



Balta Lelija

## PERSECUTION OF THE FAITHFUL INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

### General reflections

Since the beginning of the history of the Church, the faithful have suffered persecution. Even in the Old Testament we are told stories of faithful Jews who preferred to die rather than sacrifice to idols or eat foods that were forbidden to them for religious reasons.

If we look more deeply, it is the fallen angels who act “behind the curtains”, wanting to infect men with their disobedience and rebellion against God to distance them from Him. Although it is not necessary to mention these powers of darkness over and over again, we must keep them in mind to be able to fully understand the topic we are going to address.

In the Word of God we find the underlying reason why the Lord was rejected: “*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not receive it. He came to his own, and his own did not receive him*” (Jn 1:5.11).

From the perspective of faith, religious persecution consists of the truth of God being attacked and, consequently, the person who wants to be obedient to it is persecuted.

But we must understand that not only believers are the target of the Evil One's attacks; but the entire human race is attacked by it so that men do not reach the goal for which they were created or grasp the meaning of their existence. In this sense, also those people who have closed themselves to faith and believe they can build a world without God or exercise power without being accountable to Him, have fallen victims to the attacks of the Evil One. They have succumbed to a deception and, therefore, no longer live according to the deepest truth of their existence. As a result, they can sometimes even become accomplices of the fallen angels and their wicked plans, even without knowing it.

But the focus of this conference is the persecution of the faithful, who want to consciously serve God and try to avoid everything that could displease Him. The present topic is related to my latest video: “Anti-Christian shadows grow”<sup>1</sup>, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gcs6byC91ss>

other conferences that I have previously published. Although I am referring particularly to Catholics, certainly many points apply to all believing Christians, and some even apply to those people of good will, who want to live according to God's commandments.

### **Persecution in the life of Jesus**

If we look at the history of our Christian faith, we find this religious persecution first in the life of Jesus himself and then in the lives of his disciples. In a way, persecution is part of the “valley of tears” in which we live on earth, where light and darkness have not yet been definitively separated. The powers of evil can continue to work until such time as the Lord puts an end to this drama once and for all, and his people dwell with him in undisturbed security and eternal peace.

Persecutions are particularly painful when they come from our own “brothers”, that is, from those who share the same faith and are called to work with us for the Kingdom of God. But let us remember and become aware once again of the words of the Prologue of Saint John: *“His own did not receive it.”*

Jesus was persecuted by those to whom he had been sent, by those to whom he had to reveal the love of the Father, by those who had witnessed his miracles and saving signs.

Instead of recognizing that the Jewish faith had reached its fullness with the coming of the Messiah, the religious leaders of the time considered Jesus to be rebellious, arrogant, a danger to the people, a blasphemer, possessed by demons, etc. They did not want to see the signs that He performed, because these became more and more a threat to them. We see it very clearly in the passage of the resurrection of Lazarus, which led the religious leaders to the decision to kill Jesus (cf. Jn 11:53).

However, in order to kill Jesus as an evildoer who attacked religion, the religious authorities allied themselves with the civil authority. In fact, they used it to crucify Jesus. We know Pilate's hesitation when it came to condemning him to death, because he noticed the true motive of the religious leaders (Mt 27:18), but he ended up giving in to their pressure.

To continue developing our theme, now applying it to our days, let us stay with this key point: The religious authorities of that time, in cooperation with the civil authority, were responsible for the persecution and death of the Son of God. The same thing happened later with his apostles and disciples.

### **What is the situation in the year 2024?**

In many parts of the world, we perceive strong anti-Christian influences, if not anti-Christian dominance. In once Christian nations and states, policies are being implemented that, for example, no longer guarantee the protection of the child in the womb; policies that promote abortion and similar atrocities, which move further and further away from the commandments of God and leave behind moral chaos, followed by political chaos.

The dominance of the powers of darkness is evident, and the State increasingly loses the conditions under which a free and pleasing life can develop in the eyes of God. The stronger the anti-Christian influence becomes, the more troubled the faithful become, because the state powers usually possess all the external means of power to exert their influence through propaganda and manipulations of all kinds.

Just think about how a harmful vaccination campaign, which had not been sufficiently examined or allowed to be questioned by scientists in an open debate, could be promoted and carried out in almost the entire world. If a doctor or scientist dared to criticize it, they were often branded as conspiracists and even dismissed from their positions. To this day, the sometimes-absurd measures of governments continue to be defended, although it is increasingly evident that vaccines caused and may continue to cause serious harm and even deaths.

