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THE GREAT REFUSAL MIRRORED SEMBLANCES IN VATICAN

This paper is the result of a thirty hour seminar on Performance Studies, taught by Dr. Carmela Cutugno at the University of Bologna, as part of a Master course in Theories and Cultures of Representation held by Professor Marco De Marinis. The idea for the chosen topic, as well as part of the readings were suggested during the seminar by Dr. Cutugno, who assisted us for the entire process of thinking and writing about this issues. The seminar was conceived and realized as a performance studies analysis workshop and the final paper was presented and performed as the result of the course.

This essay is a synopsis of that work, and its object deals with Pope Benedetto XVI's resignation, in particular with his transformation from Pope to Emeritus Pope. We investigated such phenomenon through five different perspectives: ethical-psychological, media, theological, moral, economic. Finally, we inserted a survey concerning the reaction that this event has aroused in Brazil.

Introduction: an attempt of performance analysis

Our analysis is a result of our own research and will examine only the parts of our study that comes from our research. Both our visual and written data were analyzed and our conclusions will be included in this work, the fruit of our own personal research.

One may ask, "Why include an introduction"?

We concluded that it would be useful to include for the reader some interpretation of key facts that can be used as a compass to navigate the rest of the analysis. These key facts will also serve as points of reference, an outline of sorts, to organize our thoughts, interpretation and research into a linear cohesive work.

Before we consider the "how" of this analysis, we must first identify and give place to the "who", Pope Benedict XVI; and the "what", his recent resignation as pope.

Now that we have established the full object of our research and boundaries in which to work, we must clarify a few other thing before proceeding. We found during our research that we were not working with a both a starting and ending point. We began our research for this project at the time of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, but the true conclusion of this research cannot be attained until all the facts are made public. We cannot reach a perfectly delineated ending point because certain facts are

not yet public and will not be made public until the death of the pope emeritus. Only then will a true conclusion be able to be reached.

With this in mind, we have focused our analysis on a particular phenomenon - the "transformation" of Benedict XVI from Pope, or the "Vicar of Christ", to ex-pope or Pope Emeritus. This change of socio-cultural status has a specific "rite of passage" that led Pope Ratzinger from point "X" (Pope with all the rights and responsibilities which that position entails) to the point with which this work concerns itself, or point "Y" (Pope Emeritus with, at best, an ambiguous and job description and transitional phase of life).

This work shows three distinct phases of the ritual process as delineated in the studies of scholar Van Gennep. These are:

Separation - Verified at the moment in which the "Holy Father" resigned;

Transition - The phase which began at eight p.m. on February 28, 2013 when the service of Benedict was officially concluded. This phase continues even now.

Re-aggregation - A "return to the norm" if you will, which will occur only at the death of the Pope Emeritus leaving only "on the scene" the current Pope and returning to the normal succession of the Papal line.

This is more richly articulated and defined in the *Transition* :

The second stage that the rites of passage begins is a period of transition in which the "passenger" finds himself neither in the old life, nor in the new; this period of absence of role and ambiguity is perceived as a danger.³⁶

Understanding the parameters of our subject of study, we have decided to undertake this analysis, giving light to six different points of view. In this way, we reveal six particular focus points that, like magnifying glasses, reveal all of the individual details that make up the entire picture of this phenomenon to be examined, understanding that it is not a mathematical matter of "2+2=4" but more like a kaleidoscope made up of points of light and shadows.

Our analysis is therefore divided into these particular lines of thought: Ethics/Psychology, Media, Theology, Moral, and Economic. As we study media in particular we will also examine what kind of response this phenomenon provoked in

³⁶ Emily A. Schultz, Robert H. Lavenda, *Antropologia*, Bologna, Zanichelli 2010, p. 161

Brazil (The most catholic country in the world with 126 million professing Catholics).³⁷

Ethic/Psychological point of view

Via this point of view, we would like to clarify certain cardinal points about the conduct of Benedict, presenting him not only as pope but as a human being, a "men among men", called to fill an enormous role (in the etymological sense - "out of the norm"). We will, therefore, re-examine the facts and actions that defined his passage of status to reveal some doubts, "cracks" so to speak, that were problematic and that demonstrate what were the difficulties for the man Ratzinger. Was he able to face the responsibility laid upon him? What masks was he forced to wear and what actions was he forced to take or not take in order not to become a victim of his own circumstances? Beginning with these points in mind, we will try to bring to light its articulated and contrasted human nature often put into crisis by the need to show unique and granite spokesman for the word of God, an indivisible representative of "one holy" Church, a figure who was absolutely unable to experience his natural diversity. We will also attempt to analyze how this tension was due to the truth he must have had to come to terms with and the dynamics of his theatrical life (for this issue we referred in particular to the study of Erving Goffman). This is made all the more apparent in light of what trends will be triggered from the day of his "resignation" when the splitting, or multiplication, of his person made real tangible realities. This only served to call into question his identity, thereby denying his "being" even existed, leading him in a transitional state, a place of ambiguity, where the quest to build himself as One led to a total break and dragged him to the brink of chaos.

A Pope incapable of filling the role?

When Benedict was made pope, he represented a paradox. On the one hand he was intellectually ruthless, on the other, he was as many other scholars, timid and totally lacking the vigor necessary to reform a continuously changing clergy³⁸

The report presented by the international press relating to almost eight years of the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI (19 April 2005 - 28 February 2013) provides the vast majority of testimony was very negative judgment. Reports accuse him of

³⁷ See Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life of Washington (2012)

³⁸ John Hooper, The Guardian, in Internazionale, A. 20, n. 987, February 15/21, 2013, p.21

chronic shyness, an inability to take an air necessary to impose the long-awaited reforms, an insufficient force in proceeding to take place in the proposed projects, a management of the Church marked by gestures without real influence, an inadequacy of dialogue and confrontation. He was accused of being solitary, austere, isolated, weak - in short, he was accused of being an in-competent (in the etymological sense of the term) - as a result of having failed to complete the task to which he was called.

According to many, Benedict XVI was not the charismatic and decisive leader the Church needed in order to renew itself and solve the many problems which it currently faces. Joseph Ratzinger was introduced to the "masses" by the media as an educated theologian, an intellectual (prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Church and president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and of the International Theological Commission since 1981). He was an essayist, responsible for the preparation of Catechesis internationally.

He was profiled by newspapers as a philosopher "with his feet firmly planted in the clouds", and very distant from the problems plaguing *reality*. This portrait is however very simplistic and superficial, it creates a picture of a Pope who is wearing a suit that is already pre-assembled, ready to use, and useful to clarify and justify in a very narrow-minded way the causes of the problems that afflict the Church institution. To get closer to understanding this mechanism the words of Goffman seem illuminating in order to relate to one's use of facade when it turns into collective representation:

The facade becomes a "collective representation" and a reality in itself. When an actor takes on a particular social role, it usually turns out that he has already been assigned a particular facade. [...] In addition, if an individual takes on a task that is not only new to him, but it is also unprecedented in that given society, or if he tries to change the point of view from which his task is considered, he will most likely find that already exist well-defined fronts from which he can choose. Therefore, when a task is given a new facade, rarely we can say that this is in itself original. Since these facades are chosen and not created, it is likely that difficulties arise when those who perform a given task are obliged to choose a suitable one among the many available and diverse choices presented.³⁹

This brings to light, at least a little, the figure painted by the media, so that we "the audience" are too easily inclined to accept it as truth. So, ignoring the actual, true and

³⁹Erving Goffman, *La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1969, p. 39-40

tangible conduct of the resigned Pope, the audience (and the media, for that matter), regardless, place him in a particular position, in a precise role from which he can no longer withdraw (it is, in fact, more difficult now that *he is no longer what he was*, to recognize his true current status).

It is this sort of extreme simplification that allows the viewer to understand the portrait through the use of a few well-tested and literary keys that, because of their being so universally effective, unfortunately, every detail and every nuance is sacrificed and offers a conclusion which is standardized and convenient. This allows a great saving of intellectual energies, but is hardly very useful in helping one to understand of the phenomenon under consideration.

In this case, as before, Goffman's work is helpful in understanding idealization:

When the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the social values already accredited, even more than it involves the actual entirety of his behavior.⁴⁰

So Benedict XVI had already been assigned a role that simply required interpretation, without ever losing sight of what the "public" demanded of a figure in his position. A bleak character, devoid of great sympathy, not prepared to dialogue, old and conservative, German (with an indelible past in the Hitler Youth), an adversary of relativism which was interpreted as a move away from truth and faith, a worried observer of the transformations that were a result of global dynamics, and nostalgic admirer of the past (so much so, that he resumed wearing some of the official attire "in vogue" at the time of Pius IX, the last ruler of the Papal States in office from 1846 until 1870). A character almost of a romantic nature, who lived for years in the Vatican in the shadow of John Paul II, a sort of evil advisor to the Pope who was made "a Saint" almost immediately. He represented the power of a dark and menacing sort present in the Catholic Church. The comparison with his predecessor, so deeply loved and revered, weighed on the formation of the character of "Benedict XVI" so as to erase any defect (or murky impairment) characterizing the Polish Pope and, indeed giving the newcomer the responsibility and the heavy burden of scandals that stained the perceived immaculate conduct of the Vatican. Cardinal Ratzinger had to assume, despite himself, this new identity that was not consistent with what he had been for seventy-eight years. It was precisely because of this need for classification and standardization that the flexibility inherent in the articulation of the human

⁴⁰Ivi, p. 47

psychological version of the man - Ratzinger, that it appeared so difficult for him to accept the renunciation of the papal ministry. This is an act that disorients the viewer, suggesting the doubt, upsetting his point of view, stumbling upon "a mistake of Nature, something that does not ring true, a disentangling thread that finally put us in the middle of a truth".

In this regard, analysis on the "resignation" offered by Enzo Bianchi, prior of the Monastery of Bose, seems particularly interesting. It is in this analysis that the decentralization process put in place by the Pope with his gesture is emphasized, a kind of voluntary exit from the characters of the character, to return to his humanity:

Thus the Catholic is invited to look more to the Papal ministry than to the person of the Pope. This is certainly revolutionary and, I believe, even more evangelical. Whoever carries the episcopate or service bureau in the Church, does so in communion with Christ the Lord in measure of the degree in which he was placed, but once ceased the exercise of the ministry, another can continue it and the person who has previously exercised disappears, diminishes, retires.⁴¹

Understanding, in the words of the prior, "greater depth of analysis" and a much more polished ability to unveil the dynamics of the real compared to the many (too many) easy accusations made by the media about the conduct of the Pope, it appears unsatisfactory to solve this phenomenon with a simple "out of character". Put in these terms this resignation seems almost a "painless" scene. As if it really Benedict XVI after years on the papal throne peacefully decided, to abandon his post as Vicar of Christ and return to a quiet and serene life of theological study and prayer. The pope would not "go back to being Cardinal Ratzinger,"⁴² but would take on the new and ambiguous role of Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus.

