



USING THE FULL SPIRITUAL WEAPONRY OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

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Good Day Men of Christ, my name is Father, Cajetan Cuddy and I'm a Dominican priest from the province of St. Joseph, the Dominican province of St. Joseph. And I teach philosophy and theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington DC and it's a great privilege to be with you here at this event titled, as, you know, Awakening Men of Christ—Catholic Men, a Life Rooted in Virtue, and my topic with you today is "Using the Full Spiritual Weaponry of the Catholic faith. And I'm very happy to speak about this topic because as, you know, the full Catholic weaponry of the Catholic faith, comprises the sacraments and sacramentals. That's the topic we're going to look at today in a special way. And in case you're wondering, some of you might know, Dominicans, you might have seen them before. But this habit, this attire, is the proper attire for those men who become priests. in what is known as the Order of Friars Preachers, St. Dominic's order. That's why our nickname is Dominicans. We were founded by Saint Dominic for preaching the truth. So I come to you today as a priest of Jesus Christ and of the Catholic church, but also as a friar preacher, a son of Saint Dominic who consecrated himself and his order 800 years ago until the present moment to the truth. And the truth is very important because today people don't much like the truth or they don't think the truth has much content to it. Often today, we think of truth, particularly truth claims or life claims or truth for life as if it were a mere preference that we might subjectively decide. This way of living works for me, that way of living works for you, but there is no real truth for life. And I am here and all of the facilitators of this wonderful event are here to tell you that that is not true because the Catholic faith is not merely a lifestyle. The Catholic church is not merely a club or a fraternity or sorority.

The Catholic church is the bride of Christ. The Catholic faith is the truth of Christ and this truth

of Christ comprises both natural and supernatural dynamics. We don't need faith in order to know all Truth. For example, I don't need Faith to know that two plus two equals four. Why is that? Because things like quantity, things like two Apples, two oranges, two apples, two oranges. One, two, three, four. I can come to knowledge of those things by my own human power and my own human resources. But there are some truths which are beyond our natural powers, our natural resources and those are properly speaking, the mysteries of the faith, the supernatural truths of the faith. And these are things like the Trinity, like the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist at the holy sacrifice of the mass.

That you would, that I would never, no matter how intelligent, how learned and how many years we had devoted to studying it, would ever be able to figure out by our own resources and by our own powers. And this is what Jesus came to give us in the Catholic faith. He came to give us those precious sacred truths, which are beyond natural human discovery, which are beyond natural human comprehension. Which are so important and so profound and so transformative for human persons that he says I am going to come down from Heaven to Earth to give this supernatural truth to my beloved friends to the sons and daughters of God. That's why Jesus came: to reveal to us the truth that exceeds our comprehension, but the truth for which our souls, our intellect, our will our most profound desires yearn for. God made everything. God is the end of everything. God is the term of everything. God is the goal towards, which all things tend, whether they realize it or not.

You put a pause here just to clarify again. Some people who might be skeptical of supernatural truth claims will say, well, that's your interpretation. I myself maybe I'm an atheist or an agnostic. I'm not Catholic. You are Catholic and you seek heaven

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and you seek the beatific vision by which, you will see God face-to-face because that satisfies you and your preconceptions, your notions about what makes a human person happy and satisfied.. Me, on the other hand, this imaginary skeptic might say, I have other things, either maybe money, physical pleasure, fame, family life, political success, economic success et cetera. These things make me happy. These are my end. So you Catholics, you have your own end. I have another end. But the truth of the matter is again, back to the truth, Is that every single person whether they realize it or not is searching for God, and not just God in a calm and abstract ethereal idea about God, but God truly known. God, truly loved, which means that the soul reaches God and holds onto him. How do we know that? Why is it that money, physical pleasure, fame, success, influence, power can't make us happy? It's because none of those things are big enough, satisfying enough, infinite enough to sate the infinite desires, the profound yearnings of the human heart. Only God is big enough, good enough, satisfying enough to sate human desire, and that's why every person no matter what they follow, what they embrace, whether it be fame, money, success, physical pleasure, food or drink, influence. They're never satisfied because they're those things, which they seek are not God.

