

23. March 2023

LENTEN ITINERARY

Day 30: "Following Christ in anti-Christian times"

It is also part of our Lenten itinerary to take a careful look at the difficult times in which we find ourselves, which - as I have repeatedly said - I consider to be apocalyptic in character. While we should not be intimidated by its threat, neither can we close our eyes to the events that are happening around us.

Before the Return of Christ, we have to reckon with the coming of the Antichrist, who, perverting the kingship of the Lord, will want to establish global dominion.

In September 2020, I wrote a series of nine meditations on the subject of the Antichrist, which can be found at the following link:

<http://en.elijamission.net/2020/09/page/3/> (from 7th-15th September 2020)

Because of the topicality of this subject, I feel it is important to address it in summary form in the context of our journey in preparation for Easter. We must be spiritually armed, in order to deal correctly both with enemies from without and from within, and even with those who act within the Church.

In my view, the Antichrist who is to come at the End Times, or one of his immediate forerunners, has not, as yet, been visibly manifested, although there are many public figures who represent the antichristian spirit. The coming of the Antichrist is founded in Scripture, set forth in the Catechism of the Church, mentioned by the Fathers of the Church and thematised in various books. Therefore, it is not a secondary matter to speak of the Antichrist, although it should certainly be done as soberly as possible.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem said:

"Therefore prepare yourself, O man. If you know the signs of Antichrist, you must not only have them in your memory, but you must share them with those

around you. If you have a child after the flesh, do not hesitate to instruct him. If you are a teacher, prepare your spiritual children, that they may not take the false for the true, for this mystery is already at work".

To speak about the Antichrist is no easy matter, for in this figure the 'mystery of iniquity' (cf. 2 Th 2:7) will be fully manifested. Therefore, the Antichrist will be a threat to the whole world. However, the complexity of the subject cannot be a pretext for silence, especially at a time when anti-Christian threats are evident, even though many do not identify and reject them as such, so that the faithful can be confused.

Vigilance is required! In the first instance it is Christians who, knowing the voice of their Shepherd, should be able to discern what comes from their Lord and what does not come from Him. But obviously this differentiation is not always so simple, for Satan can present himself disguised as an angel of light (cf. 2 Cor 11:14). Therefore, we need the spirit of discernment to identify and unmask him clearly. As Catholics, we expect the Church to be able to warn us in good time of the dangers. But here too we cannot feel too safe, for even the pastors of the Church can err and fail to measure and identify the dangers of subtle anti-Christian seduction.

In times of growing anti-Christian dominance, Christians must expect persecution, which would escalate considerably from the moment when the Antichrist would concretely assume dominance. The spiritual combat between light and darkness would intensify even more.

There is no uncertainty as to the outcome of this battle, for the victory of Our Lord Jesus Christ is certain. At the End Times, the Devil - who is the "master" of the Antichrist - will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet will also be precipitated (cf. Rev 20:9-10). We, for our part, are called to enlist in the "army of the Lamb" for this spiritual combat, taking our proper place, and not to surrender helplessly in the face of the growing darkness.

This is a serious call addressed to us. If we find ourselves in apocalyptic times, the "emergency case" in the following of Christ is activated, and we must live

our faith even more intensely. God can use the anti-Christian threat to awaken us from all spiritual lethargy and false security, so that we entrust ourselves completely to the Lord.

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/31/>