Before examining this new and complicated condition, we believe it is necessary to deal with some thoughts regarding the "genealogy of the waiver," or, in other words, we'll try to answer the question: What could have prompted the Pope to make a decision so radical?

In his official statement on February 11, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI, explaining the reasons for his choice, reveals that:

⁴¹ Enzo Bianchi, *Benedetto XVI ora è più che mai il successore di Pietro*, in La stampa, February 12, 2013

⁴² *Ibidem*

my strength, advanced age, are no longer adequate to exercise properly the Papal ministry. (...) To steer the boat of St. Peter and proclaim the Gospel, you must have vigor both in body and soul, vigor that, in recent months, has diminished in such a way that I must acknowledge my inability to well administrate of the ministry entrusted to me.

This "confession", though it seemed unsatisfactory to many - if not false and misleading - in our analysis, is a perfect link to the path that we are trying to illuminate.

By our point of view, the biggest factor that led the Pope to abandon his position depended crucially on his glaring "failure as an actor" or better said, by his inadequacy to play a role pre-established and conceived by others (collective representation). One could possibly recognize in this alleged inability, a tenacious will to evade all types of simulation and remove any deceptive behavior. It is not for nothing that the motto of Pope Benedict XVI (since the time of his appointment as archbishop of Monaco and Freising) was *Cooperatores veritatis* (Cooperators of truth). He may have made a mistake by his dramatic conduct to cover his role, thus denying the presence of the theatrical nature in his position, recognizing himself as an individual, free from imposed schemes, even though he was constantly called to choose between fixed and tested paradigms of behavior, in brief adoption of a character who wears a costume (in this John Paul II was proven much more aware and prepared, however, do not forget that the young Karol Wojtyła was, among other things, an actor and playwright).

Goffman, explaining the description of a "sincere actor", distinguishing him from that of a cynic, cites Park:

Everyone, always and everywhere, more or less consciously plays a part ... And it is in these roles that we know one other, and it is in these roles that we know ourselves. In a certain sense, this mask represents the concept that we have of ourselves - the role of which we try to live up to - this mask is our true self, the "I" that we want to be.⁴³

"Our" unconscious actor, not accepting this necessary step becomes completely absorbed by his acting, does not distinguish between himself and the character played resulting in "being sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages,

⁴³Erving Goffman, *La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1969, p. 31

is, in fact, the reality".⁴⁴ It is in this way, in sociological terms, that we recognize Benedict XVI as a *sincere* actor. The condition of sincere actor has some important consequences that endanger the psychological state of the individual who experiences this condition: adequate importance is not given to the division between the *stage* and *backstage*, "geographical" areas which are of fundamental value in the conduct of every human being. They delineate on the one hand the scope of the "stage" with its accompanying rules to be observed so that the representation is satisfactory and consistent, on the other hand is delineated the location suitable for the preparation of the representation, where the actor is allowed to relax, stop playing the part, quit the role in which he is called onto the stage. The backstage is thus a place of intimacy, the manifestation of his "authentic" nature. This second area offers the actor security, putting him at ease by denying access to that space to the public, thus allowing the transgression of rigid precepts that govern the representation or "act": the absence of this space and time overloads the individual and most importantly, cause a denial of his identity, bringing him more and more towards a total self-identification with the character played. The boundaries between reality and artifice blur, and the actor loses control over the representation or "act".

This maneuver of self-deception is continuous, and psychoanalysts have provided interesting data on this phenomena which they indicate by the term 'repression' and 'dissociation'. It is perhaps from this that the term "distancing himself" comes, that is, the process by which a person is to feel estranged from his "I" (self-perception).⁴⁵

This "pathology" in our case reveals even more critical characteristics:

The higher the place held in the social pyramid, the smaller is the number of people with whom one may be familiar and even less time one has to spend backstage.⁴⁶

All of these symptoms are also understood, in our particular case, in the light of a crucial event that has profoundly marked the last days of the pontificate of Benedict XVI (having already been beset by scandals linked especially to the IOR and the protection that the Church would exercise in respect to some priests accused of pedophilia): his shocking loss of confidence in the circle of collaborators, which had as its maximum and the final epilogue the "betrayal" of Paul Gabriel (aka "the crow"), chamber assistant in the papal rooms, one of the rare familiar figures of

⁴⁴*Ibidem*, p. 29

⁴⁵*Ivi*

⁴⁶*Ibidem*, p. 154

Ratzinger. Gabriele, by stealing from the pope's own suite secret papers relating to the "vatileaks" case" and selling them to journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi, compromised the already very fragile, intimate dimensions of the German Pope.

One could say that this scandal was "the straw that broke the camel's back", because it only represents the culmination of a much more deep-rooted and threatening problem. Before beginning, however, we need to clarify some terms that will be useful in our analysis of this particular case (again borrowed from Goffman):

Team of representation or "any group of individuals who work in the staging a single routine" and "participating in "preservation of a certain definition of the situation" or *the collaboration team*:

A person who is depend upon for a collaboration on the drama, in order to define the situation that proves insensitive to informal sanctions and insists on betraying the representation ("act") or desires to give it special emphasis, is part of the team, ,and it is in fact because he is part of it that he can cause this kind of trouble.⁴⁷

If one tries to recognize the narrow circle of Ratzinger's collaborators - the structure of his "team", and one thinks of the Pope as an undisciplined actor, the collaborator of the scene that does not comply with the rules and breaks the representation threatening the consistency of the performative situation, one can (at least partly) clarify this radical transformation that has occurred in the Vatican. Franco Buffoni in an article on Alfabeta 2.28 emphasized the very low confidence the pope had in his collaborators that had proven "capable of unleashing huge scandals in order to harm one another".⁴⁸ This outlines the profile of a team unreliable, inconsistent, inadequate to the task, incapable of achieving a coherent situation: on the one hand Benedict XVI, not accepting the rules required of a dramatic actor, proves to be a difficult co-worker, and on the other hand the team itself does not appear cohesive and conscientious of a bond of mutual interdependence that should bind its members.

But something still is not right in this scenario: by this explanation the current Pope Emeritus seems to have abandoned his post because of the excessive pressure to which it was subjected, and, as a result his obvious inability to understand the facts and circumstances that revolved around him wildly, and then failing to react appropriately. It is too simplistic to reduce the former prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (formerly known as the Inquisition), "God's rottweiler", as he was affectionately labeled by the press, to a provincial illiterate and myopic

⁴⁷Erving Goffman, *La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1969, p. 101

⁴⁸Franco Buffoni, *Le mani lunghe di Ratzinger* in Alfabeta2.28, April, 2013, anno III, n. 28, p. 15

interpreter of Vatican dynamics. After thirty years of hard work and study at the Vatican in the shadow of John Paul II, away from the limelight television, but very much present in the conduct of the political line of the Church, it would seem very strange that he would have such a resigned attitude and even more strange would the implied lack of discipline with regard to a very well-known role!

It is again Buffoni who offers a hypothesis that fits perfectly with our analysis by introducing a new and essential character: Georg Gaenswein, already Ratzinger's private secretary, now appointed prefect of the Pontifical Household, in short a kind of powerful minister who escapes the authority of the Pope's secretary (the hostile Cardinal Bertone) and does not decline, therefore, remains the in his role with full power even during Bergoglio's time.

So let's review the scenario: Ratzinger retires with Georg three hundred meters from the Apostolic Palace, Georg crosses the garden every morning to carry out his nine to five job with the new pope, then reporting back for dinner. [...] No retreat, therefore, only a deadly blow to the absolute sovereignty of his successor.⁴⁹

The clarifying link is discovered: yes, Ratzinger was a bad performer, an undisciplined actor, but this is perhaps because in reality he was aiming for something else, a far more ambitious role, namely that of director.

The former Pope knows very well the dynamics that underpin the work of his team of representation, and has very clear ideas about what he believes to be the role that the director plays in the team: reposition the members within the representation when their interpretation becomes inconvenient and distribute the parts in the staging, attributing with precision the individual facade needed for each part.

What has this resignation been, if not a radical repositioning of the members and a strategic re-allocation of roles? Directing a first class operation, which reveals the exceptionally fine dramatic abilities of the Pope emeritus.

In conclusion Goffman seems to rush to our aid again by offering two categories that seem to perfectly establish our case and allows us to slide away from this intricate staging: the concepts of *expressive leadership* and *directive leadership*. It seems illuminating (and in some ways disconcerting) to conclude with this long quotation which seems to us to complete the analysis discussed in this chapter:

⁴⁹Franco Buffoni, *Le mani lunghe di Ratzinger* in *Alfabeta* 2.28, April, 2013, anno III, n. 28, p. 15

It is important to note that actors in a position of clear leadership, are often only symbolical leaders, chosen on the basis of a compromise, or as a means to neutralize positions potentially threatening or to strategically hide the power behind the scenes, and therefore also the power behind the power behind the scenes. So every time the holder of a temporary responsibility without experience, is vested with formal authority over subordinates experts, we see that people who are officially in possession of power are often lured with a part that is only dramaturgical while it is the subordinates who are actually running the show.⁵⁰

The Media Perspective

@Pontifex_it

On February 11, 2013, the anniversary of the signing of the Lateran, and the anniversary of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes, a holiday at the Vatican, at 11:46 the Vatican archivist Giovanna Chirri released the first notice that shook the world "Pope leaves pontificate".

The declaration of resignation of the Papal ministry, according to rumors, handwritten by Benedict XVI himself only a few minutes before with the help of second secretary Monsignor Alfred Xuereb, was pronounced during a consistory for the canonization of the martyrs of Otranto. The Consistory, as usual, had been announced well in advance, and for the Vatican, appeared to be a routine event. The words of the Pope, underscored by a simple but definitive gesture of the hand, left the College of Cardinals frozen in silence. No one would have suspected that this would happen.

That same day, in the morning, some journalists from TGR Puglia had insistently, but vainly, tried to obtain from CTV, the Vatican Television Center, images of the event, but to further confirm the low media profile that the papal information officers had ascribed to the event, the CTV did not foresee any of this coverage. If the coverage had been accessible to journalists from the beginning of the Consistory, they would have realized that it in fact was not an occasion like any other, starting from the detail of the dark glasses in which the Archbishop Georg Gänswein, prefect of the pontifical household, as well as secretary of Pope Benedict XVI, had presented himself in the Throne Room, covering his eyes.

⁵⁰Erving Goffman, *La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1969, p. 120

The visual memory given to the world is only those few minutes, thanks to the purchase request of journalists from Puglia who eventually found a partner willing to listen to them. From these images, in fact, one is able to capture the look of terror on the face bishop Guido Pozzo, chaplain of the pope for a little over a month, positioned to the right of Benedict XVI, where also (off-camera) Monsignor Gänswein was sitting. The secret intentions of the Pope were, for once, well guarded.