There's only one problem and this is the problem we all face even those who don't have faith. We can't get to God by our own powers, nor by our own resources. We can't come to the supernatural, infinite, and intimate union with God that we so desperately search for, even if we don't know it in name we're searching for it in reality. We can't come to that. We can't grasp God. We can't capture God by our own powers by our own native natural resources.

God has to give himself from His infinite dignity, His infinite happiness, His infinite satisfactoral power. He has to give that to us himself freely, and this is why Jesus came. Who was Jesus? Jesus, is the second person of the Trinity. The eternal son incarnate, in carne in the flesh. Jesus is the eternal Son of God, made man for us men and for our salvation. And so what happens in the Incarnation, what happens when the Eternal Son of God assumes the human nature is now we have God with us. We have a Being, the eternal second divine person of

the Trinity, the Eternal son who is 100% God, losing none of his divinity, and yet 100% man, assuming all of those things, proper to our Humanity, except sin. Jesus, true God and true man, and he comes then, the Divine, which is beyond us comes in a presence that we can receive.

He comes in his humanity, with his body, with his smile, with his eyes, to touch, and to heal and to bring up those he encounters, those who rather encounter him, to heaven. And there's another problem. So that solves the first problem, God is too far beyond us. Jesus, himself solves the first problem because Jesus in the Incarnation brings God down to us, and brings us to God because in himself, he is God, and man. 100% God, 100% man. Not 50/50, 100% 100%. That's the first problem. The second problem is Jesus isn't here. He's not here. I pause because some of you may be thinking that sounds a little strange. But if we mean it in the most immediate sense of "here," I walk down the street. I'm here in this studio, you're there watching this reflection, and if you look around, you might see your friends, your neighbors, your colleagues, but you do not see the Eternal Son of God. We know Jesus is real, but he's not here. So, how then does Jesus in his being solve our problem, our need here and now for a savior who can bring God to us, who brings us to God, who is in his very being God and man, the instrument, and the means through which we men are brought to God and to heaven. And this is the problem that the sacraments solve. The sacraments seven of them. The seven sacraments are those sacred instruments through which Jesus really and truly comes to us and touches us with His humanity. Just like he came to people 2,000 years ago in Nazareth, Galilee and Jerusalem. Through the seven Sacraments Jesus comes to us and changes us.

Through the seven sacraments and as you know or in case you forget we'll go through them just briefly: Baptism, Confirmation, the holy sacrifice of the mass - Communion, sacrament of penance/Confession, Holy Orders, Sacred Matrimony for the baptized and then final the Extreme Unction or last rites. Through those seven sacraments, Jesus comes to us and heals us, transforms us, gives us a share in his divine life and being, gives us a participation in who he is, which is divine grace. And as you recall from the catechism paragraphs in 1996 and 1997, grace

is nothing less than a participation in God's own life and being. Another footnote: you notice in this discussion of sacraments, in the problem that they solve, namely the problem of the distance that we might experience from Christ. The sacraments solve that because they are the means through which Jesus is really present. Every time a Sacrament is celebrated, Jesus comes really and truly. You might notice in our presentation of the sacraments right now that we are suggesting something stronger than what you or I might have been taught when we were children. And that's this: that sacraments are only signs that show or express our faith, our communion, our community, our beliefs, who we are. Many of us were taught from a young age that sacraments are primarily and exclusively signs. And anyone who's read the catechism of the Catholic Church, which as you know, is the Church's authoritative summary of her teaching, knows that yes, there is a sign power in the sacraments. They are signs in a certain sense, but more profoundly and more truly, they are causes through which we meet Jesus in the sacraments themselves. And that's why there is a sign, they're, not only signs they're causes and they are signs because they are causes. So, for example, Jesus could have made it so that every day at 12 p.m. If you walk outside and look up and say I'm here, Lord, he would have forgiven your sins. The problem with that is, we wouldn't know for sure that it happened because there'd be no way for us to sense or feel the forgiveness of our sins. And this is why he gives us the sacrament of Confession. What happens there? If we go into the confessional, we express our sins and we receive a sign, which is "I absolve you" that we can hear, we can sense, we can experience and when we see that sign, we know that it's not just a sign but that Jesus is doing something profound and real and transformative that I can't sense. So in the sacraments things that we can sense:, words, gestures, substances, elements like water or bread and wine at Mass, water at baptism, are used to show us that what we cannot sense is truly happening. The sacraments are causes of grace. They are instruments through which Jesus, Himself, comes to you and transforms you. And that's why with the topic of today's presentation, these are profoundly important for the Catholic faith and as spiritual weapons, against the lies of the world. There's no such thing as a loving LIE. There's no such thing as a truly satisfying