Thus, the faithful are increasingly threatened by a policy hostile to the faith and surrounded by a society increasingly permeated by an anti-Christian mentality.

### **What does the danger of persecution mean for the faithful?**

In situations that pose a threat, the faithful normally look to the head of the Church for guidance. From it they hope to receive guidelines on how to face the growing danger in the world around them, and they trust that the Church will show itself as a bastion of spiritual resistance against anti-Christian advances.

Within the Catholic Church, the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops occupy a special position. Shepherds have received from God the task of guiding and protecting the flock. For this reason, they rightly enjoy the trust of the faithful and can count on their religious obedience.

However, this wonderful spiritual order can only be fruitful and legitimate if the spiritual conditions for it are met; namely, that the Pope and the bishops find themselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, this is no longer the case under Pope Francis' pontificate. At decisive points it is no longer in line with the preceding path of the Church, and has gradually lost spiritual authority under the influence of modernism, which has been affecting the Church for quite some time. The consequence is that the poison of false doctrines and practices has spread in the Church to such an extent that we must speak of a partial apostasy.

Especially the recent statements by Pope Francis – contradictory to Holy Scripture and the doctrine of the Church – that all religions are a path to God, should be a strong wake-up call for the faithful<sup>2</sup>. At this point, at the latest, it must be recognized that the one who currently occupies the Petrine ministry is under the influence of a “different spirit” (cf. 2Cor 11:4).

But it is not only these latest statements by Pope Francis that show it, but over the last few years a wrong direction has been manifesting itself, one that wants to de-

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<sup>2</sup> On September 13, 2024, at an interreligious meeting with young people in Singapore, Pope Francis stated that “all religions are a path to reach God” and represent only “different languages”.

stroy the Church or transform it into a different entity. I have addressed these developments in a video series titled “The Five Wounds of the Church,”<sup>3</sup> as well as in writing on my blog<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, it must be noted with great pain that the faithful can no longer abide by the guidelines of the current hierarchy without endangering their faith. If he who holds the Petrine ministry acts as a false prophet without being corrected by the current episcopate – which rather welcomes his directives, applies them, tolerates them tacitly and does not contradict them openly – then the faithful find themselves in a situation emergency situation.

Deprived of reliable leadership, they have to experience how the anti-Christian spirit penetrates ever deeper into the Church, while pastors – with few exceptions – not only offer no resistance, but even cooperate in this advance. This means that the enemy has settled inside the Church and that the respective persecutions will begin for those who resist.

### **The consequences for the faithful**

Today we see that those faithful who want to remain faithful to the Church – that is, to its doctrine, its morals, its tradition, its mission – find themselves in contradiction with the line of the current Pontificate. This situation represents a great affliction for them on an internal level, as well as on an external level, as they may find themselves persecuted by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. This applies especially to priests and religious, when they are not willing to follow the errors of the supreme authority of the Church or their superiors. They are threatened with suspension and even bishops who are guilty of no charge other than not following what

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<sup>3</sup> First Wound: [https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-2-first-wound-amoris-laetitia\\_Aml6ulYsGNi3TGQ.html](https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-2-first-wound-amoris-laetitia_Aml6ulYsGNi3TGQ.html)

Second Wound: [https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-3-second-wound-abu-dhabi-declaration\\_AbKK1lyshRWj6mu.html](https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-3-second-wound-abu-dhabi-declaration_AbKK1lyshRWj6mu.html)

Third Wound: [https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-4-third-wound-the-pachamacult-in-the-vatican\\_BRyandFGt8shKhi.html](https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-4-third-wound-the-pachamacult-in-the-vatican_BRyandFGt8shKhi.html)

Fourth Wound: [https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-5-fourth-wound-the-fight-against-the-tradition\\_7f8dUHN7ffajRkd.html](https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-5-fourth-wound-the-fight-against-the-tradition_7f8dUHN7ffajRkd.html)

Fifth Wound: [https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-6-the-fifth-wound-unholy-alliance-of-the-church-with-the-state\\_nltFxSnwMCv7VyV.html](https://spiritustv.com/watch/lecture-6-the-fifth-wound-unholy-alliance-of-the-church-with-the-state_nltFxSnwMCv7VyV.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.elijamission.net/blog/>

they consider to be the pope's erroneous agenda can be removed from their diocese. Such cases have already happened.<sup>5</sup>

The means usually used to urge the faithful to follow the course desired by the current hierarchy is that of religious obedience. Without a doubt, it is a great virtue, but it leads to abuse if it is not centered on God and is used to promote paths that deviate from His Will.