As soon as the news was leaked, a "virtual tsunami" engulfed thousands of servers bouncing from one side of the globe to the other in search of confirmation. The first reaction was that of disbelief. The two words "advancing age" contained in the announcement made the rounds of the web. Among the very first caustic comments was that of Dagospia: "Ratzinger has fooled them all!" After only a few minutes, the news on Twitter took first place in the global trends with the hashtag "dimissioniPapa", "Pope", "Benedict XVI", "28 February" (the date when he would leave the papacy), "priest", "Father Lombardi, the spokesman of the Holy See". In less than three hours there were 700 thousand tweets relayed by the United States, Europe and Asia, through the Middle East, dedicated to the resignation: "Pope" was the word most used, cited in 92% of posts (estimates of Reputation Manager, a company that tracks Twitter). "Ratzinger changes history", "his is a great lesson" were a couple of the most common phrases in the post relayed on social networks. At 2 pm Facebook completely locks up: a black out probably due to the huge amount of comments, posts and photos published by users to comment on the choice of the Pope. Dozens of groups created in a few minutes, entitled "Resignation of the Pope. It was out of "respect" (one of the words most clicked by the commentators of the network) that Ratzinger made such a decision. He is a Pope who" recognizes his limits." "All of the Popes had health problems." "Resignation seems a gesture of freedom is destined to change the Church". It was said on Twitter again and again: "the resignation of the Pope clearly shows his great humanity and an extraordinary attachment to the good of the Church".

For a few seconds the Pope's Twitter profile (@Pontifex_it) was unreachable because of too heavy an avalanche of clicks on the page created on December 12, which saw for the first time in history a pope "chirp" with his own tablet. After a few hours the social network also filled up with spam, junk messages that use popular keywords to advertise sites that had nothing to do with the Vatican.

The "tweets" and the posts of celebrities cannot be missed. Even the leaders of the political spectrum, the Quirinale (presidential palace) and vertices of the European

Union commented on the web with deep respect the choice of the Pope: all realizing that February 11 will forever be a historic day.

That same night, a lightning strike was captured by a photographer and ad hoc in a video. It struck the dome of St. Peter's, becoming the symbolic image of the collective shock.

The following day the online sites of agencies and newspapers as well as the newspapers themselves, recorded and amplified the general surprise at the decision and the announcement, pointing out on the front page, with titles in nine columns, the epochal character of the event: "The Pope leaves", "A Historic Goodbye" stated *La Repubblica*. An elusive photo stands out in the middle. Space dedicated to the event was not only in the Italian newspapers, which have always devoted considerable space to the ecclesiastical affairs (The church is so influential on Italian society and politics as to have led to the emergence of the professional figure of the "Vaticanist"). One can just browse through magazines all over the world to get an idea of the impact of the papal decision and the different attitudes with which it has been received. The lightning strike on the dome of St. Peter dominated the entire front page of *El Espectador* of Bogota, Colombia, and also appeared in the *The Guardian* in London, with certain ironic comments such as, "Bolt from the blue", alluding to the proverbial lightning a clear sky.

Decidedly irreverent, if not mocking, are *Libération* in Paris and *Die Tageszeitung* in Berlin. Particularly in the German newspaper the front page was almost completely white, no photo of the Pope, only his red moccasins⁵¹.

In the following days, the satire of many newspapers became even more offensive. In the U.S., The New York Times declared that as a result of the resignation of the Pope, the Church was put "at a crossroads" and the main article was titled: *A Turbulent Tenure for a Quiet Scholar*, obviously referring to a situation of internal disturbance to the Catholic Church, which was also mentioned in the *Independent* in London, using the term "turmoil" (tumult) and coming to a precise conclusion: *New Leader Wanted*. In Germany, the influential *Die Welt* pointed out the "weariness" of Benedict XVI, overturning with this term a fact and putting in its place an ambiguous allusion of a psychological nature desired and exercised.

On the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* in London, a merciless photo pointed a finger at the fragility of the Pope. In Madrid, *El Pais* focuses on his lack of energy,

⁵¹ Roberto Rusconi, *Il gran rifiuto. Perché un papa si dimette*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2013, p. 9.

making it impossible not to notice the comment below which quite clearly is stressed that the "retreat" of the Pope would reopen the struggle for power in the Vatican. In Madrid again, the conservative *El Mundo* noted that Benedict XVI, with his gesture, interrupted the tradition of the Pope who "dies on the cross". The phrase in the title was in quotation marks, whereas the subtitle was in bold print showing the heavy criticism by the cardinal of Krakow, former secretary of John Paul II, who had stated that the pope "does not come down from the cross." The Canadian *National Post* and *The International Herald Tribune* and especially, but not only, the Anglo-Saxon press, dwelt immediately on his successor.

In most of these newspapers, once gone beyond the effective headlines, the comments in the articles are still disputable, reflecting a broad spectrum of attitudes. These further differentiated and faded in the following days, when, truthfully, other news stories regained their space and the events of the summit of the Catholic Church received less attention. On the first day their pages are thick with statements and assessments of prelates, often subtly and vaguely suggestive, especially when it comes to characters lapped by a possible candidate for the succession.⁵²

Nanni Moretti, director of the film *We Have a Pope* in 2011, had simply "changed the air" by bringing to the cinema the dramatic resignation of a cardinal played by Michel Piccoli. The latter, panicked after being elected Pope, first attempts to disappear on the streets of Rome. Later, after being brought back to the Vatican, when giving the blessing to the faithful he exclaims: "I ask the Lord's forgiveness for what I am about to do... I understand now that I am unable to sustain the role that was entrusted to me." - the dramatic resignation of one who considered himself inadequate to a role deemed too great. In this regard, the journalist Natalia Aspesi wrote: "The pope, as interpreted by Michel Piccoli - old, depressed and lost - escapes to the throne, feeling inadequate, thus provoking a new and profound emotion to the shocking words and gesture made by the actual pope, Benedict XVI."

In the end, a white helicopter lifted off the background of the eternal city. It is with this scene that we finally and symbolically bid farewell to Pope Benedict, turning the last day of his pontificate into a big media event with every detail properly in place.⁵³ A true rite of passage (one with a "fellinian" flavor) - one cannot help but recall the opening scene of *La Dolce Vita*, with the helicopter carrying Christ over Rome - by which is completed the temporary transfer of the Pope to Castel Gandolfo and the

⁵² R. Rusconi, *op. cit.*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2013, pp. 10-11.

⁵³ February 28, 2013 [A/N]

consequent abandonment of the Vacant Residence. In this, many have seen a sinister metaphor of the empty tomb. An event that, as written by Dario Morelli, despite its historical importance, could pass quietly from a media point of view, yet instead by design and details has been deeply engraved in the collective memory. It is further evidence of a skillful use of the media on which the Catholic Church continues to improve day by day, and that is inscribed in the reflection on the communication that the Church itself has carried out in recent years. This causes one to question the impact that this has on one's perception of reality, of ourselves and our relationships. Is the Church, therefore, able to recognize the signs of the times? In the last five years of his pontificate, Benedict XVI had shown a great deal of attention to the changing reality of digital media and its significance for humanity and for the Church. He is the first Pope on Twitter, the first one that was open to new technologies and amazed the whole world with the announcement of his resignation in Latin seen by thousands of users. He had already defined these new communication technologies a "gift to humanity" (Post, 2009), how they are changing not only the way we communicate, but communication itself (Post, 2011). In his message for the 47th World Day for Social Communications, the Pope used the metaphor of the door to define social networks, indicating it as a way to understand a space and inhabit it. The door is not a tool to pass over, but a transitional place. Not a closed border (a *limes*, from which we draw the word "limit") but a threshold, an access point (from the Latin *limen*). The door also tells of a discontinuity that draws our attention to differences of the spaces that it both separates and unites. This change in attitude is not without meaning: *Pontifex* is the Pope, not a subject that speaks on his behalf. This does not mean that Benedict XVI has actually tweeted without availing himself of some help. But the birth of a virtual alter ego puts the Pope on a much more interactive plane than has been made possible by other types of technologies. Perhaps behind all this was a concealed attempt to close the distance between the people and a Pope said to be too rigid, cold and distant, too "German". On the other hand, to say that it also gives "His Holiness" influence seems rather simplistic. One might then wonder, then, why Twitter and Facebook? The reason is simple:

Facebook is a more spirited platform, almost passionate, and "friends" are not only a question of terminology, but are different from the followers. Either way, if only for semantic reasons "friends" rather than the "fans" best suited the Pope's interests⁵⁴

However, according to the Reputation Manager, - an agency specializing in techniques to improve online reputation - the Pope's presence in these mediums is

⁵⁴ URL: www.Libertiamo.it, April 20, 2013

considered mainly to be negative by the users, unlike the Dalai Lama, perceived as closer and closer, his presence on Twitter has been branded as communicative catastrophe. Perhaps this is because the communicative dynamic of Pope Benedict has remained unidirectional and centralized? The network 2.0 represents a place of mediation, but there can be no "dialogue" if the language remains centered solely on self both on and outside of the network. The Pope on Twitter is follows only himself, offsetting the social aspect of the medium in question. One therefore cannot underestimate the risks of weakening of Church mediators.

Antonio Spadaro - a Jesuit theologian and director of *The Catholic Civilization*, an influential Jesuit magazine, and oldest Italian magazine ever - even spoke of cyber-theology on a homonymous blog, a point of reference for all those responsible for dealing with the media and religion in Italy. The basic theme is the relationship between digital thinking and understanding of the faith.

The American theologian Dwight J. Friesen predicted an evolution of the ecclesiastical institution towards a model of decentralized and interconnected Church, a Church that calls for networked structures of individual local churches. They would become Christ-Commons in this context, with the primary purpose of developing a connective environment where people can congregate in the name of Christ. This version though is rejected by Spadaro, who denies the sociological drift (seemingly losing the understanding that the Church is 'mystical body'). Though one can appreciate the attempt to enhance the horizontal dimension of the Church as a community, the People of God. In addition one must also acknowledge his opposition to the liturgy of the so called online "Eucharist telematics." The lesson that comes from the use of these digital connections, he says, if anything, is about the rediscovery of the missionary nature of the Church. The network - as reported by Alessandro Santagata in an article in the *Huffington Post* - can be considered as a stimulus to strengthen the pastoral nature of the Church which cannot ignore the new demand for connectivity. This can also be used as an open source of theology (Justin Baeder/Andrew Perriman), whose source code is *The Revelation*. Spadaro concludes, recalling the French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and his theory of Christ as the "Omega Point", that the network is not an alien means to the Christian program.

In the most Catholic nation in the world
Contextualization

Brazil, as is well known, was "born" Catholic: this is because the first travelers to that land were Spanish and Portuguese explorers reaching it not only with the intention of conquering lands and natural resources economically, but also with the dream of millenarian Christian salvation, caressed by the imaginary European desire to find an earthly paradise, an idea based on the book of Genesis and re-created from the Edenic imagination for centuries. The Iberian expansion, therefore, also meant the expansion of Catholicism in Brazil by the union of the cross and the sword, the throne and altar, which has not changed over the decades and centuries even with the establishment of nation-states within the continent, since many countries have legally adopted Catholicism as the official religion. This results in the absence of restriction of religious freedom in the region. Over time, however, the situation has changed depending on the country, and today one can see a certain heterogeneity of positions regarding official relations between religion and politics, church and state.