happiness-conferring myth. The sacraments bring us to reality because the sacraments aren't just ideas. They aren't just thoughts. They are the means through which Jesus, Himself, comes to us. Whether we know it or not. Whether we believe it or not. Whether we like it or not. The sacraments are the most important part of the Catholic faith and the Catholic life, for those who live the Catholic life.

For just a couple moments, we could teach a whole course about the sacraments and I won't do that here today because the facilitators will be very unhappy about that. That would go on and my poor students in Seminary that I teach at in Washington, D.C., The Dominican House of Studies, they have to go through that, but we will not today. But I want to talk about one Sacrament, the one that's probably most germane and proximate to you in terms of your state of life and that would be the sacrament of marriage. What is it about the sacrament of marriage? How does Jesus and His causality, His presence and His power? How does that transform the relationship of a man and a woman? Because we all know you don't have to be Catholic and you don't have to be baptized to fall in love and to marry. And yet, if you are baptized and you do fall in love and get married your marriage if you're baptized is a Sacrament, one of the seven, which means Jesus is involved, which means divine life is involved. So, how does this look? The best place to look at this, apart from the catechism of the Catholic church, in terms of the root, the principle of what the catechism teaches about Divine truth is, of course, St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians and there I can remember, years ago, when I was reading the letter of Saint Paul, to the Ephesians 5:25, Saint Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, talking about marriage, says something, which seems very dumb. Obvious! What does he say in Ephesians 5:25? He says, husband's love your wives.

Now if we pause there, there's nothing remarkable, there's certainly nothing supernatural about that. Why? Everyone knows, from the grocer down the street to the president, the CEO of the major corporation that husbands are supposed to love their wives it's very obvious. So, why does Saint Paul Apostle to the Gentiles, Bishop of Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit, Why does he need to tell us that? Because that's not all that he says. He goes on, and does say something that's profound

and beyond our natural knowledge and our natural abilities. What does he say? He says, husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church. Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church. This is transformative!

This is different than the simple story of Boy Meets Girl Girl Meets Boy and they fall in love. This Sacrament, this marriage with Jesus for the baptized is nothing less than a participation in Christ's own priesthood. What does it mean to be a priest? The common denominator of the meaning of priesthood is the priest is the one who offers sacrifice.

I, as an ordained Catholic priest, the sacrifice I offer is the sacrifice of Christ himself at the holy altar at Mass. This is my body. This is my blood. I offer Christ's sacrifice. And in marriage, Jesus brings in, particularly the man because we're speaking to you. He brings men in and says, husbands with wives, you will be evaluated by, you are given the obligation to love your wife, not just as someone that you're attracted to, not just as someone you love or have feelings for but in the same way that I love the church. And how does Christ love the church? Christ loved the church such as his bride that He gave her everything: His body; His blood; His soul; His divinity; Such that in his humanity on Good Friday, He had nothing left to give. He gave her all.

That, dear friends, one day, hopefully many years from now, is what Jesus will look at you and ask. At the Last Judgment when you look Him, after your death, in the eye and He says to you. Did you love your wife the way I love my bride, the church? Did you give her everything or did you hold back? Did you selfishly or with fear withhold, some of yourself, of your time, of your energy, of your affection, of your leadership, of your sacrifice and how you answer that in truth? Because you always answer the True in truth when you see, Jesus will affect and effect what happens next.

For a man who's baptized and a woman who's baptized, when they get married, the man is called to give himself to his wife, the way Christ gave Himself and gives Himself to the church, which is 100%. And this is unsustainable.

