

NOTES TO CARDINALS / 1

## Conclave: Church needs reconciliation, but in Truth

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*In view of the forthcoming conclave, the Daily Compass is publishing a series of in-depth articles inspired by the document signed by **Demos II** (an anonymous cardinal), which sets out the priorities for the next conclave to resolve the confusion and crisis created by the*

*pontificate of Francis.*

**Twelve years of a pontificate in the media spotlight,** making use of every channel of communication, from short live broadcasts on Facebook and TikTok to the decision to appear on the set of a documentary. The boundary between the virtual Pope and the real one has essentially dissolved year by year, just as the difference between the voice expressing the personal opinion of the man in white and that of Peter's successor has now disappeared. Even the perspective of a hierarchy of truths, so much vaunted for years in order to relativise important but uncomfortable doctrines, has disappeared, now effectively dismantled by a "magisterium" that has reshuffled the cards and placed peripheral issues such as human brotherhood and the "common home" at the centre.

**The gestures of this pontificate,** one of the most glorified in the media - black shoes instead of red, the various 'good evenings' and 'buon pranzo', the direct telephone calls to the most unlikely (but ideologically well-aligned) personalities, from Emma Bonino to Rita Pavone, from Marco Pannella to Giorgio Napolitano, to the editorial staff of Italian sports newspaper *La Gazzetta dello Sport* - have in fact dismantled the figure of the Supreme Pontiff *qua talis*. The Pope who appeals to the world of the media, a world that has in fact shaped the "tastes" and sensibilities of many ordinary people, is certainly not the Pope who, inspired by the Spirit who comes from above, convinces the world "of sin, of justice and of judgment" (Jn 16:8); rather, it is the Pope who says what the world wants to hear and remains silent about what upsets and irritates it. This pontificate has dangerously provoked a seriously inadequate understanding of the Catholic Church, where philanthropic values have replaced supernatural grace, (presumed) human good nature has replaced holiness, and complacency towards artificial fashions has overwhelmed divine approval.

**The widespread, continuous and inaccurate statements** made by the visible head of the Church have, over the years, understandably led to disorientation among the faithful themselves and, in a not inconsiderable number of them, even to an instinctive aversion to him; an aversion that has driven them to shores with markedly schismatic and sometimes even sedevacantist characteristics. It is undeniable that this pontificate, with its careless and misleading statements and the no less worrying ambiguity of its documents, has caused a serious and widespread internal rupture within the Church. After twelve years of Francis, Catholics are dramatically more divided and the Church is increasingly dangerously polarised.

**The next pontiff will inevitably have to deal with this schism,** which is now not

even too underground, but care must be taken that this work of reconciliation is not done at the expense of the Truth. The profile of the new Pope must be suited to the chair of Truth on which he will sit, that is, he must be a man who is aware that only Truth, goodness and beauty have a real capacity for unification; a man who knows how to build patiently on solid foundations, rather than seeking immediate gratification and applause.

**We must beware of those profiles** who claim to achieve this (supposed) unity by giving favours to all who ask for them, without any regard for the Truth; profiles who live according to the logic of "Paris is well worth a Mass"! This is a very strong temptation after years of a pontificate that has not been authoritative, because of its distance from the truth, but very authoritarian, which has led many to despair.

**In this regard, it may be useful to trace the identity of the Antichrist**, as outlined by the famous Russian theologian Vladimir Sergeevich Soloviev, namely that of a universal peacemaker, capable of satisfying everyone according to their desires and sensibilities: the foundation of a museum of Christian archaeology for the Orthodox, the creation of an institute for free research into the Holy Scriptures for Protestants, the restoration of the Pope to the See of Rome for Catholics. All for the modest price of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God and sole Saviour of the world. It is not unlikely that the Conclave will gather around a candidate with a benevolent disposition and conciliatory traits, but without a sense of his primary duty to confirm his brothers in the faith, to safeguard sacred Tradition, to defend the People of God against the attacks of wolves dressed as lambs. Caution of the candidate who is inclined to negotiate with the Truth.

**The first criterion for choosing the candidate to succeed Blessed Peter** will therefore be to check that he has a sense of the office he is to assume: 1. to protect him from the degradation that comes from constant media exposure, from approximate teachings, and from a centralising and narcissistic personality; 2. Knowing that he is truly the servus servorum Dei, not because of an ostentatious simplicity and humility, but because of an awareness of the gravity of this office, which does not place him as an absolute authority in the Church, but as a true supreme authority, insofar as he is totally relative and obedient to the Word of God, transmitted in the Church through Scripture and Sacred Tradition, authentically interpreted by the Holy Magisterium.

**It will be necessary to verify** whether he believes in the depths of his being what Benedict XVI affirmed in the well-known passage of his homily on the occasion of his installation to the Roman Cathedra on 7 May 2005: "The power to teach in the Church implies a commitment to the service of obedience to the faith. The Pope is not an

absolute sovereign whose thought and will are law. On the contrary, the Pope's ministry is a guarantee of obedience to Christ and his word. He must not proclaim his own ideas, but must constantly commit himself and the Church to obedience to the Word of God, in the face of all attempts to adapt and dilute it, and in the face of all opportunism”.

**Only if the next Pope is the first to obey the entirety of the Word of God** will it be possible to rebuild the foundations of the Church, of those who bind their obedience to the obedience of the Vicar of Christ, not to his eccentric personality or his desire for 'paradigm shifts'.