Brazil is the country with the most professing Catholics in the world: 126 million. Despite the relativity of the statistical data presented, the importance occupied by the Catholic Church in the country is notable. It is, in fact, not just a numerical importance, but also political and social, as is attested by authors such as Brett (1993) and Smith (1998).⁵⁵

Other religions in Brazil are indigenous ones such as Judaism, Eastern religions, African American and new religious movements.

A first find, resulting from the numbers of the Christian presence in Brazil, with the consequent reduction of religious diversity, was made in 1997 by Antonio Flavio Pierucci, who argued:

I believe that there is still very little religious diversity in Brazil [...]. Of those called 'great religions' or 'world religions', which ones are those that have grown in their ideas or institutions that have shaped us? We have only Christianity and none other [...]. They used to say, jokingly, that the (religious) fate of the religious Brazilian national is not at all enviable - is that of conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism. (Pierucci, 1997a, p. 259-260).

A second point of observation comes from a double religious phenomenon, as observed in Latin America, which is strengthened with each new census. It is, namely, the decline of individuals calling themselves Catholic, accompanied by an

⁵⁵ From *Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life* di Washington (2012)

increase of religious affiliations to evangelical segments , especially the Pentecostal movement. This also differs from country to country. In any case, the increase in Pentecostalism which has occurred in Latin America in recent decades has caused a social scientist to propose the idea of a "new religious reformation" (Martin, 1990), and another to wonder if these countries were not experiencing a " Pentecostalization of Latin America" (Stoll, 1990). Now, if these assumptions seem exaggerated, one cannot help but notice a diversity in Pentecostalism regarding the diversification of social subjects affected by its religious message. The diversity of theologies and new expressions religious Pentecostals, is called, in the absence of better terminology, neo- Pentecostalism (Gold; Seman, 1997). In addition to this, evangelicals, and especially Pentecostals, are very involved in Brazilian politics.

Patterns of separation of church and state

In Brazil, there is legal separation of Church and State, and religious freedom is guaranteed for all citizens, as well as equality between the various religions. Article 19 of the 1988 Constitution confirms the separation between Church and State, but it does so indirectly.⁵⁶ The article cited reads:

It is forbidden to Union, to the States, to the Federal District and to the municipalities: I - establish religious cults or churches, subsidize them, prevent operation or maintain them or their representatives, dependency relationships or alliance, except in accordance with the law in collaboration of public interest.

Article 5 of the Constitution proclaims freedom of conscience and belief as follows:

- Freedom of conscience and belief is inviolable, being guaranteed the free exercise of religious worship and being guaranteed by law, the protection of places of worship and their rites;
- No one can be deprived of rights because of religious, philosophical or political beliefs unless he pleads to exempt himself from any legal obligation imposed on all, and then refuses to perform an alternative obligation established by law.

Having understood this, the country has presented itself legally as a secular state, modern and liberal, characterized by the separation of Church and State, which remains neutral in relation to religions as long as they do not interfere in public affairs. According to this paradigm, the state gives the same legal status to all

⁵⁶For a current and historical analysis about the separation between State-Church in Brasil, see *Oro* (2006)

religious groups, by equal treatment of religious organizations.

The Brazilian Perspective

The following attempt, regarding response that the waiver of Benedict XVI has provoked in Brazil, is that of a performative analysis, carried out in the form of Brecht (German writer and playwright) of the phenomenon, focusing on the ritual perspective - *to Performance Studies*. Since the February 11 (2013) announcement to the day he left office at 8pm, February 28, Pope Benedict Pope had become only the pope "emeritus", having left the Throne of Peter vacant until the cardinals elected a new pope. Among the other "actors" in the performance and the "audience" represented by the Catholic world (and others) who have witnessed this drastic change, you will find the thousands of people of the Brazilian nation. The Brazilians reacted to each other with emotion and attention detail, attentive to the media, the principal means of communication. Because of the geographical distance, the media was the key element of "approach" to the Brazilian faithful by the "main character".

Since this is the main point of our analysis, we can analyze the phenomenon of the resignation of Benedict XVI as an object of performance, which can be defined as: Performance - that which consists of a double behavior exercised, encoded and transmitted. This double behavior is generated through the interaction between game and ritual. In fact, a definition of performance can be: ritualized behavior conditioned/permeated by the game. Rituals are a way to remember the people. Rituals are memories of action, encoded by action. The rituals also help people to deal with difficult transitions, ambivalent relationships, hierarchies, and problematic desires that exceed or violate the norms of everyday life. The game gives people a chance to try temporarily what would normally be taboo, excess or risky. Both the rite and the game bring people to a "second reality", separated from every-day life. This is actually where they can become different from what they are every day. When one temporarily "becomes" another, he performs actions other than that which he used to do in every-day life. For this reason, ritual and game transform people, permanently or temporarily. These are called "rites of passage".⁵⁷

Speaking of this as a drama, we can establish a relationship between the main actor, in this case Benedict XVI, and the other spectators of the performance. We can retrace the route in its end, as it was "played out" by Ratzinger who became Pope and then Pope Emeritus, and how his performance was closely linked to the "religious

⁵⁷ Richard Schechner, *Performance e Antropologia*, organização: Zeca Ligiéro – Rio de Janeiro: Manual X, 2012..

world", where the "sacred" and the invocation of God are present, where the rituals characterized by masses are celebrated as a form of ritual for people (audience). It is the protagonist himself who must understand the processes of transition, in which the ritual is the game where people are transformed, in this case, temporarily, as it happens for the Pope Emeritus who will end this phase with his death.

In Brazil, the news of the resignation generated a series of questions for the Brazilian people, thanks to the persistent dissemination of news about it, almost as if the news itself was still waiting to be confirmed, because of its unusual content, yet little by little the inexorability imposes itself on the Brazilians' minds: it is true, Benedict XVI has decided to resign!

The biggest surprise, however, is not due to the irregularity of situation, but the personal circumstances of the Pope, the true protagonist of this event, and the many repercussions he faced. To the Brazilian people this was seen as a great sense of detachment, not taking advantage of the personal benefits that his station guaranteed him. He was serene, seemed to understand the consequences of his actions and declared that he acted freely, after obtaining the personal guarantee that this decision was congruent with what had grown in his conscience and with his commitments at the time that he was elected Pope. To Brazil, a very religious country, where the most population is a practicing Catholics, apart from the non-religious and evangelical Protestants, in short a "Christian" nation, the criticism from the newspapers against Benedict XVI for his conservative concepts are many. There are differing opinions regarding the ideas of the church today.

In addition to this, he showed above all, a great deal of responsibility. He gave ample termination time for the Church to have time to assimilate the new situation, and completed of all the formalities derived from his act. Setting a time limit of 17 days, since the announcement to the actual validity of the waiver, by the authority acquired by his gesture, set a reasonable pace that was observed for all the measures taken. It is within this period that there was a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, celebration, farewell to the priests, his last prayer of the Angelus, following various rituals. According to Schechner rituals are normally divided into two main types: the sacred and the secular. Sacred rituals are those associated with the expression or the promulgation of religious beliefs. It is intended that this religious belief system involves communication, a prayer, if not an invocation of supernatural forces.

Schechner also emphasizes that rituals can be understood, from at least four perspectives:

- Structures - such as the rituals are seen and heard, how they use space and time, who performs them and how they are performed;
- Functions - rituals that are carried out by groups, cultures and individuals;
- Processes - the dynamics underlying the creation of rituals, like how rituals promote and deal with changes;
- Experiences - how to be "in" a ritual.⁵⁸

Starting from the fact that there is a large number of spectators who observe this ritual that is translated into all the languages in a participatory way and that even the Brazilian faithful perform acts of faith and gratitude to Benedict XVI, the news affirmed that:⁵⁹

Benedict XVI is no longer the head of the Catholic Church on Thursday from 8pm (4pm in Brazil). Bells around the world announced the official resignation and the end of his papacy. When the helicopter carrying Benedict XVI to his place of retreat, Castel Gandolfo, flew, at the Vatican, the bells of the church of Rome were made to play in homage to the pope who was passing now to the position of "pope emeritus".

The Archdiocese of São Paulo celebrated a mass in the Sé Cathedral, officiated by Auxiliary Bishop Tarcísio Scaramussa.

In Rio de Janeiro, a city that hosted what would be the next World Youth Day in July of this year, On the next Friday, (the 22) a Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated for the services rendered by the Pope.

Churches all over the country prayed special prayers in honor of the Pope in the last Mass of the day. In several cities this act was repeated with gratitude, respect, acts of faith and devotion.

It should be noted, as well, the participation of a people so far away geographically. Thanks to the media, churches located in the country were able to participate in this ritual as a listeners and observers, split into groups scattered throughout Brazil.

Beginning with the four aspects of the ritual stated before, according to the author this performance should be explored from many points of view such as: ethnologists,

⁵⁸ *Ivi*

⁵⁹ <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/1238358-sinos-marcam-fim-do-papado-de-bento-16.shtml>

anthropologists or neuropsychologists, in order to investigate the theoretical performance of the inherent ritual processes through related workshops, essays and performances. According to Richard Schechner: from the vast literature on ritual, only little is relevant to studies of performances. He identifies seven key themes for exploration, but we want to focus on just two:

Rituals as performance

The authors cited here by Schechner, indicate some particular features of the performance of Benedict XVI, since he first began to contemplate resignation, until the announcement followed by various actions, until the final "detachment", becoming Pope Emeritus. In this aspect Durkeim recognized a similarity in which the rituals are thoughts and actions.⁶⁰ This is one of the qualities that make ritual similar to theater.

At this point we are able to bring to mind the images of the scenes of announcements and statements, quotes, such as on a stage with the "acts" always well prepared, processed, with all the scenic elements on stage. These scenes include the "protagonist" and all the other performers that make up the scenes seen around the world, announced, with many spectators.

Arnold van Gennep (1873 - 1957) has also recognized the ritual/theatrical dynamic.⁶¹ In his study of "rites of passage", van Gennep has proposed a three-stage structure of the ritual: preliminary, transitional and post-transitional. He points out that life is a succession of transitions from one phase to another, and that every step of the way is marked by a ritual.

The life of Joseph Ratzinger is precisely divided into different phases, accompanied by rituals, beginning with his pontificate April 19, 2005, who had a history of eight years, this period is characterized by several facts with many repercussions, until the conclusion of this phase, a self described "simple pilgrim", in a speech given to the clergy of Rome in the 14th of February. Then we will continue to analyze this fact, focusing in the middle phase - the transitional.

⁶⁰Émile Durkheim (1858-1917): French sociologist, one of the founders of sociology, anthropology and psychology. Author of *The elementary forms of religious life* (1911, Eng. 1915).

⁶¹Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957): French ethnographer and folklorist, author of *Rites of passage* (1908, Eng.1960).

