

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Of course, it’s not legal now, but for centuries dueling was an accepted way of settling disputes. And the words that often kicked off the duel? The French phrase “En Garde!” Which means get ready. The weapon might be a sword (during ancient times) or a six-shooter (on the streets of the wild, wild west), but whether rocks or rockets, swords or spears, knives or nuclear bombs, all indicate conflict. It seems to ring true that the future only holds confrontation. True in schools. True on the streets. True at the workplace. True in our homes.

Are you geared up and ready to go? For the war. For the battle. For confrontation. Do you have your weapons all ready to go? To be able to combat an ideology that is threatening you? To be able to overcome the political disputations that may come? To be able to protect yourself and your loved ones from the danger that comes. You got the right comebacks, the right facts, the right conviction. You’re ready.

Ah, but. When we peel back the curtain, we make a rather startling discovery. **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”**

St. Paul tells us that there is something else going on behind the scenes, that society’s woes are not caused by poverty, poor parenting, or lack of mental health resources. While those things do contribute to the problem, they are not the source of the problem. They are part of a well thought out, concerted attack on humanity in general and on Christians in particular.

So if you think of yourself as a Christian then you need to be aware that there are movies and websites and philosophies and books and videos and movements that you are at war with. However, do not think that you are fighting against a specific figure of a movement, and once they are defeated holiness will reign. Do

not falsely believe that once you can get rid of the ideas in a book that societies woes will fall to the wayside. Do not think that with enough force you can fight a war of culture and then you will be safe.

Because it is far more serious and enduring than that. Because there are things have been specifically designed to cause you to stumble and fall, not in society, or in your work, or in your family, but in your faith. And these threats all have one source, which is the devil, and he has one goal for you and that is to separate you from faith. And if you do not believe that then you have your proverbial head in the sand. Yes, “En Garde!” is the perfect term. We need to be ready.

Satan is no fool. He has been tempting people since the first human being, and he is very good at it. He is not openly going to reveal himself and his intentions because that would set off the warning bells. He will conceal his fiery arrows under false aims to hide their intent. He will conceal his attacks in order to trick us into defending ourselves in a way that will not work. And he has lured countless souls off into a battle ill prepared and they have fallen. He has convinced countless souls that his attacks are not deadly, and they have paid the price of eternity. He has led people off to a false war when their real enemy is him.

So how do we fight him? We know we know that we are locked in a battle. And we know the battle is real. And we know that the consequences are eternal if we lose the battle. But how do you duel with the devil? We just read that “**our struggle is not against flesh and blood.**” I mean if he had a body, we might have some idea on how to fight him, but he doesn’t.

There are a couple of things to consider; first, keep in mind he has already lost the war. That was confirmed when Jesus rose from the dead. However, though he has lost the war he can still win some battles, battles that are rarely of our choosing. You get put in a position where you have to fight a battle that wasn’t yours to begin with. You didn’t start the fight. You didn’t ask for the fight. You’re not even prepared for the fight. And you certainly don’t want the fight. But you’re in the middle of it. And you didn’t even choose it.

The reality is we don’t get to choose a lot of things. We don’t get to pick our families: our moms, our dads, our brothers, our sisters. We don’t get to pick bodies: our noses, our ears, our height. We don’t get to pick our circumstances:

the place we were born, the stability of our family. It's not like babies got together and said I'm going pick to be born to parents who are loving and nurturing. Or I'm going to pick to be born to parents where nothing I do is ever good enough.

You didn't choose the country to be born in. You didn't choose the era to be born with the specific challenges it has at this moment. We just sort of arrived and it's a battle. None of us gets to choose those things. None of us gets to choose our abusers. We don't get to choose our struggles.

You're going to fight some battles in your life and the devil is going to try to discourage you in those battles. The evil day is every day of your life. You're going to battle when things are good. You're going to battle it when things are bad. You're going to battle when you're tired and when you're sick. You will not choose your battle. But it's going to happen anyway.

But while you might not have picked your battle, you can equip yourself for it. And God has given you a tools with which to fight. **Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.**

If Satan comes with arrows, you have the shield of faith, rooted in the power of the almighty which extinguishes them. When satan seeks to strike a mortal blow you have the breastplate of righteousness and helmet of salvation which removes his power to destroy and keeps you safe in the promise of life everlasting in Jesus merit. When Satan seeks to distort you reality you have the belt of truth, which is his unchanging word and promises to you, which will withstand all change.

Brothers and sisters, you are equipped for the battle. Do not fight the battles that are less important. Do not fight satan with the tools that cannot win. Your battle is a spiritual one, and your tools are the word and the sacraments. You, Christian, already have the victory through Christ, now fight like you do! Amen.