



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem ©
* Knights of Malta *

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Chancellor's Update

THE CHURCH FATHERS AND THE ANTICHRIST

The following Letter to the Editor from The Wanderer in the mid 1960s is a good continuation of last month's Update on future events.

“My curiosity was awakened last Summer at the Second Wanderer Forum by the widespread belief that we may be living in the days of the Antichrist. I myself skirted the question in my own talk before the Forum - and suggested an answer that probably we are not, because all distraught ages - and they are commonplace - believe their trying days betoken the end of the world.

This Fall and Winter I pursued the question a bit further and have become interested in what the Fathers of the Church have foretold about the Antichrist and his days. I now find that this is much too vast a project for me to do a definitive job on. It is enough for three Ph. D. dissertations and I suggest the divisions: (a) what the Church Fathers shared by both the East and the West say, (b) what the Western Fathers say, (c) what the Eastern Fathers say. Greek, Latin, Arabic, Russian, plus any modern Western European language and Church Slavonic seem enough equipment for a definitive job. However, anyone with lots of time can do seventy-five percent of a definitive job, for most of the material is available in translation. I cannot over emphasize that scholarly work is possible not only to us nuts in universities. Actually, anyone who can read can do highly scholarly work. About one-third to one-half of the “students” in our colleges and graduate schools CANNOT do scholarly work, for they can't read. I have gone far enough with this project to know that most of it exists available in any one major European language – German perhaps best, but excellent is French OR English OR Spanish OR Italian, etc.

I should like to share with the Wanderer family what I have learned to date.

The Antichrist will be born in or near Jerusalem from an impure Jewish woman of the Tribe of Dan. The promiscuity of his mother will be so thorough that not even she will be certain of his paternity. The mark of Satan will preside over his conception and delivery. He will bring a universal peace and prosperity to the world, but they will in reality be will-of- the wisps. They will appeal to most people, but there will also be a large number who know they are only a bubble. Those who do not follow the approbation of the majority will be ostracized and cruelly persecuted. The instrument of the universal peace will be a gathering of the nations (“*narodov* – peoples”) in a far Western mammoth city. The Antichrist will use this assembly to spread his reign and an apostate bishop of Rome will unite with him. Russia will know a long night of blood before the final days in which people will wade “knee-deep” in blood. But she will free herself from her tyranny at about same time that many other nations will fall into it. Her “meat will be frozen but will thaw out and become palatable, again, whereas the warm winds of Spring of the West will rot all its meat.” There will be a vast apostasy of Bishops and priests and laics

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all over the world who will persecute the faithful and drive them from the churches. The apostasy, although universal, will be far more wide spread in the West than in the East.

My sources for the above are St. Gregory of Nissa, Gregory the Great, St. Irenaeus, Pope Leo I, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cassian the Roman, St. Cyprian of Carthage, St. Anthony of the Desert, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas.

I cannot refrain from a quote from Anthony of the Desert as pupils question him about those days.

“How will so great a falling away be possible?”

"Men will surrender to the spirit of the age. They will say that if they had lived in our day faith was simple and easy. But in their day things they say will be complex and the Church must be brought up to date and made meaningful to the day's problem. When the world and the Church will be one, then those days are at hand. For Our Divine Master placed a barrier between His things and the things of the world." [Disquisition XCIV]

With the exception of St Seraphim of Sarov all the above, I believe, are acceptable to the Western Church. St Seraphim is interesting to me for a multiplicity of reasons, including the trouble he has caused the Bolsheviki. He has been behind more seemingly unexplained perhaps supernatural phenomena to plague the Bolsheviki than seemingly anyone else except Theotokos - The Blessed Virgin. For example, “heavenly lights” engulfed the convent he founded for the nuns at Sarov. The Soviets destroyed the convent and slaughtered the nuns. The “lights” engulfed the surrounding forest. The Soviets cut down the forest. The lights engulfed the mountain. The Soviets bulldozed the mountain. The lights spread over the entire area of Sarov - and the Soviets bar entrance to it.

Are the Church Fathers infallible? No. It would be considered imprudent to reject them, doubly so on what several agree on. Very much of the teaching and dogma of the Church has always been derived from the ideas of the Church Fathers. But they are simply profound thinkers and great saints - and can be as wrong as you or I.

Any Ph.D. candidates among The Wanderer readers floundering around for a dissertation topic? Get yourself a good director and go to it. This would make for a better dissertation than anything I have ever seen.

Induat vestimentum cut decet. If the clock fits, put it on.

Dr. McCrossen, Ph.D.”

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