Ritual as Transitional Performance

Van Gennep understood that these rites of passage consist of three stages - the preliminary, the transitional and the post-transitional. The middle phase is transitional - a period of time in which a person is "alien (or "foreign to) and between" social categories or identities. It is during the transitional phase that takes place the real work of the rites of passage. At this point, the transitions and transformations take place in specially marked places.

The work of the transitional phase is twofold: first, to reduce those entering the ritual to a state of vulnerability, so that they are open to change. People who are stripped of their old identities and places determined in the social world, enter into a time-space where they are neither-this-nor-that, neither here nor there, in the middle of a trip from one social standing to another. During this time, they are literally stripped of power and, often, of identity. Second, during the transitional phase, people internalize their new identity and begin to experiment with their new powers. There are several ways to perform the transformation. People can make oaths, learn traditions, wear new clothes, perform special actions, be religiously "sacralized" or circumcised.

On April 19, 2005, Joseph Ratzinger began a transitional phase and in the process became Benedict XVI, posing as a "laborer in the vineyard of the Lord", he himself said on the 27th of February in his last speech to the faithful of how he felt with a life "without private space" with the heart that had to be "enlarged" to the world by making mention of the fact that he felt the responsibility of being spiritual leader of the world. Now He has stopped "being" that Spiritual leader and has become Pope Benedict XVI emeritus. From this point of view does he "relive" the transitional period? Only in reverse? But he did not return to being a Cardinal as he was before he became Pope. Can we say that he is in a phase in which there is neither-this-nor-that?

At the conclusion of the ritual transitional phase, actions and objects carry and radiate meanings above their practical use or value. These actions and objects are symbolic of the changes in space as well. That which becomes "accepted" is a change in condition, identity or baggage - a transformation that is takes up space. Ratzinger accepted this continual transition despite his being Pope Emeritus until his death. This was the choice made by Ratzinger and in his speech, he said that he understood the gravity of his choice, but that in his examination of conscience was not able to fulfill his task, as Pope, he felt his strength decreasing, feeling fatigued and tired.

The Theological Perspective

Theologically correct?

The Resignation of Benedict XVI from a theological standpoint

Dear Brothers,

I called you this Consistory not only for the three canonizations, but also to communicate a decision of great importance for the life of the Church. After repeatedly examining my conscience before God, I came to the knowledge that in my lack of strength and advanced age, I am no longer fit to exercise properly the Papal ministry.

I am well aware that this ministry, for its essence spiritually, must be done not only with works and words, but also suffering and prayer. However, in today's world, which is subject to rapid changes and agitated by issues of great importance for the life of faith, to steer the boat of St. Peter and proclaim the Gospel, one must also have strength both for the body and soul, strength that, in recent months, was depleted in such a way that I must acknowledge my inability to administer well the ministry entrusted to me. For this, being well aware of the seriousness of this act, with full freedom, I hereby renounce the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, the Successor of St. Peter, entrusted to me by the hand of Cardinals April 19, 2005, so that, from February 28, 2013, at 8pm, the See of Rome, the seat of St. Peter, will be vacant and shall be called, by those who have competence, the conclave for the election of a new Pope.

Dear Brothers, I thank you from my heart for all the love and the work with which you have carried the weight of my ministry with me, and I ask forgiveness for all my shortcomings. Now, we entrust to the Holy Church to the care of her Supreme Shepherd, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and implore His Holy Mother Mary, that she may assist with her motherly kindness, and the Cardinals in electing the new Supreme Pontiff. As for me, in the future, I want to serve with all my heart, with a life dedicated to prayer, the Holy Church of God.

The object of the studies which we identified is culminated by the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, we are planning, however, to analyze the behavior, the relationship between Joseph Ratzinger, the other actors and spectators of the performance represented by the Catholic world (and the others) who assisted in the bringing in of this new era.

The present condition of the Pope Emeritus seems to coincide perfectly with the "not-not-situation," the concept of transition (put forth by Schechner) and suspension,

and this is doubly transitional. We experience this when we look at and suspend our value system in order to embrace something 'other' than that to which we are accustomed. This was also experienced by Ratzinger himself, who is no longer Pope, but in a position in which he cannot even go back to being the cardinal before without any implication, even if only a linguistic one. "He will float" in this transitional condition until he leaves this world.

The Performance Studies, in addressing issues related to this particular performance, on the basis of theories by post-structuralists, leverage on the concepts of marginality and marginalization, discrimination and a desire to undermine and subvert. It is perhaps a culmination of everything - the act of a pope who refuses a "task" that should be entrusted to him by God himself?

The question we ask here is, "what is the relationship between the resignation of Benedict XVI and theology?" Is it possible, first of all, that a pope can give up the Papal ministry of his own volition? According to the Code of Canon Law, yes. The report below delineates the steps from Book II, Part II, Section I, Article I, canon 332, paragraph I-II:

The Supreme Pontiff obtains full and supreme power over the Church with legitimate election, with his acceptance, together with episcopal consecration. Consequently, with the election to the supreme pontificate, he already has already obtained in an episcopal manner, this power from the time of acceptance. If the chosen one was not already a Bishop, he is immediately ordained Bishop. In the event that the Roman Pontiff resigns from his office, it is required for validity that the resignation is made freely (not under duress) and properly manifested, it is not required then, that someone must previously accept said resignation.⁶²

The waiver, therefore, does not itself offend canon law, in fact it is covered by it. Apparently this has already occurred historically over the centuries, as evidenced by the case of St. Celestine V, elected July 5, 1294 and resigned in December of the same year, not considering himself to be of the height of the assumed office.

Moreover, Cardinal Ratzinger, in his book-length interview of 2010 "Light of the world", told the German journalist Peter Seewald that if a pope realizes that it is no longer able

⁶²*Codice di Diritto Canonico* in www.vatican.va

"physically, psychologically and spiritually, to discharge the duties of his office, then he has a right and, under some circumstances, also an obligation to resign".⁶³

Despite the media's insistence on the 'unexpectedness of this decision, one can see, how he has behind him a long "gestation period", and the theological world knew already, and is not totally surprised.

Indeed, part of it (the theological world) was pushing for this to happen, some Spanish theologians, joined with these words to the "Open Letter to the Bishops of the whole world" of the Swiss theologian Hans Küng, in 2010:

We believe that Pope Benedict XVI is exhausted. The Pope is not of the age nor the mindset to respond adequately to the serious and urgent problems that the Catholic Church is facing. We think, with all due respect for his person, that he should resign from his post.

The gesture appears, therefore, legitimate, if not theologically right, as stated by Enzo Bianchi, from the perspective of evangelical theology and canon law. However, on the historical level, it is not in continuity with the tradition and practice of the Church. Perhaps, though, it makes sense to want to oppose tradition and prominent life as the two poles of a relationship past and present? Has not the tradition, the prominent past, present and, might we even say, the future, already been formed?

Either way, the opposition to the glorious past and unyielding church is deeply felt by more traditionalist theologians, who see the pope is not a man, but as a long standing institution, not a single pope, but the papacy, the uninterrupted series of vicars of Christ, from St. Peter's onward.

The Catholic philosopher Enrico Maria Radaelli, insisting on the ontological and moral plane, says, referring to chapter 21 of the Gospel of John, that "the cross is the status of each Christian" and that to "rebel against one's status, to reject the grace received, would seem to be negligence against a Christian virtue of hope, against grace and supernatural value, against the acceptance of the human condition, all the more serious if the one in the condition holds roles 'in sacris', as is the condition of the pope."⁶⁴

⁶³Peter Seewald, Benedetto XVI, *Luce del mondo. Il Papa, la Chiesa e i segni dei tempi*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010

⁶⁴*Perchè papa Ratzinger-Benedetto XVI dovrebbe ritirare le sue dimissioni. Non è ancora il tempo di un nuovo papa perchè sarebbe quello di un antipapa* in Aurea Domus, www.enricomariaradaelli.it

And yet, this philosopher also said that the resignation of a pope, although theologically permissible, is not metaphysically and mystically permissible, because metaphysics is tied to "being", which does not allow such a thing as "being" and "not being" at the same time. Mysticism is tied to the of the Mystical Body which is the Church, for which the vicarious oath, taken with election, draws the elect to be on an ontological plane substantially different from the plane he has left: on a metaphysically and spiritually higher, the Vicar of Christ. From this point of view, one cannot regress from the ontologically divine plan to which he was elected to become merely human, therefore, he cannot even resign, because the pope who would later be his successor would be also, despite himself, an "anti-pope".⁶⁵

But are these concepts are in step with the process of secularization that the Church is presently experiencing?

Perhaps the gesture of the Pope 'emeritus' is of a more political wariness than a spiritual wariness: could it be a symbol of adaptation of the Church to a changing world? In his official speech, Ratzinger's words, "in today's world" seem to stand out. It is here that it is linked to the concept of tradition. This was all before though, says Vito Mancuso, including why he was standing as an "employee" from on high. Today, tradition is no longer a regulative force of life, and this forces is the individual to be stronger. There can no longer be forced way that seeks to govern the lives of human beings in a *deductive* fashion, or from "top to bottom". The Catholic philosopher, Jean Guilton says that we currently live in a regime where there is no longer precise tradition.⁶⁶

Has, then, the crisis of tradition caused the crisis of authority? Can one see this crisis as something positive and necessary? Can it be seen, perhaps, as a march of humanity towards freedom? It is in this setting that the papal institution must be reconsidered; Mancuso says that if the Church does not adapt to change is destined to become as extinct as paganism.⁶⁷

It is, however, inevitable that the act of ex-Pope Benedict XVI seem so subversive of the tradition, and even more so from him in particular because he has always been considered a "formidable conservator of the system of pre-conciliar doctrine and

⁶⁵*Ivi*

⁶⁶Vito Mancuso, *Il mestiere di Pietro*, in La Repubblica, March 4, 2013

⁶⁷*Ivi*

theology."⁶⁸ We may say, therefore, that in addition to being subversive towards tradition it is also subversive in relation to doctrine. If one should analyze the speech of his resignation, one would notice how he said there was a "diminishing" of his strength both "physical and spiritual", not psychological, emotional, or mental. The Pope Emeritus lacked the strength to exercise the sacred power to impose the obedience due to him as head of the Church. With this statement, it is as if he confessed that his "spiritual weakness" was due to God Himself, that God would not be close enough to him and that he would be deprived of the strength necessary to carry out a task of such importance. Is it perhaps an admission before the entire Christian world that God may not give one the necessary strength to fulfill one's duty to the end?

However, it is also true that Ratzinger said that he was resigning "for the good of the Church". Is he admitting, therefore, that it is for the good of the Church that God has "caused" him to lack the strength and that he had to therefore renounce the mandate given him? This could really be read in terms of a powerful theological and doctrinal revolution.

