

A Strange Papal Election

by **Ida Magli**

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No Pope has so far dared to call himself Francis. Choosing a new name means to identify in some way with the person who bore that name, making him your guide. But surely Francis of Assisi would have run away in horror at the sight of the show (this is the right word: "show") that was performed by the Vatican during the election of the new Pope. Francis would have stripped himself of his clothes, would have stayed naked in front of everyone, if he had seen the clothes worn by Cardinals, who were like actors slowly walking in procession on the world's stage. We do not even imagine how much cost the fabrics, damask, golden threads, lace and jewels especially made for the Cardinals. It is certain that Francis would cry in horror and shame in front of the followers of Jesus dressed as the ancient Pharaohs, whose magnificence was so much admired by the Jews.

This is a double and tragic betrayal that has been perpetuated for two thousand years; they are identifying with the Jews, and are copying all what Jesus condemned as the worst of evils: the wealth of the Temple and the maniacal Rituals. "Do not repeat words!": this cry of Jesus echoed sadly in the minds and hearts of those who watched the unfolding of a meticulous ritual that is the absolute denial of the Gospel, but is a way of asserting its own power. The Rituals, in fact, serve to this, are born for this: to show the separation between the Sacred and the Profane, to mark the Power of those who – managing the Sacred – are above the People, command and judge the People. This is the reason why the Priests – anytime and anywhere, regardless of their religion – wear special clothes, that have a symbolic meaning, are linked to the magical occurrence, and are powerful. There is no difference between the Cardinals in Conclave and the Wizards or Shamans or Africa; the costumes of the Cardinals are derived from ancient Egypt, as a matter of fact. In the long history of the Church several times there was a rebellion against the Rituals and their pomp, and saint Francis was the most important witness of that, but to no avail. The problem is not Wealth, in fact, but "Power." A power that the priests will never give up.

The comments about the nomination of Jorge Mario Bergoglio were all positive, at least those expressed in public, but certainly the group of the losers is now sharpening its weapons. The election of a Pope that is not European is in fact an attempt to get rid of the domination of the Curia, a viper's nest perched in the Vatican and its surroundings. But there is no other reason to hope for a real transformation of the Church in the evangelical sense. In recent years, many ideas and suggestions came from within the ecclesiastical structures, and were published by their more orthodox publishing houses (especially Pauline and Dehoniane): they spoke about going back to the path of Poverty, about preaching the Gospel, about giving up the direct management of the Vatican State. All this was swept away abruptly by the message sent through the election of a Jesuit to the papal throne, and through the spectacular pomp performed for his election: the Church is always the same, and nothing can ever scratch its power and authority. Since the beginning, the peculiar task of the Jesuits always was to be the wardens of Papacy: to guard, protect, defend, and support the Pope. Now the Ward has taken the place of the Sovereign ...

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