This situation creates a deep inner affliction for the faithful: if they follow the dictates of their conscience, it may happen that they are prevented from following the guidelines of the current ecclesiastical hierarchy in essential points. This carries the respective consequences and causes deep inner pain, since normally the faithful are committed to obey and, under normal circumstances, would do so willingly.

In a certain sense, we can speak here of an "internal persecution", since the believer has to defend the truth against the error that wants to impose itself even by demanding religious obedience. Discords can arise here, even within the family; one can experience marginalization and deprivation of the spiritual home that one loves and to which one was accustomed.

But this sacrifice for the Lord's sake is inevitable if we want to remain faithful to the truth. In such a situation, we must not become discouraged, but learn to face persecutions in the Spirit of the Lord. Thus, "internal persecutions" become a training to root ourselves more and more deeply in the truth, in order to also be prepared for external persecutions. The Lord will know how to reward fidelity and will strengthen the faithful internally in this combat.

The reproaches and accusations from those who defend and justify Pope Francis' line will use religious language. It is possible that the faithful will be accused of causing schism, of being disobedient, arrogant and hostile, of lusting for power, of not respecting the authority instituted by God, of being rigorists... However, we will have to endure all this because of the truth, learning to face it in a spiritual way. This "spiritual way" means not simply seeking to defend oneself, but – as far as possible – pointing out the errors of this Pontificate with the force of prayer and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Bishop Joseph Strickland was removed from his diocese of Taylor, Texas. Given the lack of reasons that the Vatican gave for this decision, he himself was asked how he explained it, to which he responded: "The only answer I have to that is because there are forces in the Church that do not want to the truth of the Gospel" (<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/255990/strickland-saga-ousted-bishop-s-interview-vatican-removed>)

the truth of doctrine. Thank God there is one or another voice in the episcopate that dares to do so and thus becomes a help for the faithful.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, one should not close one's eyes to the fact that the current Pontificate has already sealed such alliances with anti-Christian political systems. Think, for example, of the disastrous deception of the coronavirus crisis, in which the church hierarchy not only uncritically implemented the measures of the governments and the forces behind them, but was sometimes even a pioneer in introducing harmful measures or giving them a religious justification.<sup>7</sup>

If vaccination centers were even installed in sacred places, as was the case in the Vienna Cathedral<sup>8</sup>, this clearly shows the degree of confusion prevailing. To this day, hardly any state body or any high representative of the Church has been heard apologizing for having harmed many people with their measures, nor have they shown that they are aware that they themselves fell into a serious deception.

Let us not forget that many of those who opposed the vaccination campaign suffered great reprisals and were sometimes even prevented from practicing their profession. A large part of the faithful was deprived of the sacraments, the churches were closed and the dying were left alone, without family support. We experienced a kind of persecution here, in which the State and the Church worked hand in hand.

If an “unholy alliance” arises between the State and the Church – and there are increasing signs pointing to this – then an internally weakened and corrupted Church can easily be used to pursue anti-Christian goals.

## **What are the faithful to do?**

### **1. Don't be afraid!**

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<sup>6</sup> Among them we can count Cardinal Raymond Burke and Gerhard Müller, Bishop Athanasius Schneider, Joseph Strickland and Marian Eleganti, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, among others.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Pope Francis introduced an ordinance in the Vatican according to which workers and visitors to Vatican City had to present a Covid-19 health certificate, proving vaccination or immunization after having passed the disease (<https://www.redaccionmedica.com/secciones/sanidad-hoy/el-papa-hace-obligatorio-el-certificado-covid-para-entrar-al-vaticano-6743>). Furthermore, he urged the faithful again and again to get inoculated, even putting moral pressure on them: “*Getting vaccinated (...) is an act of love: love for oneself, love for family and friends, love for all peoples*” (<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-08/pope-francis-appeal-covid-19-vaccines-act-of-love.html>).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.orderofmalta.int/news/vaccinations-in-st-stephens-cathedral-vienna/>

This is the first thing God asks of us. If He allows such a situation for His faithful, then He will also give them all the graces necessary to go through such difficult stages on the path of following Christ.

It requires our firm faith and great trust in the Lord. These are the anchors we cling to when storms break out. If we let fear and anxiety dominate our lives, the enemy would already have a great advantage to use. The strength to defend ourselves in persecution or to endure it with dignity does not come first of all from our own ability, but it is the Lord with his Spirit of strength who makes us capable of trampling “lions and dragons” (Ps 91:13) .

