

PROFILE

## Parolin, Silvestrini's heir and Bergoglio's continuator

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Cardinal Pietro Parolin, former Secretary of State, appears to be the natural successor to Francis' pontificate because, despite the temperamental and cultural differences between the two, he belongs to the ecclesiastical current that supported Bergoglio's

candidacy: the faction of Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, the prelate of Brisighella, a point of reference for Italian leftists.

**To understand who Parolin really is**, and why his possible ascension to the papacy would be a disaster for the Church, one must understand Silvestrini. He is the man who has been called "the cardinal of diplomacy", who arrived at the Holy See in 1953 and came into the good graces of Monsignor Domenico Tardini, future Secretary of State (from 1958 to 1961), who introduced him to his newly created Villa Nazareth, of which he was later to become president (as well as president of the Domenico Tardini Community Foundation). Villa Nazareth was the driving force behind Italian Catholic progressivism.

**He then came under the protective wings of Cardinal Agostino Casaroli**, with whom he collaborated closely in the implementation of the Ostpolitik, which gradually marked the transition from the Church of Silence to the silence of the Church; not because Casaroli was pro-Communist, as he has been falsely accused, but because dialogue had become the supreme value to which much, too much, had to be sacrificed.

**Silvestrini was also the man of the Second Vatican Council as a prophecy**, as an index pointing to wider horizons not yet realised, as a constitutional charter that communicated the principles for the beginning of a new Church. For this reason, Silvestrini, the Cardinal in dialogue with all, could not tolerate a figure like Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, who was clearly not worthy of his dialogue. In his eyes, Lefebvre was the image of the pre-conciliar Church, which now had to be abandoned like a heavy ballast that would slow down the prophetic process.

**Silvestrini always saw the Council as the fundamental starting point** for new processes through which the Church would have to open itself to modernity. His vision was summed up in an interview he gave to *Avvenire* (Italian bishops daily newspaper) on the occasion of his 90th birthday: "I believe that we must start again from the Second Vatican Council, from everything that has not yet been implemented and that remains to be done [...]. With my dear and brotherly friend, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, we have often wondered over the years how necessary and urgent it is to find a new language to speak to humanity today, especially to the younger generations, and to give adequate answers to modernity. The challenge for the Church is precisely to leave the confines of the sacristy, in a sense to "declericalise" itself, including its laity, and to live the Gospel authentically. New processes must be initiated, leaving the sacristy to reach the peripheries, fighting against clericalism: The pontificate of Francis has been an attempt to carry out Silvestrini's programme; and it is no secret that Pope Bergoglio has visited

Villa Nazareth several times to thank and pay homage to his benefactor. However, the programme has not yet been fully implemented, which is why the descendants of the Cardinal of Romagna are working hard to manipulate the Conclave and not to interrupt the dream of their mentor.

**In fact, Cardinal Pietro Parolin is Bergoglio's natural heir**, because he is Silvestrini's natural heir. Bergoglio's election and the priorities of his pontificate came from the desk of 'Don Achille', although Bergoglio's very authoritarian and undiplomatic character has hindered rather than helped the enterprise. Parolin is the right man to repair the Argentine Pope's character flaws without deviating in the slightest from Silvestrini's agenda.

**A Council, a prophecy that continues with Pope Francis"** was in fact the title of an important speech that the late Secretary of State gave in Washington in 2017, at the Catholic University of America, at the invitation of Archbishop Donald Wuerl, protégé of the former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick (whose misdeeds he was obviously completely unaware of) and his successor in the Washington chair. This speech is notable for having been literally 'copied and pasted' from two writings by Cardinal Marcello Semeraro from 2014, full of ideological rants about the 'Church of the poor'. It is remarkable that the Cardinal Secretary of State, visiting the most important Catholic university in the United States, did not find the time to write something original, but instead allowed himself to be inspired ad litteram by one of the most progressive bishops in the College of Cardinals.

**The Council can certainly be considered an event**, and this was intuitively felt by many from the outset, if only because of the transition, evident to all, to a new paradigm of a Church with a global dimension. There were those who compared such a change, because of its enormous scope, to the transition from "Jewish Christianity to pagan Christianity". Nothing less. The Council of change, of prophecy yet to be fulfilled (and which obviously goes in the direction of those who know how to manoeuvre well), the Council to be interpreted "not exclusively in a historical key, but in a sense, I would say, still prophetic, capable of guiding and continuing", the Council as an event. In short, the Council according to that "open" hermeneutic which is not interested in the texts of the documents or even in the interpretation given to them by the subsequent Magisterium (John Paul II and Benedict XVI), but only in the prophetic spirit. Despite the diplomatic subtleties and balancing acts present in the text, there is no doubt which of the two hermeneutics Benedict XVI invoked in his famous speech to the Roman Curia in 2005 is that of Parolin.

**The "paternal" traits of Cardinal Silvestrini are clearly visible in his heir:** Parolin is in fact the most ruthless Cardinal towards the faithful attached to the ancient rite; it was he who played a decisive role in the drafting of the Traditionis Custodes, laying the foundations for a veritable apartheid within the Church. If Parolin were to emerge from the loggia dressed in white, the danger of a new schism in the Catholic Church would be very real, despite the fact that he is currently giving assurances of more moderate advice on the issue in order to gain the twenty or so votes from the conservative wing that he needs to reach the required 89. It is called an election campaign, and one of the most despicable.

**And then there is the agreement with China**, which has angered even a man of great obedience and gentleness like Cardinal Zen. With this negotiation, Cardinal Parolin, with the decisive mediation of the former cardinal Theodore McCarrick and of cardinal Claudio Maria Celli, another Silvestrini, linked to Villa Nazareth, sold the Church to the Chinese communist government, which is now practically free, through the government's office for religious affairs (i.e. the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association), to appoint the bishops it likes, to create new dioceses and to prevent the Christian initiation of minors. And so far, no one knows the content of this agreement, not even the Cardinals, who would do well to ask for an explanation before casting their votes in favour of the former Secretary of State.

**Parolin against everything pre-conciliar;** Parolin, the man of diplomatic success at any cost; Parolin, the great manipulator as also the recent 'Becciu case' demonstrates. It

was largely in the hands of the former Secretary of State. According to some rumours, the case was resolved among a few cardinals in a way that was far from transparent, with two alleged letters from Francis appearing out of nowhere, signed 'F', which the rest of the College of Cardinals did not see.