

READER'S GROUP GUIDE

Light versus dark; good versus evil; truth versus lies. *The Devil You Don't Know* invites us to acknowledge the very real presence of Satan in our world and understand the reality of a daily struggle with the one who would subvert our journey to God. Author Rev. Louis J. Cameli talks about his own effort to pay attention to how the devil is present and at work in his everyday life. He strives to resist evil by “being alert, resisting [the devil] in faith, discerning all the spiritual impulses I encounter, and returning often to my fundamental hope in Jesus Christ and his victory” (p. xiii–xiv).

St. Patrick of Ireland also understood what it means to struggle against the darkness. His powerful prayer “The Breastplate of St. Patrick” brought him strength in his spiritual battles. He knew well the importance of paying attention. Legend holds that he started each day with the Breastplate, which begins: “I bind to myself today the strong virtue of the Incarnation of Christ.” Patrick’s prayer can help us today as we learn to cling to Christ who is the source of our triumph and the ultimate victor over evil.

In *The Devil You Don't Know*, Fr. Cameli tackles the deception, division, diversion, and discouragement of the devil’s efforts in our world.

Not surprisingly, the evil one's energies are directed to division and disunity, as he tries at all costs to divide people from God, from each other, and from their very selves. The devil works against the very center of our redemption in Jesus Christ, which is our reconciliation and our sharing in the very unity of the Holy Trinity. (p. 57)

We experience the devil’s work of deception, division, diversion, and discouragement in politics, economics, religious conflict, and other broad realities of our culture. And we experience these in our social interactions online or in our physical neighborhoods, workplaces, and households. Perhaps the most difficult places of struggle against the work of the devil is in our most intimate relationships. But when we keep all things in right relationship by living always in justice and binding ourselves to the saving power of Christ, then union, not division, is assured. Only after binding oneself to the power of God in Christ can we resist the forces of evil—the presence and work of the devil in our daily lives.

The Devil You Don't Know studies how deeply woven evil is in our world. But we hold within us the power to overcome it through the love of God and the force of his Son’s death and resurrection to cast out darkness. Our path from darkness is not found in turning from the material world. It is instead through the world, by the power of God, that we remain in union with God’s will for our lives. This is the great message in Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection: we are not spared the hard realities of our world, but rather we are born into it to live in

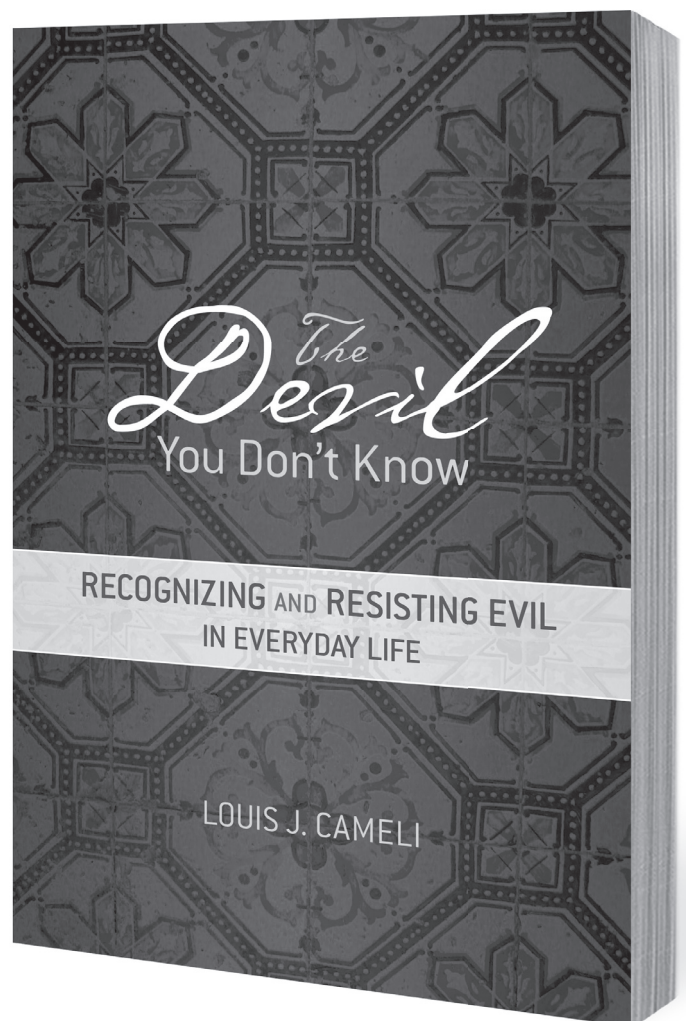
union with God, bringing the saving power of Christ to all its broken places. This union is at the heart of God’s desire for us, and the focal point of Satan’s efforts to bring corruption to our lives.

Our path to victory is clear and we have at our disposal the examples of fellow disciples like Fr. Cameli and St. Patrick. Patrick taught us to pray:

*Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ within me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me. . . .*

Cameli teaches us to use that power of union with Christ to resist the daily activity of the devil in our lives.

Remaining both in the word of Jesus, which is truth, and remaining in the love of Jesus, which is the very love of God, enable the followers of Jesus to integrate or bring together truth and love. This living synthesis assures them a victory over the deceptive ploys of the devil. (p. 53)



FOR GROUP ENRICHMENT

T*he Devil You Don't Know* is recommended for prayer or study groups interested in deepening their understanding of the forces of evil in the world and the steps they can take to resist and transcend these forces. A group that has been meeting for a while is particularly suited to this content, and participants can provide support and encouragement to one another as they identify the areas of darkness in their lives and seek to live differently. Be sure to allow adequate time for prayer and reflection during the meeting, so to balance the serious nature of the material.

For group discussion, you may wish to use some of the following questions:

1. What are some ways I now recognize the deceptive nature of evil in my life?
2. How do I seek the truth, and speak it, when necessary?
3. In what ways do I feel confident of Christ's victory over the devil? How might I experience this confidence on a deeper level?
4. How do I experience a sense of division within myself? My family? My community? My church? What actions can I take to help heal these divides?

AN ACTIVITY FOR PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

T*he Devil You Don't Know* is a powerful selection for individual study, as the content challenges the reader to discern the hidden ways in which the devil is at work in the world. It is recommended that the individual reader seek the companionship of a spiritual director to discuss any questions or concerns which may arise during the reading. Also, this companion can help the reader discern ways to enter more fully into relationship with God so as to counteract the challenges of the devil's initiative. Readers are invited to keep a journal as they read the material to jot down insights and questions, or to respond to these questions for reflection:

1. What are some new ideas presented in the text that I find hard to accept? Why might that be?
2. How is my faith in Jesus Christ strengthened by reading this book?
3. What changes will I make in my prayer life to deepen my commitment to Jesus?
4. How has this book changed my attitude toward others? How can I show that change to others?