

Reflections

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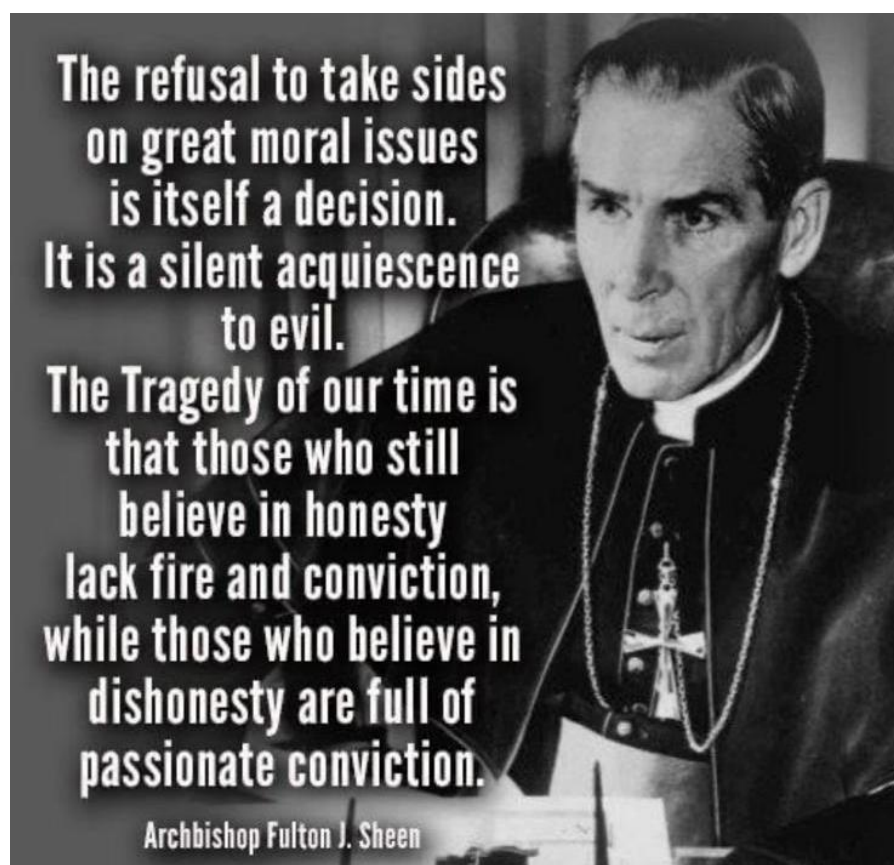
Bringing Light Into a World of Darkness

The Temple of the Holy Spirit

Spiritual Attacks

**The Slaughter of Catholics and
Christians in Africa**

*****THOUGHT FOR TODAY*****



By: Richard Pickard
Blessings to All:

A great spiritual movement is taking place in your soul and in the souls of your family and loved ones each day. Two opposing forces, good and evil, are at work.

Which one is chosen can dominate your spiritual life. Your soul contains the Spirit of God and scripture tells us that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. *"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The morally good choices we make, we call the workings of the Holy Spirit. The morally bad choices we make are the workings of the evil forces who hate you and hate God. There is no goodness in Evil, only hate and anger.

Each one of us has this battle each day. You may not think it is happening, but all you need to do is **to reflect on your day**. As example, you may be at



work, and a co-worker is spreading gossip about someone who also works in the office. You hear this gossip and without thinking, you then pass it along to others. Even though you do not know if what is said is "true", you pass it along anyway.

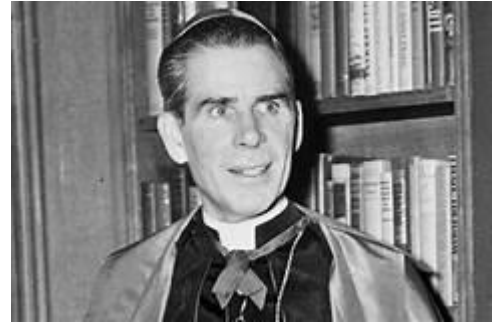


Or you're at the grocery store and the checker misses checking an item and puts the item in your basket. You see that it was not scanned and for a moment you think, "I won't say anything, it's a small thing anyway." What will you do? Will you do what is just or do the opposite and take the item without paying.