This is impossible for our mere human capabilities. Why? Because eventually, if I just give for my own Human Resources, what happens? I eventually exhaust my own human resources, and the only way

that you are going to be able dear friends to give and give and give to your wife, your children the way that Christ has called you to in this sacrament of marriage, which is meant to bring you and her and your children to happiness is if you are receiving Christ's love. So if you've been having problems in marriage or insecurities in your marriage, my first question to you would be, how often are you going to Mass? And how often are you going to confession? Because it's unreasonable to assume that you would be able to give and give and give and give and rejoice in giving in marriage as you're called to do. If you're not also receiving Christ's love, Christ's power, Christ's mercy, and you do that regularly, in the sacrament of the altar—communion and in the sacrament of penance, The sacrament of marriage changes us. It's not just a relationship of affection and of chemistry. It's a bond in which Jesus, himself, unites a man and a woman. And he calls the man to love in a way that no natural man can, that only Jesus can, which means you dear friends need Jesus to love your wife properly and to give to her all that she needs, and your children need to bring you to heaven and you will be evaluated by that. Ephesians 5:25. Did you love? Do you love your wife the way Christ loves the church?

So, the sacraments we just spoke about one of the sacraments, a sacrament of matrimony. There were seven total sacraments. They are instruments, causes through which Jesus changes us, transforms us. They are not just signs of our feelings, of our beliefs. They're, the way through which God comes down, Jesus comes down and makes us different. But the church doesn't just have sacraments. Those are her prize, her Joy because those are the means through which Jesus comes to us at every moment now, in this life. Jesus truly comes in the sacraments, you know, you can't see him, feel him, sense him. In every Sacrament he acts. The church has also instituted something called sacramentals, there's sacraments seven of them and then there's something called sacramentals. And if you want to read more about the sacramentals of the church, I also encourage you to look at the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 1667 through 1679, paragraphs 1667 through 1679 in which the church articulates sacramentals, which are also instruments that are only signs unlike the sacrament. Sacraments are signs and causes of Grace. Sacramentals, those are signs of faith that point us to the seven sacraments.

Examples of sacramentals are blessings. Everyone loves to receive blessings as a priest it's, one of the things everyone's always wanting. That's fine. That's a sacramental. Another example would be holy water. That's a sign of our baptism. This gesture itself is a sign of our living in the cross, in the Trinity. So sacramentals are many unlike the seven. Sacraments. There are many sacramentals, but there's one sacramental and this is what I want to conclude with that's often overlooked. That's very powerful and very practically significant to the man of the 21st century. And that is one of the sacramentals that the catechism itself identifies in its own pages. And that's the sacramental of the Holy Name of Jesus. The sacramental of the name of Jesus. We recall just to remind us sacraments are instruments through which Jesus comes to us. Sacramentals are signs that bring us to the encounter with Christ in the sacraments.

And now we're going to talk about one sacramental that brings us to the sacrament.

And that's the sacramental of the Holy Name of Jesus. One of my dear friends and he's actually the reason why I'm here at his instigation and I do anything for the Erickson's is Peter Erickson. And Peter Erickson is a character. Some of you may know him. He's probably watching this. And let's imagine that Peter and I are in downtown Milwaukee. We're not together. We just happened to be there for different reasons and I see Peter Erickson walking across the street, and he doesn't see me. And so, what do I do? I say his name, I think it in my head. I speak it. I pronounce it, wave my hand. The name comes first. He looks over and then he comes over, and we begin to communicate. That's how normal human discourse occurs or even begins. The name comes first and then the person arrives. Why is that? It's because for us, names and realities are a little bit distinct because we are complex, finite contingent creatures. I won't go into all the philosophy. But the name can come first and then the person comes, I can visualize the name. I can utter the name and it's only if the person hears that name that they come. With Jesus, it's exactly the opposite. Why is that? It's because, as you know from the Bible, from divine revelation, at the name of Jesus, every knee must Bend.

The Holy Name of Jesus is not like Peter Erickson's name. It is not something separate from his divine

person. Why is that? It's because what is the name of Jesus connected to the divine person of Jesus? And what does that name mean? That name, Jesus, means savior. And what happens when we utter that name? Sincerely not as a curse word, not frivolously, but sincerely. We have 100% proof whenever the Holy Name of Jesus is on our lips, our heart, in our minds that Jesus is present. Why is that? Because get this, this is very important. It's very true. You're going to doubt it. I pray that you don't and if we had five hours I could explain the metaphysics in the philosophy behind it. But I'm telling you the truth. No one is able to utter sincerely the name of Jesus without Jesus already being present.

