

13. March 2024

LENTEN ITINERARY

Day 29: "Following Christ in anti-Christian times (II)"

The spirit of discernment and the Antichrist.

Let us return today to the theme of the Antichrist, to whom we will dedicate several meditations. We will continue with this theme, giving also some concrete guidelines for dealing with the threat emanating from the Antichrist and his henchmen.

As I mentioned in yesterday's meditation, there are strong passages in Scripture that speak of the Antichrist. Thus St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians:

"It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has taken place and there has appeared the wicked One, the lost One, the Enemy, who raises himself above every so-called God or object of worship to enthrone himself in God's sanctuary and flaunts the claim that he is God. The mystery of wickedness is already at work, but let him who is restraining it once be removed, and the wicked One will appear openly. The Lord will destroy him with the breath of his mouth and will annihilate him with his glorious appearance at his coming. But the coming of the wicked One will be marked by Satan being at work in all kinds of counterfeit miracles and signs and wonders, and every wicked deception aimed at those who are on the way to destruction because they would not accept the love of the truth and so be saved. And therefore God sends on them a power that deludes people so that they believe what is false, and so that those who do not believe the truth and take their pleasure in wickedness may all be condemned" (2 Thess 2:3-4,7-12).

St. John the Apostle writes in his letter:

"Children, this is the final hour; you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and now many Antichrists have already come; from this we know that it is the final hour. They have gone from among us, but they never really belonged to us; if they had belonged to us, they would have stayed with us. But this was to prove that not one of them belonged to us" (1 Jn 2:18-19).

From the various biblical passages, of which we have only quoted a few, and from what has been written and said by various reliable people throughout history on this subject, we can mention the following characteristics of the Antichrist:

The Antichrist, also called "son of perdition" (cf. 2 Thess 2:3), will present himself as universal ruler. Whereas the other "antichrists" that have existed throughout history - such as the dictators of the last century - soon revealed themselves as violent tyrants; the Antichrist who is to appear at the End Times is usually described as a bringer of global peace, endowed with extraordinary charisma and the corresponding political powers to carry out his goals. He will come at a time when humanity is in great need, at a time when development makes it possible to exercise global dominion. Outwardly he may present himself as a virtuous and spiritual man; but, deep down, his inspiration is of demonic origin.

As his name indicates, the Antichrist will present himself as an imitation of the Redeemer; while he will try to conceal his deep aversion and enmity towards Christ. Thus, he may even quote the Gospel, placing particular emphasis on those passages which address man in his need. He will thus give the impression that he is acting out of Christian charity and that he is an advocate of justice and representative of mercy. In reality, he will offer a kind of "intra-worldly gospel" that denies the transcendence of God and man's need for redemption. He will keep hidden his "satanic mission," which consists in achieving global dominion and penetrating the temple of God to usurp its place (cf. Mt 24:15).

The Antichrist will want to exert his influence in the Church and use her for his ends, thus trying to pervert the mission entrusted to him by the Lord. He will succeed in getting a considerable number of Christians on his side and will cause deep confusion in the time of the great apostasy.

Not a few suspect that the Antichrist will have at his side a kind of "False Prophet" (cf. Rev 19:20), who will have previously prepared his advent. Unfortunately, we cannot rule out the possibility that this False Prophet, and even the Antichrist himself, will emerge from among the Christian ranks. Let us remember what St. John said in his letter: *"They have gone from among us, but they never really belonged to us"* (1 Jn 2:19).

These are some characteristics that could help us to identify the Antichrist when he manifests himself. Certainly we have not covered them all; but, if we are vigilant, we will be able to perceive the "spiritual flavor" of the antichristian deceptions. Indeed, we can discover them already in the world today. If we hold fast to the traditional Catholic faith, it should be relatively easy for us to identify them. But we must also discern whether, by any chance, this spirit has infiltrated the Church, since it claims to sit in the sanctuary of God (2 Thess 2:4). And it will certainly also try to penetrate the inner temple of our heart!

Meditation on the reading of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/30/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <http://en.elijamission.net/2021/03/17/>