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But Nobody Ever Told Me... XXII

Tradition is surprisingly fragile. Once a link of the chain is broken, it is extremely difficult to reattach—and if it effects a second link—almost impossible. What often happens in many disciplines is that an older generation assumes that the younger generation knows how and why certain things are done. We can see this in everything from sports practices to cooking recipes.

The Enemy and spiritual warfare

As we continue our perusal of spiritual warfare, we recall that the devil is a formidable foe. We spoke last week about some of the weapons and allies at our disposal, because it is most important to look where we want to go, not what we want to avoid. Never get caught up in *studying* evil. Given enough time, it will corrupt your thoughts like a worm burrowing through an apple. We only spend the time we need to comprehend what is going on so that we can go to our Father and ask His aid with the trust and reliance of a little child and the understanding and confidence of an adult.

The devil made me do it... Despite his virtually infinite power over us, the Devil prefers to work in the background and corrupt us through our thoughts and feelings. In a pitched fight, he loses when we call on help, so he mostly wants to destroy our understanding and our desire to call on help. He wants to make us think God is our enemy. And he is good at it.

His most effective weapon is fear. He does not try to make us afraid of him—that would lead to defeat as discussed above. He just wants to make us afraid because fear makes us reactionary and rash.

He will use any negative experience we have to inject lies into our mind and heart. 2 summers ago I spoke about this in the context of trauma and its enduring effects in us. As a result of Trauma, either by the Adversary's clever deceit (or our own need/desire for answers/reasons), we come to believe lies about 1) ourselves (our goodness or lovability), 2) God, 3) all relationships, and 4) Love in general. We do not "tell" these lies, but we believe them and for the rest of our lives, act out of them.

This leads to habitual sins that have roots in our very thought processes. These sins are ways that we avoid the pain of confronting what is really wrong. They are a form of self-medication or compensation for these ailments.

This clever attack leads us to sin and corruption one act at a time—of our very own volition. In an extended way, it is true—the devil made me do it. However, he doesn't compel or force us, he inclines us and we do the rest all by ourselves.

*Fr. Michael*