For Pete Erickson. I say the name and then he comes, because his name is not divine. His name is not infinite. His name is not a sacramental, but the Holy Name of Jesus is a sign that contains within it and reflects the infinite power, saving power, savior of Jesus himself. And so if I'm alone. I'm on my way to work. I'm sitting in a church. I'm feeling frustrated. I'm feeling good. Whatever the moment. If I say, very simply, Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you. I have just done something sacramental.

And I have 100% proof that Jesus is already with me. Not that he will be there. But he's already with me. Why is that? Because no finite created creature like me or like you could utter something so holy and so infinite, could produce something so holy and so infinite, like the Holy Name of Jesus unless there were an equally infinite cause person and reality, inspiring, moving, causing us to speak His holy name.

The Holy Name of Jesus is something so powerful, so holy that only the holy person of Jesus can cause. And so, if you and I speak in faith, the Holy Name of Jesus, we have proof that Jesus is with us because no finite, no human creature could ever say that by their own power, by their own resources. So in conclusion, to bring all of these themes together, I'd like to share with you a story from the desert fathers, the fathers of the desert. These are early Catholic monks in the early years of the church that love Jesus such, that love God, such that they gave up everything else to go to the desert, literally to be with our Lord in prayer, in contemplation, with nothing else. And there's one story of a young monk who heard about these famous desert fathers, who lived all of their life in prayer in caves in the deserts.

You know what? I want to do that too. So he runs out, becomes a desert monk himself and sets up an appointment somehow with one of the old and wise monks. And he comes to the old and wise monk and says, to him, "Father, teach me how to be a saint. What's the secret to Holiness? How do I become in my very being united to God? Even here on Earth in this desert?" And the old monk, looks at him with love and a smile. And says, okay. Here's what I want you to do. Say this prayer. The young monk takes out his parchment and writes it down. Say Jesus, Son of the Living. God have mercy on me, a sinner.

The young monk wrote that down the Jesus prayer as it's known. And the old monk says, I want you to say that 1000 times and then come back and see me again. So the young monk with great excitement and the prayer runs off. The next day, he comes back and says to the old monk. "Okay, I've done that. What now?" and the Old monk looks at him smiles. Again, in love, and says "Now do that every day for the rest of your life."

Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Jesus, The Holy Name of Jesus. The sacramental, which points us to the seven sacraments. Those sacred instruments, those causes through which Jesus himself fully physically, really in his divine personhood comes to us, transforming us. Those that live in the Holy Name of Jesus are drawn closer to the seven sacraments in which we meet and are transformed by Jesus. This Jesus, who is God came down from heaven, come down from heaven, assuming a human nature to give us all of himself to bring us to who he is. And so I encourage you dear friends, and your life, and your work and your vocation to marriage, to live in the Holy Name of Jesus. Make that like the spiritual pulse of your soul and every moment of every day, even if it's mindless because it's never really mindless. Jesus. I love you. When you brush your teeth Jesus. I love you. When you have a bowl of cereal. Jesus. I love you. When you pour yourself a cup of coffee, Jesus. I love you. And you go to work. Jesus. I love you. When it's a good day, Jesus I love you. When it's a bad day, Jesus I love you. And living in that sacramental will bring you to the seven sacraments. And if you are already frequenting, the seven sacraments, particularly the sacrament of confession and the holy sacrament of the altar, the Mass, communion, continue that because no one can find

the happiness for which, they search without union with God. And as we started off this presentation, considering, realizing, reflecting upon Jesus brings God, who is beyond us to us. And the sacraments bring Jesus who is no longer here to us and the sacramentals are how we remain in our hearts and in our minds outside of the sacraments even, united to Jesus.

And so, please for the sake of your soul, for the sake of your joy, the sake of your salvation live in the Holy Name of Jesus. Avail yourself of the sacraments and follow our Lord, who draws you to himself in all things. Follow him to the end. The truth is real, God is real. The sacraments are real and His holy name is powerful.