It seems to be, at this point, useful to relate our object of study with some of the seven functions of the Performance that Schechner intended: to entertain, to make or change identity, to construct or expand a community, to heal, to teach, to have to do with the sacred or with the demonic. If one reflects, one may notice a strong link between the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI and these functions. With this act of renunciation of the Pope Emeritus entertained a large audience, the entire Catholic world and beyond. He has also definitely changed identity, taking on another still undefined and indefinable. With his choice, he has helped to 'break' the community of the faithful. With this waiver, he intended perhaps to make a step toward healing from the corruption of the Church? Is it considered a way to teach? The link with the sacred seems obvious, but there are those who oppose this gesture that would consider it to be something demonic rather than sacred.

The resignation of Benedict XVI, has, in fact, sparked a debate thus generating, in turn, a somewhat "apocalyptic" climate. One could insert here the figure of *kathecon* (from the greek: *what holds* or is *he who keeps*) extensively analyzed by theologians

⁶⁸Gilberto Squizzato, *Due o tre cose a proposito del nuovo papa (e di quello uscente)*, in www.minimaetmoralia.it February 22, 2013

and philosophers (Massimo Cacciari has devoted a long and thorough study of the matter also from a political point of view).⁶⁹ It is the object of numerous blogs and Catholic publications. What is *kathecon*? The main source of knowledge of this word in a theological sense is from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, which speaks of *kathecon* as something that "holds", which prevents the manifestation of the mystery of iniquity. The *kathecon* is, in essence, the force that prevents the manifestation of the Antichrist or *Anomos*, i.e. "The son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is worshiped as God, so that he himself will sit in the temple of God claiming to be God."⁷⁰

Before the antichrist is made manifest, the *one who holds* the mystery needs to be removed. St. Thomas identifies this force as the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church, his heir and successor. But for Catholics today, the most fervent and sensitive to the prophecies, the *kathecon* is identified in the figure of the pope himself, who, as Vicar of Christ, has the task of curbing the spread of lawlessness in the world.

How can one link the resignation of Benedict XVI to this point of view? Ratzinger, by giving up his power, also gave up the force that precedes the release of the Antichrist into the world? does his gesture announce the future occurrence of iniquity and of perdition?

With the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, the first thing to be questioned was the DNA of the figure of the pope in itself. The figure of Pope will now be viewed as an office limited time and no longer an eternal appointment. The figure will also change in the eyes of the faithful, who are used to seeing this office as irrevocable. There comes a diminishing of the identification between person and role, which until now has "reigned" in most of the Papal predecessors: the prevalence of sacral dimension, of "being pope" regardless even of one's own body. Just think of the choice of John Paul II to "drag himself on", ill, until the end of his term. The Pope Emeritus has, in his own way, placed his body in the foreground, so much so that he named it as one of his main motivations within his resignation announcement - "the impossibility, physical fatigue" keeping him from continuing "to drive the boat of Peter alone". Now *function has got the better of the essence (...), and the secular has got the better of the sacred.*⁷¹ A sacredness that, in this case, vanishes and that, perhaps,

⁶⁹Massimo Cacciari, *Il potere che frena*, Ed. Adelphi, 2013

⁷⁰*Lettere di San Paolo, Seconda lettera ai Tessalonicesi*, The Holy Bible, Old Testament, CEI

⁷¹ Vito Mancuso, *La Chiesa entra nell'era dei due papi, l'ombra di Ratzinger sul successore. Per la prima volta una "coabitazione"*, in La Repubblica, February 12, 2013

could cause a metamorphosis even the traditional image of an omnipotent and omnipresent God.

As many argue, the ministry, or the role, takes priority over the identity of the person, and this helps one in one's study, from a performative point of view, understand that it is not the person in whom one should be interested, but his actions, the behavior.

Enzo Bianchi points out that Catholic doctrine does not allow the person to be more determinant than the ministry that he has been called upon to perform. Cardinal Ratzinger would never forget the Benedictine rule of "nothing but the love of Christ", for it was the love of Christ which would surpass his own person called upon him to perform the arduous task of Papal Minister. What emerged was the ability to decentralize himself when compared to the figure of Christ, and the ability to assert his own, miserable condition of man, "humble servant of God".⁷² Thus the concept of infallibility is related to the ministry and not the person, the penultimate of the dogmas declared by the Catholic Church (Vatican Council 's Dogmatic Constitution Pastor Aeternus - of Pius IX, 1870). The Pope was infallible, Cardinal Ratzinger was not. This dogma would have previously led to a desire to centralize on the figure of the pope and of his primacy, justifying thus the sensation sparked by the news of his resignation. The previously cited theologian Hans Küng, in his book, *Infallible? A Question* (1970), cast doubt on the infallibility of the figure of Pope and as a result he was stripped of the status of Catholic theologian by Pope John Paul II.⁷³ Should one now, in the light of the incessant changes which are being witnessed every day, doubt the truth of a divine appointment? Is the concept of infallibility feasible today? Perhaps Ratzinger has given a definite answer and showed the world his answer with his actions. On the other hand, according to those who tend to justify the act of Ratzinger while not questioning Catholic dogma, infallibility does not necessarily coincide with the indefectibility. The Church, being part human, can make mistakes, and as stated Leo XIII, mistakes can be committed by its ministers, as well as its children .

That the papacy is considered a "judicial office of the Church," not joint indelibly to the person who occupies, is related to the fact that the apostolic hierarchy exerts two types of powers united in the same person: the power of order and the power of jurisdiction. Both are aimed at achieving the specific purposes of the Church, but they are very different and, perhaps, contradictory to each other: the *potestas Ordinis* is the right to distribute the means of divine grace and refers to the administration of the

⁷²Enzo Bianchi, *Benedetto XVI e il monachesimo*, in *Avvenire*, February 24, 2013

⁷³*Ibidem*

sacraments and the exercise of official worship, the *potestas iurisdictionis* is the power to govern the ecclesiastical institution and the faithful individual. Another way in which it is different is the way in which these powers are granted. The power of order is given by consecration, by means of a sacrament, and was therefore a of sacred nature and to whom it is invested will be so forever and no human authority may remove this ontological condition. The power of jurisdiction, however, is not permanent, but temporary, revocable, its offices end with the termination of the mandate. This power rests with the pope and the bishops, however, is only the first that possesses it in its fullness. Progressive theology supports reform in the sacramental sense, and opposes the power of order over power of jurisdiction. The episcopal structure, though, resembles that of a monarchy: the pope would expect to be required only for ethical and religious function, not for government. In this perspective, Hans Küng suggests a pontificate that can end and not for life, as a form of government required by the rate of change in the modern world:

Can the Church have an 80 year old Pontiff, who is no longer fully present from a physical and mental standpoint as "Eternal Pope"? As a theologian, the author can say that the Papal ministry, which was introduced in the Middle Ages, is not a sacrament. One can be ordained a priest, may be ordained bishop, and remain a priest forever. But the Pope cannot. There is an order to be Pope, not sacrament.⁷⁴

There are those who, as the Christian historian Roberto De Mattei, see a contradiction in this: if you believe that the essence of the papacy in the sacramental power of order and not in the power of jurisdiction, then can the Pope resign? If he did lose something it would be only the exercise of power, but not the power itself, given as indelible. He who admits the hypothesis of a resignation, would also have to admit that the Pope's *summa potestas* derives his jurisdiction from exercising and not from receiving the sacrament. For the same reason put forth by De Mattei, the possibility of "two popes" could not even coexist even if one is "pope" and the other is "emeritus". Ratzinger is back simply to being a cardinal who is no longer entitled to exercise any prerogative, even that of infallibility.

Then who, now, is Joseph Ratzinger? Theologically, what role does he now play in the Church? From a visual perspective, can he still be considered the main actor of this performance? While we cannot define his precise role, he is, on the other hand, back to being, in fact, Cardinal (note the etymology from *cardo_inis* = a pivot, the

⁷⁴*Dimissioni Papa, Hans Küng: "Ratzinger sarà pontefice ombra. Possibili ingerenze pericolose"* interview with theologian, in www.huffingtonpost.it

pivot around which revolves a door and, in a figurative sense, a pivot on which it is claimed that one turns anything whatsoever). He himself says that his life will, however, be given to prayer, a presence of intercession, mediation between God and humanity.

His presence in the Vatican, from a theological perspective, is problematic; after the election of Pope Francesco I, they would have to, in some way, coexist, only one pope *de facto*, but both *de jure*? We have already mentioned how some thinkers have not fully contemplated all that the resignation of Benedict XVI implies and, consequently, have not fully contemplated the existence of a new pope (antipope). According to Mancuso and Bianchi, the problem is not truly present, from the moment that being pope means above all to be bishop of Rome. The Bishop of Rome is only one person - the Pope, and Ratzinger is the retired bishop of Rome.

The former Pope in the Vatican, has caused the theologian Hans Küng to conceive the concept of "Shadow Pope".⁷⁵ Küng underlines the fact that Ratzinger will have and want to remain constantly in contact with the cardinals and the Pope. He will still have the opportunity to speak continuously (due to the presence of Father George Gaenswein, as has been already pointed out in the development of this thesis) and will be considered an alternative to which to turn in case one is not in accord with the decisions of the current Pope. Ratzinger himself said: "I am out, but I am still at the heart of the Vatican". Can one then assume that he might be a "secret, uncontrollable interference"? Has our actor really turned into a director?

*It is said that when the deer migrate in groups or make their way to new lands, they support the weight of their heads on each other mutually, so that one goes and the one that follows rests its head on the one before it ... the head alone bears the weight of another, and when he is tired, it then moves into the queue, for in its place is another to carry the weight of the "head of the line", thus resting from his weariness, resting his head the same as the others (Commentary of St. Augustine on Psalm 41).*⁷⁶

The Moral Perspective

The teaching of Pope Benedict XVI at the service of the Truth:
sex scandals and pedophilia

⁷⁵Ivi

⁷⁶Enzo Bianchi, *Ora più che mai è successore di Pietro*, in La Stampa, February 12, 2013

What has happened? Why Pope Benedict XVI left the Papal throne? Is there anyone that drove him to this choice or was it of his own free will? There is perhaps a silent director behind all this? Is the resignation of the Pope the final act of a script that Benedict XVI is no longer able to follow? What, then, is the canonical script? How did cardinal and theologian Ratzinger choose to interpret the role of Pope Benedict XVI, the "face of the Church"?

Let's take a step back and go back to 2005, the year of the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

All the teachings of his pontificate are supposed to be at the service of Truth which is described in two ways - either as divine (referring to the dogma that Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life) or as human (that is - transparent in value). How does the pope act out this well- structured script? Well, It must be played out in two different theaters: the rigid, institutional, official window at which the man, Ratzinger does not appear, but appears the character of Benedict XVI, metonymy of the Church. Understanding the gap between actor and character has already given us one of the problems of analysis. From the window, we see only a pope who shows us only the front of himself, a half-length, with an attitude of strict justice to emphasize the firmness of the spotless face of the Church. Truth is the theme in his speeches that returns again and again. It has been thought that Ratzinger probably uses the technique of identification or perhaps maybe imitation of a role that he has very clear in his mind in order to act out the character Benedict XVI. This is definitely not an intrinsic characteristic, since it is the result of various types of human beings that are encountered in everyday life. The peculiarity of this particular scenario is that the actor in question has chosen to perform his character in truth and that for him (the actor) it has utopian worth, some would say divine, but certainly super-human.

