cast out" (Rev. 12:10-12).

"A saint sad is a sad saint," a priest-friend of mine once told me. It is true: Jesus does not want sad saints; he wants happy ones! He wants people who will be aglow with the love, joy and peace of Christ. A little girl once said, when asked what a saint was, that saints are people who let the light through! She was referring to the saints on the stained-glass windows in her church. They literally "let the light through." That is our task: to let the light of Christ, and his joy, through our lives to shine on others.

One of Mother Theresa's favourites prayers after communion was the one that spoke of letting the light of Jesus shine through her. The light was not her own, but the light of Jesus shining on others through her union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

We must not live only in the sorrowful mysteries: we also have to live the joyful and glorious ones as well! May you rejoice in the Lord and in His love for you. I also encourage you to wear the miraculous medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You will receive many graces if you do. One of Mary's titles is "Cause of our joy." She is the cause of our joy because she brought us Jesus by cooperating with the Lord's will for her. Turn to Mary for comfort and joy and you will find it.

Be vigilant in fighting evil but never let the battle get you down. Always return to rejoice in the Lord. Draw strength from prayer, especially Holy Mass and Communion. There is no greater prayer on earth. Do little things with great love, like the Little Flower, St. Therese of the Child Jesus. Ask her to pray for you as well. She is the greatest saint of our century, as Pope John Paul II said once.

Look for opportunities to spread the joy and peace of Christ. Make use of statues of Jesus, Mary and the Saints, especially St. Joseph, the Universal Protector of the Church and terror of evil spirits. Pray the chaplet of Divine Mercy, which is a mighty weapon against evil. Buy pamphlets of the Image of Divine Mercy and spread them around. They are powerful weapons. You can order them and other Divine Mercy materials from the Canadian Divine Mercy Centre and Apostolate at 1-800-461-9254.

God desires us to be cheerful, as we can see in Proverbs 15:15: "a cheerful heart has a continual feast." Satan desires us to be sad and without hope. Please pray for all people who are involved in witchcraft or Satanic worship or any type of occult practice. Have nothing to do with psychics or horoscopes or anything connected with the occult, if you want the joy of the Lord to remain with you.

The Lord in his mercy has provided many spiritual weapons for us to use. It is up to us to receive these weapons and use them frequently. The Lord wants skilled spiritual warriors who know how to fight against the devil and win. May you grow in your knowledge and skill in the wonderful spiritual weapons that the Father of mercies has graciously given to you. Remember, as Scripture says, we are more than conquerors in Christ who loves us (Romans 8:37). Fight the good fight!

We all have our own unique vocations in this life. Not all are called to be front line spiritual warriors, but all of us are involved in this spiritual battle in one way or another. Some are called to be intercessors for priests and other

people fighting in the heat of the battle. Wherever your place is in God's plan, live in it with love, peace and joy. Do everything for Jesus with merciful love.

Conclusion

God has equipped us with a great variety of spiritual weapons we can use in our battle against the devil. I would like to propose five words we can use to keep us on track: God's will, simplicity, prayer, trust and humility. If we truly seek God's will in all things and in every circumstance, the victory will be ours. We must have an attitude of simplicity, a deep life of prayer and an abiding trust in Jesus as our Savior and ultimate defender in times of spiritual struggle. In all things God is calling us to have humility. If we are humble, God will sustain us in every situation. It is the proud that he casts down from their thrones. God exalts the humble, just as he did with the Virgin Mary. For some readers, the idea of using medals or other sacramentals may seem odd and even unscriptural. We should keep in mind that Jesus once used soil to make mud in healing a blind man. At another time a woman was healed by her faith that if she just touched his garment she would be healed. The Lord works in many ways, including through physical objects. This is not magic, but God's graces coming to use in tangible ways. Even the greatest gift Jesus gives us, his own body and blood, comes through the means of ordinary bread and wine, which is then transformed through prayers of consecration to become our spiritual food and drink.

I would like to conclude by recommending a special group of people called the Spiritual Warfare Prayer Warriors. You can join them in their daily battles against Satan by visiting <http://www.ilovejesus.com/worship/swpw/> and scrolling down to the graphic that says "Join Prayer Team." You will receive prayer requests each daily via email and you can pray for them and email a response back if you wish. You can receive teachings on holiness and evangelization as well as free Christian music downloads by subscribing to my monthly e-newsletter "I trust Jesus" at www.ItrustJesus.com/ItrustJesus.html Fight the good fight and never give up in your spiritual battles! God is with us! We have nothing to fear. May the Lord teach you to use your spiritual weapons effectively.

The following prayer is something which I wrote as I pondered the mystery of God's merciful love. I encourage you to pray it every day in order to grow in merciful love and maintain your spiritual strength in fighting against evil in the world. Without prayer we will not have the spiritual strength to resist the devil and help others out of the

spiritual chains that may be binding them. There is great joy in heaven over every sinner who repents. There is also great joy over every person afflicted by evil spirits who receives spiritual freedom.

Prayer to be an Instrument of Merciful Love

Use us, Lord Jesus, to spread Your merciful love throughout the world. May the flame of Your burning love fill our hearts and consume us entirely. May we become living flames of love and spread Your light and power in the darkness of this world. May the Holy Spirit lead us in all we do, and help us to know and do God's Will. May our Father's Kingdom come in our hearts and in the hearts of all souls. Use us to destroy the work of Satan and bring healing and hope to all Your children, especially those in most need of Your mercy. Convert sinners, Lord, through us and help us to be converted more deeply every day. Help us to pray from the heart, to fast, and to live in Your Word and spread peace everywhere. May we always live in the love of Your Sacred Heart and draw life and strength from Your Most Holy Body and Blood and experience the powerful protection of Your angels. Merciful love of Jesus, enflame our hearts. Amen

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