These are **small examples**, but sometimes, the small things can lead us into larger choices that could ultimately lead into temptations for mortal sins. The devil uses these small enticements to chip away at your moral core. Over time, you become vulnerable to giving in to larger temptations. Bad habits have a way of growing into Big Bad Habits.

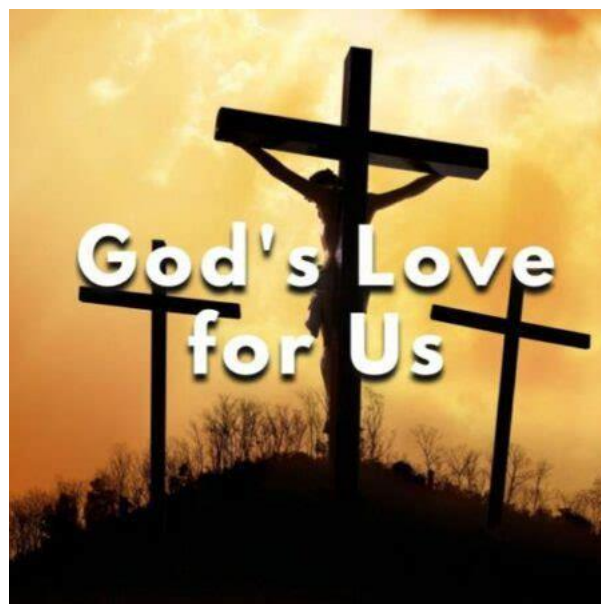
When you have these choices of good or evil, don't hesitate, do the right thing. **Don't pass along gossip...tell the check out clerk about the item that was missed.** Bishop Fulton Sheen had some thoughtful comments along these lines.

"...for evil habits cannot be overcome by the will alone: love is required as well. No alcoholic is cured until he finds something to value more highly than the attractions of alcohol. No other evil is renounced until the sinner finds some positive good, he prizes above his sin. Our Lord warned us of the house swept and garnished, which was filled by seven devils worse than the first; this was the inevitable result when an **evil was driven out but no good was sent to take its place. Even in the moral world, nature abhors a vacuum.**



Evil habits are not driven out by our hate of them (for we do not always hate them properly). They are crowded out by our love of something else. The new love that takes possession of us must be bigger than ourselves... for it is our selves which need amendment. It cannot safely be anything earthly that we use as a substitute love; the man who cures himself of dissipation through pride or ambition may be worse off, in his reform, than in his sin.

Habits cannot be efficaciously fought unless we have a philosophy which makes our lives revolve around the God for Whom we are made, and without Whom we are miserably bound to the drab companionship of our own growing imperfections. No new, competing love is large enough except the love of God Himself, with all that that love makes us long to do. St. Augustine summarized its effects when he said, "Love God, and do what you will." For if you love God truly, you will never wish to hurt him, any more than you would wish to hurt a human friend.



7 Signs You Are Dealing With a Spiritual Attack

Every believer struggles at different times with spiritual attacks even though we don't always recognize it as from the devil. We blame our circumstances, family, friends, and sometimes even God, for our troubles. Yet Satan is a master deceiver who instigates problems and disappears before anyone recognizes his influence.

The Bible instructs us in Ephesians 6:10 that "*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*". If we recognize the signs of a spiritual attack, we won't waste time blaming the wrong people—instead we focus on dealing with the devil and overcoming him. What are the 7 signs that you are dealing with a spiritual attack?

Sign #1) When you struggle with random thoughts that go against biblical teachings

If we haven't learned to discipline our minds according to God's word, our thoughts can wander to the wrong places. Yet even with discipline, it's possible to find ourselves struggling with adverse thoughts. We must first recognize that sinful, evil thoughts don't come from God and likely are planted by the evil one. Our responsibility is to deal with those thoughts promptly.

Sign #2) When you struggle with overwhelming feelings of discouragement

We are often tossed to and fro through the waves of adversity. Many times, we pray, fast, and study God's word to find peace in the midst of it. Yet sometimes we have moments when we feel overwhelmingly discouraged and without the strength to keep going. In those times we must call out to God to provide the grace we need to move forward. It's especially helpful to begin with thanking the Lord for His many blessings one by one as we make our way out of discouragement.

