

# ***Peter Thiel Fears the Antichrist Is Coming. In Rome, Some Call His View Heresy.***

The right-wing tech investor is giving lectures near the Catholic church's administrative heart. Commentators there are rejecting his apocalyptic vision.

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Reporting from Rome

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For months, Peter Thiel, the right-wing tech billionaire, has warned of what he sees as an imminent threat from the Antichrist, an entity portrayed in some Christian traditions as one of Jesus' ultimate enemies.

Mr. Thiel, an investor in artificial intelligence, says he is drawing on biblical prophecies to warn of an Antichrist who will promise safety from existential risks like nuclear war, climate change and artificial intelligence only to bring about something worse: one-world, totalitarian government.

Now, Mr. Thiel is encountering resistance from Christian thinkers in the Roman Catholic Church, just as he tries to build support for his ideas in the church's backyard in Rome.

This week, Mr. Thiel arrived in Rome to deliver four lectures on the Antichrist. The series, which began on Sunday, is exploring how "occult forces are ceaselessly at work, intent on destroying what remains of the West," according to the conservative Christian group hosting him.

In response, Catholics have decried Mr. Thiel's vision in several articles over the past week. One was titled: "American heresy: Should we burn Peter Thiel?"

Mr. Thiel held [similar lectures in San Francisco](#) last year and [in Paris in January](#), prompting relatively little reaction from Christian thinkers. But proximity to the Vatican appears to have prompted some Roman Catholic commentators to issue a more sustained response. In the "American heresy" essay, the Rev. Paolo Benanti, an adviser to the [Vatican on A.I.](#), described Mr. Thiel's vision as "disturbing."



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Father Benanti said that Mr. Thiel — a venture capitalist who played major roles in the formation of PayPal; Facebook; and Palantir, a software and data-analysis firm — was attempting to accelerate the decline of liberal democracy to make it easier for his companies to operate.

Mr. Thiel had taken three key components of the Western value system — competition, technology and the individual — and warped them so drastically that they risked leading to “radically divergent results from the common democratic project,” Father Benanti said.

A spokesman for Mr. Thiel declined to immediately comment.

Published Saturday on [Le Grand Continent, a French-language opinion website](#), Father Benanti’s essay described Mr. Thiel as the promoter of “a prolonged act of heresy against the liberal consensus: a challenge to the very foundations of civil coexistence.”

For the past week, too, *Avvenire*, a daily newspaper owned by an organization for Italian bishops, has published several articles warning of the threat posed by Mr. Thiel’s vision. One described him as “[decisive in the slow conversion of American liberal democracy](#) into a sort of light autocracy built to his measure.” Another called him an “[agent of chaos](#).”

Nonreligious groups have also protested. On Sunday, members of Italian branch of the No Kings movement, an anti-Trump protest group, gathered in front of Italy’s defense ministry holding up a bilingual sign that read: “Peter Thiel out of Rome. The technoligarchs of war out of Rome.”

Mr. Thiel, an early backer of Donald Trump and JD Vance, has said that [his Christian faith is at the center](#) of his worldview. He grew up in an evangelical Christian family and has described his faith as [“somewhat heterodox.”](#)

When Ross Douthat, a columnist for The New York Times, [last year](#) asked Mr. Thiel about the Antichrist, the billionaire responded: “How much time do we have?” He went on to express concerns that focusing on existential risks would lead to regulations to create a one-world totalitarian state.

The lectures in Rome were organized in part by the [Vincenzo Gioberti Cultural Association](#), a conservative Catholic organization based in northern Italy. Participation was by invitation only and the venue — the Renaissance-era Palazzo Orsini Taverna in downtown Rome — was a closely held secret until the series began on Sunday.

On Monday afternoon, the day of the second lecture, dozens of guests dashed through the palazzo’s main gate, ignoring a dozen-odd reporters being held at bay by security guards.

Some wore badges identifying them as “guests” of “The Biblical Antichrist” conference. Many appeared to be men in their 20s and 30s, though a few women also entered, and at least one priest.

No one responded to journalists’ questions.

On its website, [the Gioberti association](#) said Mr. Thiel’s appearances were “a special honor and a gift from Providence.”

But not everyone in Rome felt the same way.

After media reports that the lectures would be held at the Pontifical St. Thomas Aquinas University, a Dominican university in Rome where almost 40 years ago Pope Leo XIV wrote [his doctoral dissertation](#), the university [issued an official denial](#).

Another report said that the lecture participants would celebrate a traditional Latin Mass at the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini. The parish priest was non-plussed.

“I have no idea how the news got around,” the Rev. Roberto Paoloni said Monday morning.

Traditional Latin Masses, which the church moved to phase out in the 1960s, have to be approved by local bishops, and a spokesman for the diocese of Rome said on Monday that if they had received a request, it would not have been granted.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/17/world/europe/peter-thiel-rome-antichrist-catholics.html?smid=url-share>