



The Anchor

Book Review

By Dan Beauchamp

The Spiritual Combat

by Dom Lorenzo Scupoli (1530-1610)...

...is a time honoured, edifying and vigorous spiritual classic ready to prepare you for the great battle of the soul: the spiritual combat! Would you like to know how to overcome yourself, your imperfections and your most grievous faults? Are you tired of feeling like you're not going forward in your spiritual life? Would you like to learn the powerful methods of prayer and other spiritual weapons with which you can arm yourself in the combat of your soul? This 267 page TAN Classic, first published in 1589, will give you all these answers and so much more!

From the very first chapter, Dom Scupoli reveals the purpose of his book: to lead the reader to the summit of spiritual perfection. How to get there consists completely of interior practices. First there is knowing and loving God. Secondly there is despising and mastering in us all our evil inclinations in order that we may be able to submit and abandon ourselves entirely to God for love of Him. After writing 5 edifying chapters on how we are to distrust ourselves and gain confidence in God, the author shows us the means on how to apply these lessons to our spiritual life. Dom Scupoli makes known to the reader the correct path on the right use of our faculties. He explains that our understanding must be free of ignorance and curiosity and then indicates to the reader how we should prevent the deception of our understanding. He divulges on the exercise of our will and how to control it. By this control, we may do all our actions completely with selfless love to please God and accomplish His Holy and Divine Will. By the grace of God and the strengthening of our will, we will be able to say 'no' to sin and gain the victory! Dom Scupoli suggests to the reader various considerations which will incline the will to seek only what is pleasing to God.

While describing the opposition in man's two fold nature,

Dom Scupoli expounds on how we are to fight our passions, vices and how to curb their sudden impulses. The author gives us great tools in the fight against impurity and teaches us how we should combat sloth, govern one's speech, avoid rash judgments, ward off vainglory, avoid despair and fight that which may intrude upon our peace of mind. He speaks eloquently on the practise of virtue and how we are to fight to persevere in them. He makes clear that progress in the practise of virtue must be constant. Dom Scupoli then speaks on our infernal enemy, his use of every artifice to make a soul fall into sin and keep it there and expounds on what tools we are to use to get out of sin. He mentions the importance in asking for the graces we need in order to persevere in virtue, sanctifying grace and the spiritual life to the end!



The author then discloses the powerful tools for use in the spiritual combat and their paramount importance: prayer (vocal and especially mental), devotion and meditation on the Passion and sufferings of Jesus Christ, devotion and meditation on the virtues, sorrows and life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, devotion to the holy angels and the saints, the reception of the sacraments (and the manner in which we are to receive them), spiritual communion, the sacramentals and acts of thanksgiving to God. Dom Scupoli then prepares the reader on the means of spiritual combat for the last hour of our life and warns us of the four assaults of the enemy at that very moment. He ends his book with his wonderful masterpiece on peace of soul and inner happiness.

I highly recommend this powerful and edifying book to all parishioners for their growth in the spiritual life. We all must endure the spiritual combat therefore let us prepare ourselves boldly! **I invite you to stop by St. Clement's Gift Shop and Bookstore and purchase your copy today!**