Sign #3) When you struggle in your relationships

Even when we strive to live at peace with everyone, we may have to deal with people who cause division, distraction, and struggles in our lives. These could be family members, coworkers, or even fellow believers. Most of the time, they don't realize that they are being used by Satan to cause trouble. We overcome this struggle by praying for them and asking God for the wisdom to deal with them in a way that is pleasing to Him.

Sign #4) When you struggle with sleeping because of interruptions or nightmares

We are usually at our best when we are healthy and get rest at night. However, Satan can cause us to be awoken with troubling dreams or interruptions throughout the evening. It's best to seek out the Lord in prayer, especially using the Psalms as a method to get you through. Psalm 3:5 "*I will lay down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me*" and Psalm 4:8 "*In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety*" are especially helpful.

Sign #5) When you struggle with past temptations that you've overcome

Just when you thought you were over a past temptation—it comes back with a fierce determination to draw you back in. This tactic of our enemy is to make us forget our freedom from the power of sin. We must hold fast to our first love, Jesus Christ, and not make excuses for fading back into former ways of living. Pray to overcome these temptations. Don't give up. Fight them and God will hear you and help you.

Sign #6) When you struggle with worries, doubts, and fears every day

Worry, doubt, and fear are always available if we let them infiltrate our hearts and minds. We live in a fallen world where there's an abundance of trouble to deal with. Yet our hearts and minds must stay completely focused on God's word and His faithfulness in spite of the hardships we face.

Sign #7) When you struggle with praying regularly

There's nothing Satan wants more than for the people of God to **stop praying** with regularity. Our prayers hinder his work in the world. Many times, we underestimate the power of prayer and begin to neglect the fervency and consistency of it. We must never forget the amazing works of God in our lives through prayer. Our prayers are powerful and effective to bring down the walls of deceit and lies built by our enemy.

Knocked Down, but not Knocked Out

"Life is a hard fight, a struggle, a wrestling with the principle of evil, hand to hand, foot to foot. Every inch of the way is disputed." (Florence Nightingale. English social reformer, statistician, and founder of modern nursing (1820–1910))

Many times, we want out of the struggle. We want to give up and walk away hoping to find a calmer, more peaceful life. Yet the kingdom struggle remains until Jesus comes back. We must fight on like worthy and faithful soldiers of Christ. We were created for this moment of struggle so that the Lord would be glorified as we tear down Satan's kingdom winning over one person at a time. Fight on!

Over 15 Catholic parishes close amid ongoing violence against Christians in Nigeria..

By Abah Anthony John

ACI Africa, Nov 8, 2024 / 14:55 pm

Every day we hear about killings and kidnappings.



Bishop Wilfred Chikpa Anagbe of the Diocese of Makurdi in Nigeria has called for action to address escalating insecurity in Nigeria's Benue State, which has led to the closure of over 15 parishes in his diocese.

In an interview with ACI Africa, CNA's news partner in Africa, during the seventh International Theological Conference organized by the Institute of Consecrated Life in Africa, Anagbe urged the Nigerian government to prioritize security to restore hope and enable displaced persons to return to their ancestral homes.

"Benue state is like the epicenter of what is happening. In my Diocese of Makurdi, I have lost about 14 to 15 parishes now," the bishop said.

"When I mean parishes, some parishes have about 20 'outstations,' some have about 15. It covers almost 20-25 kilometers. So, the demography of the state and the diocese is shrinking."

Anagbe clarified that the closure of parishes owing to insecurity is also being witnessed in the Otukpo Diocese as well as in the Katsina-Ala Diocese. Both are located in embattled areas of Nigeria.

The bishop expressed concern about the constant reports of killings and kidnappings in the country, emphasizing the role of the Nigerian government to protect lives and property.

"Every day we must hear about killings and kidnappings. And it is not for the people to defend themselves because the protection of lives and properties is in the hands of the government," the Catholic leader explained.

He said authorities in Nigeria should "do the needful thing," adding: "**We have been plunged into untold hardship. It is not just Makurdi but the whole of this country. As you travel from any part of this country ... until you arrive, you are not safe.**"

Anagbe, a member of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

(Claretians), warned that the prolonged closure of schools in affected areas could create a generation of future bandits and terrorists.

“Schools in these areas have been closed down for over 10 years. What we are breeding now is a group of future bandits and terrorists in our villages because the children now have no education and no formation. The government must act now to prevent this ugly trend,” he said.



