



16. March 2024

LENTEN ITINERARY

Day 32: "Following Christ in anti-Christian times (V)"

Spiritual resistance to the anti-Christian threat

In our journey towards the great Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord, we have dealt with the grave threat of the anti-Christian powers. These have even penetrated our Church, seeking to disintegrate and weaken her from within, so that she loses her clear and unequivocal witness and is no longer able to give true guidance to men. The more the Church adopts the "smell of this world", the less she reflects the face of her Divine Bridegroom.

One of the serious attacks on the Holy Church, which threatens her very identity, is the increasing restrictions on the traditional rite of Holy Mass. Instead of encouraging this rite, which is loved by a considerable number of the faithful, as Pope Benedict XVI had done during his Pontificate, the opposite is now happening. Some clergy and faithful, who see these restrictions as a great injustice, will probably opt for clandestinity in order to escape the attack on this great treasure and to preserve the continuation of this rite.

So how can we, the faithful, defend ourselves and offer appropriate resistance to the attacks that cast a shadow over the face of our Church?

I will now point out 4 pillars to which we must cling and build upon in this fight:

1) In order not to fall prey to anti-Christian seductions, it is important to hold fast to **the sound doctrine of the Church** (orthodoxy) and the praxis that derives from it (orthopraxis). The Apostle Paul goes so far as to say that even if an angel from heaven should preach a different gospel to us, we should not believe him (cf. Gal 1:8). The Catholic Church has a clear and unambiguous doctrine! Infinite thanks be to God for it! It can certainly be understood with increasing depth and precision; but it can never evolve in such a way that it contradicts itself. We should not lend an ear to anyone who does not pass on this "clear water" of sound doctrine, or who questions it, relativises it or makes it the subject of debate. To close our ears to the fables of which St. Paul warns (cf. 2 Tim 4:3-4) is already an act of resistance, because we do not give room for error to proliferate.

2) **The moral teaching of the Church** has not changed! Sin is still sin, and it cannot be presented as if it were not serious. True mercy does not mean relativising sin; it means helping the person to get out of a disordered situation, so that his or her life corresponds objectively to God's Will. For this, much patience is needed and harshness must be avoided. However, it will never be mercy to simply leave people in their disordered life, or, worse still, to confirm them in that way of living. This would be to mislead them, and would go against their transcendent vocation, which is to live as true children of God. Homosexual acts, adultery, sexuality outside marriage, masturbation, etc., are still sin, even if the world - and even erring bishops and priests - say otherwise. Holy Communion can only be received in a state of grace. Whoever cannot directly help people in this or that critical situation, can always turn to prayer and offer sacrifice for them.

3) **The mission of the Church** - this has not changed either! The Lord's command to proclaim the Gospel to all people (cf. Mt 28:19-20) is still valid, because no one can be saved without our Lord Jesus Christ. "No one comes to the Father except through me" (cf. Jn 14:6). All dialogue and ecumenism will be authentic only to the extent that it fulfils this missionary mandate of the Lord. The goal of mission cannot simply be that the Muslim becomes a better Muslim and the Hindu a better Hindu; but that all must meet this God who sent His Son into the world to save them (cf. Jn 3:16). No one, not the Pope, not a bishop, not a creature can change this! A dialogue that loses sight of this would be misleading.

4) **The way of holiness:** this too has not changed! In the first place, it is a matter of accepting God's love and responding to it; of entering into an intimate relationship with the Lord and cultivating it... To this end, God has given us His Word, prayer, the sacraments and many other helps...

The love of God comes first, and from it springs true neighbourly love! All other issues must be subordinated to this hierarchy of values. It is not the betterment of the world that must occupy the first rank in the mission of the Church; it is the love of God manifested in Our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls.

"I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and so that I may be in them" -says the Lord (Jn 17:26).

Whoever, living in a state of grace, holds firmly to these four pillars - the sound doctrine of the Church, her moral teaching, the missionary mandate and the way of holiness - without being misled, is already equipped with a stable armour to resist the anti-Christian forces and not to be blinded.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2022/04/02/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2021/03/20/>