

The Resignation of the Pope

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[ItalianiLiberi](#) | 12.02.2013

The crisis of the European civilization has now come to its final stage. This is the only way to interpret a gesture that is taking place today for the first time after two thousand years of History: the resignation of the Pope. Whatever the reasons – fatigue, old age, disease, internal quarrels inside the Curia, political pressures, the crisis of the Church, the crisis of Christianity – one thing alone is certain: Italy, Europe and the West, are going through the last stretch of a long journey which saw the birth, the development and the sudden decline of an extraordinary cultural invention, that characterized the history of Italy and of the West with the flowering of intelligence.

During that journey, and with different political forms, the awareness of the rights and of the freedom of the person was born. This was the core of the message of Jesus of Nazareth; later on it was developed by many social scientists, philosophers, theologians, economists, politicians, writers, poets, patriots: they all fought with words and weapons to keep alive this awareness. The strength of the Italian culture (and of the West) consisted in embracing all citizens within a single spiritual "center", continuously supporting their vital force, in each field: scientists or musicians, monks and artisans, farmers or merchants, rich and poor, friends and enemies. This cultural structure always continued to live, through and notwithstanding the continuous political changes, fractures, schisms, wars and revolutions that took place. Civilization, in fact, is something that lasts for a long time: events do not change its direction or meaning, but strengthen it.

Starting from the second half of the Twentieth Century – and more rapidly in the first years of the new Millennium – the European civilization is disintegrating: it does not know what will be its direction and destination. This is mainly due to the fact that any reflection and meditation over the Past was forbidden, and in place of it an unrealizable project for the future was proposed. Politicians did not understand this, because they are deeply ignorant and also because – especially in Italy – before deciding how to move they waited to see the final outcome of the

Bolshevik revolution. On the contrary, those were the crucial years along the path towards catastrophe; in that period two very important and new events took place. The first one was the '68, when the most vital and sensible part of Society – the young people – understood that the old culture was agonizing. So they attempted to create a new society: an impossible task, since Culture consists of a complex set of behaviors and values that both have a conscious and unconscious level. Culture *cannot be imposed*, as was proven by the failure of Communism in Russia.

The second event was the Second Vatican Council, which attempted to save Christianity and the Church. There are still discussions about this Council, to understand its meaning and and most of all to understand the reasons of its failure. Thinking about the causes of the resignation of pope Ratzinger, a fairly reliable one can be perhaps the irremediable conflicts that have flared around the interpretation of the Council, and the inability to implement it. The Council was an attempt to save Christianity, similar to the one made by the young people with the '68; the Church should have known very well that it was a mistake, because it was Jesus who said "*you can not put a new patch on an old garment*". Christianity is dying because there is no Faith; and Faith first of all is Trust, confidence in ourselves and in our own group, Hope, a vision of future, a goal to achieve. But this is precisely what has been taken away from all citizens, from all Christians of Italy and of Europe: no institution – let alone the Church – will be able to give it back to them.

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February 11th, 2013

Traduzione a cura di Marina Mascetti