However, he acts out his role on another stage also, A place where he is loved by young people, and where and on WYD, Ratzinger, from the pope-mobile, knocked down the fourth wall and invaded the public, showing his "human" side - the unofficial, soft side of the Church. This is a typical attitude of famous people (heads of state, Miss Italy, journalists, Olympic athletes, singers and more generally all idols) which at times are made to act out of context: for example, a politician who goes onto a show for teens, or an Olympic athlete who is forced into a dance contest, or a model who is assigned a role in a drama. The audience enjoys the show, and does not expect the interpretation to be flawless, but enjoys the fact that its darling in a context that is not his own, and to see then, how he copes. This is a kind of parenthesis because the audience of the faithful know that the context of Benedict

XVI is normally at the window, between books to write, paperwork to sign, and psalms and hymns to be recited in Latin (because that is how the Church wants the public the images private life of the actor), the parenthesis this time is that the darling is immersed in an environment that is not his own. This makes him a bit more "human" and therefore more accepted, especially if he is a "grandfather" celebrating the World Youth Day.

Even so, the pope acts out Truth by reintroducing the Latin language for official ceremonies (Eucharistic celebrations, hearings, just to name a few) which are universally shared by the people of God. It is clearly the language of the Fathers of the Church, and thus the "true" language that all the faithful should understand, but instead, they perceive it to be strong and authoritative as the basis for the foundation of the dogmas of faith. The effect was instead a withdrawing from the people in order to reaffirm that the Church is another thing, it is different, does not fall into the category pettiness of ordinary men.

But all this is a time bomb for Benedict XVI, which exploded in 2008 a cloud of dust decades old, in the USA . From April 15 to the 21, 2008, the Pope went to the United States, just as the storm of the pedophilia scandal continued to rage.⁷⁷ A Problem that has plagued the American Church since 1989 after revelations of the " Boston Globe" on the case John Geoghan, the priest (later defrocked and sentenced to ten years in prison) accused of molesting more than one hundred and thirty children in thirty years, during which his superiors, instead of denouncing him, transferred from one parish to another. Later, other complaints were added to involve a hundred priests. It was the obligatory theme, then, and the pope knew this and dealt with it in a press conference on his plane:

Never again are there to be pedophile priests, we are deeply ashamed and we will do everything possible to see that this does not happen again; pedophiles are completely excluded from the priesthood.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ To understand the American context in which are the facts, we have borrowed the analysis and research of Ann Pellegrini, Associate Professor at the University of California, collected from the book *Love the Sin*. From these we know that the absolute values preached in the U.S. are Christian values about crimes involving sex but do not extend for example to the death penalty is still enforced in some parts of the USA. The researcher then asks why in a country that proclaims religious freedom, people should be judged by the standards of a particular religious tradition. The American situation is therefore paradoxical at best.

⁷⁸Aldo Maria Valli, *Benedetto XVI. Il pontificato interrotto*, 2013, Arnoldo Mondadori, Milano, p.150,

On May 10, 2008, Ratzinger addressed the participants in the International Congress promoted by the Pontifical Lateran University on the fortieth anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Pope Paul VI. He explained why this encyclical is still valid and current:

If sex becomes a drug, and if the sole purpose of sexuality is to become the possession of the other, it is not only the true concept of love that is at stake, but also the dignity of the person himself.⁷⁹

Also in 2008, July 15-20, Benedict XVI was in Sydney for World Youth Day. An Australian television journalist of the SBS raised the thorny question of whether he would apologize for sexual abuse committed by priests. Ratzinger replied: "There are things that are always bad, and pedophilia is always bad. (...) We will do everything possible to clarify the teaching of the Church and to help in education and preparation for the priesthood, and we will do everything possible to heal and reconcile the victims. I think this is the fundamental meaning of apologizing".⁸⁰ "Benedict XVI, ready for "lying in wait" by the local media for the Australian issue of sexual abuse by priests, was clear and unequivocal: he said that those responsible would have to be brought to justice, and he urged the bishops to do everything possible to eradicate a phenomenon for which he confessed shame. At the beginning of 2012, the Catholic Church was driven by revelations coming from some European countries, of sexual abuse committed by priests against children. Cases in Ireland were discovered where two committees of inquiry brought to light more than two thousand cases (from 1975-2004) concerning the diocese of Dublin. The spring of scandal does not stop there, for cases in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Italy were also discovered; and Pope Benedict XVI, for perhaps the first time in the history of the Church, calls the abuse "sinful and criminal acts". The Pope expresses shame and remorse, and indicates the line of action he had decided to follow: to carry out a thorough investigation, to identify all liability in abuse and cover-ups, and to take strict measures that would contribute to the rebirth of the Church. Unfortunately, the turbines of pedophilia are not yet finished turning.

Although Pope Benedict XVI, during the nineteenth plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family, remembered and adopted the harsh words of Jesus against those who offend "one of these little ones" (Mark 9:42), the New York Times, with a few articles on the abuses of the clergy against children, sought to engage

⁷⁹*Ivi*, p.157.

⁸⁰*Ivi*, p.162.

Ratzinger directly by accusing him of silence and cover-ups during the time that he was head of the Congregation for the doctrine of the Faith. The Vatican vocally by way of Father Lombardi with the help of "Osservatore Romano" and Vatican Radio stated, "Cardinal Ratzinger has never hidden cases of which he was aware, and indeed has worked with the utmost severity and transparency to clean up this problem."⁸¹ However, the storm continues, because new cases of pedophile priests are reported frequently around the world.

The pedophilia scandal is an ugly one for the Vatican. The pope is at the center of the news and journalists from all over the world flooded Benedict XVI with the same question: What is the truth? Why has it been silenced for so long and all those who knew did not lift a finger to stop the abuse?

Sunday, May 16, 2010 in St. Peter's Square, Pope Benedict XVI said, "The sin within the Church is the real enemy we must fight." A few days before he had explained in Fatima "Forgiveness does not replace justice. The sufferings of the Church are part of those announced in the third secret of Fatima." Has the Pope done enough to establish the truth and punish those responsible in cases of pedophilia within the Church?

Corrado Formigli, a journalist for *Anno Zero*, produced a report aired May 20, 2010, where were interviewed some of the demonstrators who were protesting in front of the cathedral of Oakland, California. Here are some quotes from these interviews:

- They do not want the truth, do not want the victims speak to the media. The truth is their worst enemy! The Vatican does not possess the truth. We are the true people of faith.
- I do not understand, why the hell are you protesting? The pope is cleaning up other religions are doing the same?
- I was abused by a lousy Catholic priest.
- I'm so sorry.
- You are with a pope who has defended him , and the pope has covered up for Stephen Kiesle a rapist what do you have to say about that?
- You cannot come here and talk to me about situations of which I know nothing and then tell me that the Pope is a criminal. Who are you? Who knows you?
- The Vatican protected pedophile priests for decades trying to blind the eyes of all.
- But the Pope is now apologizing.
- It is not enough, he should resign.

⁸¹ *Ivi*, p. 258.

The script has definitely changed, but there's more. Where is the truth for which Pope Benedict XVI is searching? In the rooms of the Vatican? It is from there that the scandals started. Or maybe it started in the body of the Church, or in any practicing Catholic? Is man not a sinner? What is in those rooms, the shadow theater, surrounded by light? Are they whitened sepulchers? What a drama that unfolds! From the moment of his resignation, Pope Benedict XVI will leave those rooms forever, but before leaving, however, he tried to discover the truth.

Was there an unexpected change in the script to cause the resignation of Benedict XVI? Or was it the scandals of pedophilia? Was he no longer able or no longer willing to "perform" the new script? Although we cannot know, what we do know is what Pope Benedict XVI told cardinals assembled in consistory on 11 February 2013. We have nothing else on which to go. How heavy truly is his silence?

The Economic Perspective

The Legacy of Ratzinger

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Benedict XVI thought of these same words before leaving the Papal ministry, and deciding to carry the weight of the cross alone, withdrawing to prayer. This is perhaps a plausible hypothesis.

Exposed to too great an ordeal, and left alone to struggle, Pope Benedict chose to abdicate in favor of someone younger and more "holy", a new "messiah" who can revive the fortunes of the Church, a boat adrift at sea in a storm.

To some this was a risky choice. To others, it seemed heroic, and still to others it is the sum of faith. Either way, it still a humungous choice, which has rocked, for better or for worse, the foundation upon which sits the entire structure of Christianity.

It is certain that to leave is not a minor thing. The legacy of the Holy Father, in fact, is not only a fixed place at a window looking out to where the *urbi et orbi* blessing, but a veritable Pandora's box that, if opened, could unleash forces beyond any human expectation.

Benedict XVI passes on to his successor, as a witness in this "relay" of faith, the "baton" of great responsibility. Starting with the man and finishing with him as well. The Church is made up not only of doctrine and prayer, but also, and above all, men. So, from 8 pm, February 28, 2013, Pope Benedict was effectively "retired". A spiritual father who, from the vicar of Christ on earth, comes to be a man among

others, and delivers to the next Pope a Church ripped by intrigue, deceit, scandals and machinations.

The figure, that of the Bishop of Rome, has a split, multiple identity. A Pope who put off His Blessed Person and was in line to go down in history as simply a great religious leader who, because of the great strain, physical and mental, left the chair of the Son of the Father, and retired into seclusion, while continuing to dress the white dress, a symbol of the supreme pontifical. It is that dress white that is so distinctive when compared to the black of the "Crows" by which he was surrounded during the years of his papacy.

This is a weighty legacy for the new Pope. A legacy that can be summed up (perhaps trivially) in the two volumes of over 300 pages that make up the secret dossier that three cardinal investigators submitted. These investigators that were appointed by Pope Benedict XVI to clarify within the Vatican, submitted this dossier to the pope that resigned; who, in turn, left it and the throne of Peter, to the new pope, Francis I.

Nobody, except the investigative "007" cardinals, the Pope "emeritus" and the new Pope, knows the secrets enclosed in these volumes. But, from what has been leaked and from what we already knew, there has definitely been a flood of beautiful words for a substantial handful of cardinals.

The social drama displayed by media around the world, who for days, pointed their cameras at the windows of the Vatican, has as its main protagonist Joseph Ratzinger, theologian and cardinal before, and Pope and Pope "emeritus" after, but revolving around his person is a constellation of very diverse characters, who, in one way or another, whether it be acting in the shadows or in the light of the sun, helped to draw an often murky and indistinguishable landscape around him.

The Church, of which Ratzinger was the most authoritative expression (in spite of himself?) Appears to be a true institution of ministerial employees, officers, directors and top management. And it's not that far from being associated with a multinational or a real company, complete with asset management, real estate and church property. However, at its core, has a grueling division of curates and a crisis of confidence in Church leaders.