Anagbe also blamed the food insecurity currently being experienced in Nigeria, Africa’s most populous nation, on the failure of the government to provide a secure environment for farmers to return to their farms and produce food.

“It’s for the government to take care of this insecurity so that our farmers can go back to their villages and farm. It’s not about sharing food items in the IDP [internally displaced persons] camps. No. We can do more,” he said.

“Our people are not beggars. They don’t ask for food. They produce their food and they are okay with it,” he said, adding that any government policy of food aid that does not return the displaced people back to their indigenous homes “will fail.”

Anagbe expressed frustration at what he described as a lack of decisive action from the government.

“The protection of lives and properties is in the hands of the government, yet this responsibility has been neglected,” he said, arguing that Nigeria’s capacity for peacekeeping in other nations — such as Sierra Leone and Liberia — demonstrates that the government could resolve the crisis if it chose to.

“You can’t tell The 59-year-old prelate also condemned leaders who, he believes, knowingly turn a blind eye to the criminal elements terrorizing the region.

“Some of our leaders consciously don’t want to mention these criminals,” he

said, adding that banditry has become “one of the biggest industries” in Nigeria.

Anagbe urged Catholics and all Nigerians to remain hopeful, trusting in God’s justice.

“We shall continue to pray that God, at his appointed time, will send us a leader who will be able to liberate us. And people will regain their freedom and live happily in their communities devoid of banditry,” he said. “These bandits are beyond the Nigerian army or the police,” Anagbe said.



Burnt in Maiduguri, Nigeria

Over 50,000 Christians killed in Nigeria by Islamist extremists

According to the report “Martyred Christians in Nigeria” issued by Intersociety, over the past 14 years at least 52,250 Nigerian Christians have been brutally murdered at the hands of Islamist militants.

By Lisa Zengarini

Over 50,000 Christians have been killed in Nigeria since the outbreak of the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in 2009, a newly-released report published by a Nigerian non-governmental organization has revealed.

The report, titled "Martyred Christians in Nigeria", has been published by the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety), a Nigerian-based research and investigative rights group, which has been monitoring and investigating religious persecution and other forms of religious violence by State and non-State actors across Nigeria since 2010.

52,250 Nigerian Christians murdered since 2009

According to its findings, over the past 14 years at least 52,250 Nigerian Christians have been brutally murdered at the hands of Islamist militants, more than 30,000 of whom during the eight-year presidency of former Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, often criticized during his tenure for not doing enough to combat growing insecurity in the country.

18,000 churches set on fire

In the same period 18,000 Christian churches and 2,200 Christian schools were set ablaze. Approximately 34,000 moderate Muslims also died in Islamist attacks. The outlook for 2023 does not seem any better, with over 1,000 Christians killed since the beginning of the year. Within the same period, at least 707 Christians were kidnapped, out of which the Northern Nigerian Niger State recorded more than 200 abductions, including 14 March 2023 abduction of over 100 Christians in Adunu (Paikoro). At least 101 anti-Christian abductions were recorded in Kaduna while other affected States include Katsina, Taraba, Edo, Ogun, Nassarawa, Kwara, Kogi, Borno, Yobe and Adawama Bauchi, Enugu, Imo, Kebbi, Gombe, Bayelsa and Cross River.

Christians risk their lives not only at the hands of Boko Haram, but also of ethnic Fulani Muslim herders who have joined Islamist extremist groups.

The attacks have led to mass forcible displacement. About 5 million Christians have been displaced and forced into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps within Nigeria and refugee camps at regional and sub-regional borders, the Intersociety report says.

The Intersociety report confirms that Nigeria has become one of the most dangerous places to live for Christians in Africa.

The killing and inhuman treatment of many Catholics, Christian and Muslims in Africa has to stop. This is a global genocide of humans because of their faith. Please pray that Our Blessed Mother and Our Savior Jesus Christ will provide the Graces, which will grant this to stop. The world is looking the other way and Satan is openly killing people of faith.



Our Blessed Mother is shedding so many tears at what is happening to the children of God through the hands of man filled with the hatred of Satan.

Africans praying outside because of Church burnings. Please pray for the end of this suffering. Say at least one rosary for this to stop.



**The International Catholic Family Newsletter
Is Published Monthly**

Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.



The Rosary is the 'weapon' for these times. – St. Padre Pio

St. Paul Ministry

<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>