

Daily Meditation 01/04/2023

Pope Benedict's Political Legacy

We are meditating today on the topic of the political impact of some of Benedict's decisions, along with his mentor and guide, Pope John Paul II, and specifically the F-word -- fascism -- so well represented, if you will, by Opus Dei, which received a green check -- green light and many checks -- during those two papacies.

So I write about this in considerable depth and detail in my book on *The Pope's War: How Ratzinger's Secret Crusade Has Imperiled the Church and How It Can Be Saved*. I have a long chapter on Opus Dei and Cardinal Ratzinger. And I quote a theologian who knows very well the Peruvian church, a Catholic priest. He writes:

In Peru, Opus Dei bishops are everywhere. All of the major cities are now under their control. There are 13 to 15 of them, which is nearly half the Peruvian Episcopacy.

Now this book came out originally in 2011. So this was 11 years ago.

It is clear that they've been given a carte blanche by Rome to disassemble anything connected with liberation theology and the popular Church. The Archbishop of Lima, Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani, is particularly important because he is smart and also vicious. He described the human efforts, the human rights efforts of NGOs, and people in the church as 'bullshit.' He was also a buddy of Fujimori, former President of Peru, who was sent to jail for murder and corruption.

The m.o. of Opus in Peru has been to first drive out progressive priests, even those who are essentially centrist. Then they go after any church related groups at work in the area of human rights and social justice. In the indigenous areas of the country, specifically Cusco and Puno, they've shut down anything connected with pastoral work focused on Andean culture.

In other words, there is a movement to uproot the indigenous cultures still, again. The same insider says that in Peru, 11 years ago, "35 to 40% of the bishops are Opus Dei, and they have a game plan to control the universities." And they are aggressive in the indigenous areas of Peru. And racism is clearly patently, openly involved.

They expelled the Maryknoll order and shut down social centers everywhere.

And he said

It is going to happen here in the United States as they amass more and more power. Los Angeles is an example. And yes, the CIA is involved. They are lining up their ducks.

So these are the things that went on under these two papacies, and there are a lot of publications today-- media, I should say -- both Catholic and general who are trying to sentimentalize and make sweet the papacy of Pope Benedict.

But this is all part of dismantling liberation theology, and turning his back on social justice and on the rights of indigenous people and actually promoting racism in South America.

And he says in the 1970s, the German Catholic aid agency, Adveniat, gradually replaced the CIA as the helpmate of the military regimes in South America. And then Adveniat became controlled by bishops sympathetic to Opus Dei, including Cardinal Hoffner, Archbishop of Cologne and a close friend of Ratzinger. Hoffner attempted in August 1984 to hand two parishes of his Cologne diocese to Opus Dei priests, but the parishioners protested so vehemently that he had to abandon his strategy. Mother Jones reported that in July 1983, CIA money went to support an Opus Dei think tank, called the Chilean Institute for General Opus Dei itself has been called the "Holy Mafia" because of its frequent banking and financial scandals and disgraces. And I explained some of those in detail.

One more point: a woman who was in the Opus Dei, a secretary to its founder Escriva for a number of years, says that money that was raised for the poor, the homeless and the unemployed, never went to these people. She never once saw money that was raised to go to them. She said Opus Dei concentrates its work with "intellectuals from the sciences, banking and the law; in a word, with the groups who control the money and power in a country. Opus Dei women do apostolate with the wives of influential men."

So there is much that has to be exposed about the fascism that has crept into the Roman Catholic Church in our lifetime. There was a time when it was resisted. The bishop of Oakland, when I was still a priest in good standing in Oakland, -- and he was a pastoral man and a good man. Nothing outstandingly radical about him. But he refused at that time, this was back 25 years ago, to let Opus Dei into his diocese. He was aware back then, what often happens with Opus Dei. And a lot has happened in Oakland, in America, North America since that time regarding the movement of Opus Dei and its penetration into the bishopric, the episcopacy, of the Roman Catholic Church in North America.

Thank you. We'll see you tomorrow.