## **2. Don't be confused!**

The problem is not with the faithful, but with those who distance themselves from the teachings of the Gospel and the authentic doctrine of the Church. It must be said clearly! Either we must decisively confront attempts to justify current errors or, if we do not feel capable of doing so, we must withdraw.

In the Letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul left us strong phrases that are very helpful because of their clarity:

*“It is not that there is another [Gospel], but there are some who worry you and want to change the Gospel of Christ. But even if we ourselves or an angel from heaven were to announce to you a gospel different from that which we have preached to you, let it be anathema!”* (Gal 1,7-8).

It must be said bluntly: anyone who, for example, wants to induce priests and bishops to bless homosexual couples<sup>9</sup>, anyone who says that all religions are a path to God, speaks neither in the name of the Gospel nor in the name of the Church. It rather, confuses people.

## **3. Enroll in the spiritual combat against the Antichrist!**

The Letter to the Ephesians reminds us very clearly who the real enemy is and how to confront him. They are the “principalities and powers”, “evil spirits” (Eph 6:12), who exert their influence on those who allow themselves to be deceived by them.

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<sup>9</sup> In the declaration “Fiducia supplicans” priests are allowed and even recommended to bless couples living in “irregular” relationships, including homosexual relationships.



In reality, in the background they are the persecutors, but people can become their collaborators, even without knowing it.

We must very consciously carry out the step of engaging in spiritual combat. Along with the realization that a large part of the world – and unfortunately also the current authorities in the Church, who should be a bulwark in spiritual resistance – are partially under the rule of the “prince of this world”, we must also perceive the situation of persecution in which we already find ourselves, as well as the one that is coming.

The Holy Scriptures predict that at the end of time the Antichrist will come (2Thes 2:3), who has had many precursors throughout history. He will take dominion over the world for a time and sit in the sanctuary of God (v. 4). It will be a kind of imitation or falsification of the Reign of Christ. On his side he will have a false prophet, who will seduce men to pay homage to the Antichrist (cf. Rev 13:11-14).

We must be very vigilant to see if the coming of this Antichrist is imminent, who will want to exercise dominion over the entire world and usurp the place of God. From this perspective, we must carefully examine whether the current Supreme Head of the Church is not being used by the powers of darkness to, once the Church is weakened and infiltrated, deliver it into the hands of the Antichrist.

#### **4. Church in the desert**

As the intensity of persecution within and outside the Church increases, the faithful will have to retreat into a spiritual desert. If it becomes increasingly difficult or even impossible for them to reconcile with their conscience the participation in the life of the Church as they were accustomed to doing, then oases will have to emerge in which the Catholic faith can continue to be lived without cuts.

The Catholic Church can never be destroyed, even if the current hierarchy falls further into apostasy or even attempts to convert it into a kind of “ecumenical anti-Church.”

#### **Conclusion**

The faithful must prepare for persecution. Indeed, persecution has always been present throughout history, and today it can even become global if a centralized political power manages to exert its influence in practically all countries. Today there are technical possibilities for this. For example, if we consider the European Union as a relevant political entity, we see that it is mainly guided by anti-Christian policies. The same goes for most large political organizations.

As I have tried to point out, the Church is so weakened and disoriented – especially in the current Pontificate – that it seems more inclined to applaud a global political power rather than be a voice of prophetic correction and a refuge for the faithful.

Therefore, we must put all our trust in God. He will not leave his faithful without guidance, even if those called to guide them go astray. For my part, I try to offer help in this inevitable fight with my lectures<sup>10</sup> and daily meditations<sup>11</sup>.

In these times of great confusion within the Church, we must adhere even more closely to Holy Scripture and the unaltered doctrine of the Church. As far as the clergy is concerned, we can only expect help from those who have clearly distanced themselves from the course taken by the current pontificate and have shown unwavering fidelity to the traditional Catholic faith.

These times of tribulation are times of testing. With God's help, we must resist and grow spiritually in them. God uses these difficult times for the good of his faithful, to purify them and so that the Church can flourish again even under persecution. We can hold on to this hope, which will help us not succumb under the heavy burden, which we can consider as the hour of the "crucifixion of the Church", and will give us the strength to rise again as our Lord did on the Way of the Cross. After the crucifixion comes the Resurrection. With our eyes set on the Return of the Lord, we go out to meet him. May, upon returning, He be able to find faithful in whom charity has not cooled (cf. Mt 24:12)!

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/@elijerusalem-English>

<sup>11</sup> [en.elijamission.net](http://en.elijamission.net)