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THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN THREAT AND HOW TO CONFRONT IT

“Part V: The Antichrist in Michael O’Brien’s novel”

Today we’ll take a look at another book that addresses the topic of the Antichrist.

Like Robert Benson, Michael O’Brien—an author who is still alive—presents his apocalyptic narrative in the form of a novel. The main character of his trilogy is a Jewish convert who becomes a Catholic priest: Father Elias.

The story recounts the rise of a man who exerts an enormous hold over humanity. O’Brien hints at certain events from his youth that suggest he is, deep down, a truly cruel person, even though outwardly he appears impeccable and virtuous. As the story progresses, Father Elias learns that this man has ordered the killing of his political opponents and that he is surrounded by violent men who carry out his orders.

Father Elias, who before his conversion had also embarked on a promising political career, is tasked by the Holy Father with confronting this man to try to save his soul and urge him to turn away from the paths of perdition. The Pope and Father Elias are convinced that this powerful politician may be the Antichrist.

The alleged Antichrist tries to win over Father Elias and other high-ranking clergy for his own purposes. The book describes how some bishops and cardinals support the Antichrist’s initiatives. These are the same people who want the Church to adopt a more progressive stance.

At one point, the decisive encounter between Father Elias and the alleged Antichrist takes place, and the priest performs an exorcism on him to give him one more chance to convert to Jesus Christ. However, as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that the Antichrist does not convert but instead carries on with what he considers his “mission.” This consists of establishing a world government in which he himself occupies the central position as a sort of “peacemaker.” As in Robert Benson’s novel and other publications, the Antichrist appears as a messenger of peace, deceiving people with his seemingly positive façade.

The end of the third book describes how Father Elias, who by then has been ordained a bishop, travels to Jerusalem with one of his brothers to confront the Antichrist once again. The Antichrist makes a public appearance at the Western Wall. A few voices are raised to denounce him as the Antichrist and the False Prophet, enemies of God. However, the vast majority of the crowd is spellbound by him. The voices opposing him are silenced and annihilated. The same fate befalls Father Elias.

There is much more literature on the Antichrist, but I believe the three books we have summarized are sufficient within the scope of this series.

Before highlighting some of the Antichrist's characteristics in tomorrow's meditation, I would like to quote a passage from dogmatic theologian Franz Diekamp, who draws on the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas. He writes the following about the Antichrist:

"The Antichrist will appear as the 'man of lawlessness,' the 'son of perdition,' and the 'adversary.' ...

At the end of time, the spirit hostile to Christianity—the spirit of impiety—will manifest itself in a specific person who will wage a terribly cruel war against the Church. This Antichrist has his precursors in all those who turn, filled with hatred, against Christ and His Kingdom, and who, therefore, may also be called 'antichrists.' However, the 'final Antichrist' will surpass them all, synthesizing all their claims in his rebellion against God and His Anointed One, leading him to 'deify himself.'"

According to Diekamp—and I believe this is essential—neither the collectivist interpretation (which asserts that the Antichrist is not a specific person but rather the sum of Christ's enemies throughout history) nor the purely historical interpretation (which identifies the Antichrist with figures such as Nero or Caligula) fully corresponds to reality.

Therefore, we must expect the appearance of a specific individual who, at the end of time, before the Second Coming of Christ, will exercise dictatorial rule for a time, persecuting all people and especially those who remain faithful to the Lord.

The Antichrist, also called the "son of perdition" (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3), will present himself as a universal ruler. While the other "antichrists" who have existed throughout history—

such as the dictators of the last century—quickly revealed their cruelty, the Antichrist is usually described as a messenger of peace, endowed with extraordinary charisma and the political power necessary to carry out his plans. He will appear at a time when humanity is in great need, in an era when technological advancement allows for global domination. Outwardly, he will present himself as a virtuous and spiritual man, but deep down, he will be inspired by demons.

Tomorrow, we will delve deeper into the characteristics of the Antichrist.

Reflection on today's reading: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-right-answer/>