

2. January 2025

Warnings about the Antichrist

1 Jn 2:22-28

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he has promised us, eternal life. I write this to you about those who would deceive you; but the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

Sadly, it is not a myth that an Antichrist will appear in the last days, before the Second Coming of Christ. Rather, this warning is an integral part of Christian doctrine and is firmly based on Scripture. When the final Antichrist appears - and most who have pondered this figure of doom agree that it will be a specific person - he will seek to exercise global power in several dimensions. The Antichrist will want to usurp the place of God and demand some kind of religious worship for himself. This is the same old desire of the devil, which was clearly expressed when he approached Jesus in the wilderness and wanted to be worshipped, thus seeking to dethrone God (cf. Mt 4:8-9).

If we ask ourselves whether such a figure as the Antichrist is already in this world, and if we wonder whether we will experience the temporal dominion of the "Son of Perdition" in our lifetime, we will have to conclude that we cannot yet know, unless God gives us a supernatural light to recognise him. Nor will we be able to distinguish whether he is the 'last Antichrist' or just another antichristian figure, as there have been throughout human history.

But the fact that we cannot yet give a precise answer to such concerns does not mean that we should avoid the delicate nature of today's reading, let alone disregard the urgent advice of the Apostle. For just as the return of the Lord will be preceded by signs that

the time is near, so there will be signs that the coming of an evil figure - such as the Antichrist - is being prepared by his disciples.

The wickedness of this figure may not be perceived at first. Not a few authors who have written about the Antichrist even describe him as a sympathetic and appealing character, appearing virtuous, religious and, above all, fascinating. Perhaps in our time he presents himself as a globalist, bringing apparent solutions to the material problems of humanity, developing far-reaching concepts to improve the quality of life.

Outwardly he may appear to be the right man at the right time, the one to carry humanity forward and rally the great institutions of the world behind him. Many nations may look upon him as a benefactor of mankind, seemingly invested with special authority, and consequently give him their support.

But all this is deception! Within himself, the Antichrist will not be guided by the Holy Spirit, but will be inspired by demons who will make use of his God-given human qualities. The purpose of the demons is not to create a benefactor for humanity, but to use this appearance to lead people away from God and to influence them.

The Lithuanian author Antanas Maceina, in his book 'The Mystery of Iniquity', gives a very revealing description:

"The Antichrist (...) is a self-satisfied benefactor. He wants to give everyone what he needs. He wants to establish justice and the distribution of goods in the world. In fact, (...) he achieves universal prosperity. But he does all this not because he considers men to be his brothers in the Lord (...), but for the simple reason that, through his benevolence, seduced mankind will fall on their knees before him, thank him, worship him, and consider him to be their only guide and protector. The satisfaction of self-love is the fundamental motive of antichristian charity."

The Antichrist described by Saint John in today's reading should be clearly recognisable to every faithful Catholic, who would notice if Christ were openly denied. But all this can happen much more subtly. It does not necessarily have to be a public denial; it could be 'between the lines', hidden, not clearly expressed.

The biblical advice is clear: we must not be deceived, but stand in the anointing, that is, in the Holy Spirit. For us, this means standing firmly on Scripture and the authentic Magisterium of the Church.

This warning is all the more important because confusion has entered the Church, the spirit of Antichrist is at work in the highest levels of the hierarchy and is weakening the Church from within.

This is why St John's warning must not go unheeded. We can only resist the seductions of the Antichrist and his false prophet if we are rooted in the Word of God, if we follow the authentic teaching of the Church, if we take seriously the path of holiness and if we seek to cultivate an intimate relationship with the Virgin Mary.