Underground alliances, secrets, scandals and strictly private leaks were on the agenda for a long time, fueled by news of new discoveries, interrogations, unclear internal

operations, dismissals, arrests, convictions, granting thanks and amnesties. All of this has deeply undermined the credibility of the Church, which is already struggling to find recruits in the various corners of the world. A very hard blow for an institution that is over a thousand years old and has as its *public-client* swarms of believers of all nationalities.

What were these sad events that sapped the soul of the elderly pontiff, no longer able to embody the role that the Holy Spirit through the court of cardinals had somehow imposed?

His soul, perhaps, would not have withstood the evils of careerism and the pursuit of personal power in the men of the church entrusted with responsibility. Too much corruption in the ecclesiastical institution would convince one, among many other reasons, to yield to human rationality, to uncover the role of the infallible Pope, and to entrust the work of Divine Providence, believing and hoping in someone more than adequate to support the Papal ministry.

The *actor-Pope* followed a precise script for nearly eight years, preaching the doctrine of the faith and exercising his "power" as best he could. He embodied the part entrusted to him with extreme caution showing the world what he himself, perhaps, wanted to see and then, with a flick of his hand, going against the "direction" that was imposed, he preferred to improvise, leaving the scene, retreating into silence full of separation and asceticism, the spotlight off, no more cameras trained on him. A *performative choice*, becoming an active agent of change, that is, the eye with which society looks at itself.

The human-performer on the stage of life, of which Ratzinger himself admits shortcomings and pettiness is what, by the way, is the scaffolding material on which rests the Holy Church. Failing to be that "Holy" Church, all of the aura which surrounds it comes crashing down, and it loses its strength and holiness. It does an about-face. The misconduct and the thirst for power prevail over the message of hope, faith, justice and peace handed down directly from the tablets of the Ten Commandments. In fact, as much as they recite the sixth and seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not steal", the Church and the Vicar of Christ on earth should be alien to these atrocities, but it is exactly from this highest bastion of Christianity, that certain uncomfortable facts have come to light.

As a "pilgrim [who] begins the last leg of his pilgrimage on this earth" (these are the words of Ratzinger in his farewell speech in the world), Pope Benedict XVI says goodbye to what was his divine mandate, leaving a legacy of unresolved issues and relinquishing for the first time, after years of pontificate, his mission as Bishop of Rome to become just a humble faithful disciple in search of Christ as the Truth. A schism, which has certainly meant a great sacrifice, which showed the world the multi-identity of a pope, both holy and human revealing a contradictory backstory of an institution, the Catholic Church, the scene of another fission of what is lawful and what is not.

The lack of transparency within the internal and external affairs of the Church is abundantly emphasized by the papal resignation, and revolves around the sexual and financial scandals perpetrated on this side and beyond the Vatican halls, and through a convoluted map of locations both physical and spiritual.

The *Vatileaks* case erupted in early 2012 and has as its centerpiece a leak of confidential Vatican documents concerning relationships inside and outside of the Holy See. It has brought to light the power struggles at the Vatican and some irregularities in the financial management of the IOR (Institute for Works of Religion), as well as a range of concerns on the effective enforcement of the rules against money laundering, which added the Vatican bank in the list of countries monitored as potentially guilty of money laundering.

A "nice stew" from which emerges some relatively well-known names, uncomfortable for the Church itself because this demonstrates the presence of cardinals that by skilled manipulations of news and conscience have become engineers in the creation of "mud machines" in order to instill poison of doubt about some prelates.

The *dossier-bomb* that came into the possession of Pope Ratzinger on December 17, 2012, speaks volumes about the intrigue, the miseries, the fickleness of the curate, pressure groups and networks. The first stone laid by Peter himself to build the Church of Christ must have suffered a severe jolt following the telluric movement that is the basis of the various sub-sets within the framework of the Vatican.

So then, was the elderly pontiff wrong for not feeling that he was capable to administer his teaching? In light of this revelation anyone would pale and would be unable to revive the spirit to accept such a compromise as the papal throne.

The Supreme Pontiff, then, rather than being a pastor of men and a guide on the journey of faith, might have to play the role of CEO of a major corporation, or manager of a massive company in order to maintain an earthly organization which is a matter of great scope. The Holy Father should be limited to dispense spiritual goods but if he finds himself having to be also general manager of an internal bank, can he manage the two tasks together without being liable to a "conflict of interest" and no matter what is going to compromise the proclamation of the Gospel? Apparently, theory and practice do not always agree.

The Church is thus faced with a chasm, which requires a change of course or at least a right turn to give her the opportunity to avert a catastrophic shipwreck. The papal resignation is only a first solution to the internal crisis that tears at the clerical structure. Too many secrets and cover-ups over the years have helped to create a magmatic mass that has violently exploded when the papal apartments have leaked strictly confidential information. The traitor, the butler Paolo Gabriele, so close to the Holy Father, stealing private documents and making them public news sparked a chain reaction that still continues to generate consequences. Sure, sexual and economic scandals had already jumped on the pages of newspapers around the world for some time, but the *Vatileaks* case was a real fuse. No secret was safe anymore, not even there where, for centuries, secrecy was a commonality of the house.

In the shadow of Bernini's colonnade it has thus created a task force specifically to contravene in the emergency situation in which it finds itself. An intervention of unprecedented resources and troops deployed and allowed to act with wide-ranging methods that involved inside detective work which, in turn, shared the data collected by the parallel intelligence carried out by the "Sherlock Holmes-like" three cardinals of Benedict XVI.

Also in this case, an extraordinary amount of documents and acts was prepared about the (parallel?) lives of laity and clergy within the Leonine Wall and beyond. Other voluminous material, therefore, was left in the tired hands of Pope Ratzinger and the eighty boxes found in house of the butler were full of unconfessed sin.

Hot news, data which was certainly not encouraging, but has almost certainly had an impact on the nomination of the new Pope, which, perhaps not coincidentally, is from Argentina. A pope, in fact, that is the other side of the world could be a strong signal of recovery and questioning of principles, which are more or less questionable, which thus far has pursued the curate.

"Replace" the old with the new, beginning from the ground up and from an entirely different perspective. The teaching that Ratzinger left, then, with his revolutionary act may have been understood. Even in the season of poisons it is possible that revenge would not follow.

The struggle between the angels and demons of the Vatican continues to the sound of spying and burying, and it is not to say that there are no twists worthy of a great drama.

There remain several questions that must be answered. Why still maintain a great secret of the empire that the Vatican was built with the money received by Mussolini in 1929 in exchange for recognition of the fascist regime by the pope? And why is the IOR so reluctant to adapt its actions to the rules governing the transfer of money and the control of suspicious transactions? And again, why does it seem that many prelates take advantage of the positions of responsibility with which they have been entrusted to do both good and bad, whichever is more convenient at the time? do we have to wait for a new book by Dan Brown to receive clarification? Beyond the countless questions, however, there remain, thankfully, the certainties.

The Church, while undermined in the community, has always had a distinguished spirit, and has survived schisms, holy wars, external competition and popes on horses who were not exactly shining examples of charity and faith. This crisis then, might be just another obstacle that the church must tackle in order to rise from its own ashes.

The third secret of Fatima, as can be risky, reads: "the angel pointing to the earth with his right hand, with a loud voice says, "Penance, Penance, Penance." Thus, perhaps, what we really need is an analysis of conscience on the part of all the curate and a *mea culpa* that extinguishes the sins of which the whole ecclesiastical institution is stained, from the lowest level to the highest level that holds the power.

Thus, Pope Ratzinger has rewound the ranks of his ministry and has traced with his latest actions a trail from which to re-begin.

The challenge was to give to his successor a chance to carry on operations in transparency. His resignation is a spiritual testament, a warning that something will change - a change for the better, for the good of the Church and the good of all Christians.

With his subversive but decided gesture, Benedict XVI has shown that despite his age and ill health, the mind is lucid and aware - that he is conscious of being a "deputy God" on earth, but still a man who knows his own limitations and defects, who asks for forgiveness. Not an absolute ruler, but a pastor who exercises his power jointly aided and supported by the many actors in a drama that the Church is playing out. Such a decision, therefore, relates, for all intents and purposes, to the man Ratzinger, as Pope, and influenced the last hours of his term and the future of the Holy Roman Church because from that moment on, any other successor to the throne of Peter will be burdened with an even bigger task, a conduit and a laborer to be seen by all, and judged by all whether he is worthy of the Vicariate of Christ.

Thus:

Francis, for Benedict, eschatologically reveals the other half of the story: the pope that God wanted to but that would not have been possible without the other. And Benedict, for Francis, biblically outlines the other half of the road, that God had prepared for him, but before that preparation he would be unable to travel. Benedict was a prophet, like Elijah or Jeremiah, who in the era of secularization, perceives horizons that are distant, but real, of religious revival. Francis is instead the Patriarch, like Abraham or Moses, who has the strength, and especially the charisma to convince her and to lead her in the right path. Both, the one for the other, may eventually become, and occupy the other half of the heart. It is no coincidence that Bergoglio has received Ratzinger on the threshold of his house, in a deliberately intimate space. Besieged by the affection on the streets, Francis is discovering the effect of a solitude that remains: that of the court of St. Peter, from which it can bring out the Church, but not his own self. A solitude in which the man who has the power of binding and loosing is hopelessly bound, with no possibility of disengaging. Not even as emeritus.⁸²

In Short, Benedict XVI is a transitional figure, who was and is no more, but that continues to be in a different way and to "ensure" by his example and his actions concerning the spirituality (and not only) of the new pope and the whole curate.

⁸² Piero Schiavazzi, *Francesco e Benedetto, il Papa patriarca e il Papa profeta, insieme nel "giardino della Curia"*, in L'Huffington Post, May 2, 2013

His current "lack of role" puts him - as was said - in a transitional condition, that does not guarantee a definite identity, but instead produces a shattering of his person.

Such an assumption puts him on the next threshold, not only in relation to his physical being, but also in relation to his soul. Ratzinger is a point through which pass endless lines - a goal that both unites and separates at the same time.

Abandoning the role of the protagonist has resulted in the surrender of a part that had already caused the performer to no longer distinguish the limelight from the backstage, not to mention the disappearance of the support of a team of designated to support the heavy role.

However, his resignation as problematic as it may be, has allowed us to highlight a subtle, yet more important detail, the fact that Joseph Ratzinger could refuse such an assignment, that he was not congenial, and unable to bear the heavy role assigned to him. However, though the appearances are to the contrary, the former Pope now finds himself occupying a position equally enormous: far from the spotlight and therefore not directly attacked or subjected to judgments, he continues, albeit discreetly (whether consciously or not is unknown) to direct a drama which will be on stage for some time and maybe, even before having even ascended to the throne of Peter, he was able to lead with great skill.

Just like a magician who, in spite of the public, puts on big show but never really reveals his tricks.

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N.B. La presentazione multimediale che è stata presentata durante l'esposizione in classe del percorso di analisi performativa è disponibile su <http://prezi.com/lzkighfjxcpb/untitled-prezi/>