

Putting on the Armor of God

"**D**raw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation as the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph 6: 10-17

In our struggles against the world, the flesh and the devil, God fortifies us with the life of grace. However, a method of protection is given in Ephesians 6 that can help us resist the power of Satan and the evil culture around us. We should use this prayer in times of trial or temptation, and may do so on a daily basis. By using faith imagination we place these articles of protection upon ourselves, and ask for the security that each symbolizes. The first 5 are defensive in nature; the 6th is offensive. We can do this prayer individually or in a group, even in proxy. In reality we never take off the armor of God but we activate it by our prayer.

Belt of Truth. We imagine placing a belt of truth around our waist, and we express a desire to know the truth today and to live by it. We ask God to remove any darkness or deception that seeks to hinder our freedom.

Gospel of Peace. We imagine placing shoes of peace on our feet. Wherever we go today we wish to bring the spirit of peace and to receive the spirit of peace. Riding in a car we can pray God's peace upon the people and places we pass by.

Breastplate of Righteousness. We ask God to protect our entire body from physical harm, sickness and disease. We pray strength upon all the bodily functions. If we have some illness or disease we pray for healing according to God's plan.

Helmet of Salvation. We thank God for his saving power in our lives. We ask that all our faculties be protected from harm: eyes and ears to behold what is good and to turn from what is evil. We wish to think clearly and to make good choices with our will. We ask God to heal painful memories from the past, and to bring good memories to mind. We take care not to let our imagination wander or phantasize about the future. Emotionally we ask God to remove excessive anger, fear, guilt and depression. We choose to forgive those who have hurt us and we forgive ourselves. We ask God to fill us with faith, hope and love. We ask for key fruits of the Spirit, e.g. peace, joy, humility, self-control, perseverance.

Shield of Faith. We hold up our faith against all temptations or attacks against our body, mind, emotions and spirit. We pray protection from any curse or evil wishes made against us from whatever sources. We pray that these curses would go back to the senders.

Reflections: by Father Michael Salvagna

Sword of the Spirit. The inspired Word of God is a two edged sword that cuts through inauthentic living and deception. The Bible is a source of direction, consolation, encouragement, correction and training in holiness. We should read and quote the Bible when the world, the flesh and the devil seek to enslave us. Remember St. Paul's message, "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me." Phil 4:13