

# The Church and the Secular State: The Concordat of 1801

On the Occasion of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Death  
of Pope Pius VII

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## Summary

*The history of the relationship between Pope Pius VII and Napoleon Bonaparte, from the political aspect, as well as their personal relationship, is an interesting topic for both historians and novelists, for psychologists, and sociologists; moreover, there is a hagiographic side to their relationship, namely the relationship between persecutor and persecuted. The ensuing text will focus mainly on the key event of the liaison between these two protagonists which was broken due to the signing (and implementation) of the Concordat of 1801. This event — a dry diplomatic act — is most certainly an introduction to a new page in the life of the Church in post–revolutionary Europe and the world. In this respect, tribute should be paid to Pope Pius VII.*

Keywords: Pius VII; Napoleon; Concordat; Church–State relationships; revolution; Papal State

## Introduction

The 200th anniversary of the death of Pope Pius VII (August 20, 1823) provides an opportunity to rethink the time of the outbreak of the French Revolution and some decades thereafter, a turning point in European and World history. The severity of the drama resulting from the shaken foundations of the Ancient Regime, the foundations of identity in general, and of the European way of life is nowhere as evident, to be sure, as in the relationship between the new, republican, enlightened, even atheistic worldview, and Christianity. At an institutional level, this clash is most apparent in state conflict: first the revolutionary republics, then the Napoleonic Empire with the Catholic Church within its struc-

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ture, and the almost self-evident fundamental institution of Catholic Europe, but also indirectly of Europe as a whole.

As in any great drama, such as this conflict truly was, the lives of the main protagonists reflected the intensity, gravity, but also the unpredictability and absurdity of such conflicts. The text that follows aims to put forth biographical details about the conflict between Pope Pius VII and the new idea of political power embodied in the Emperor Napoleon. In theatrical terms, both of the main protagonists enter the scene practically at the same time. On the famous Coup d'état of 18 Brumaire, November 9, 1799, Napoleon will assume power as the First Consul of the Republic.

### *1. The election of Pope Pius VII and the beginning of his Pontificate*

After the death of Pope Pius VI, who died in exile in France in 1799, the cardinals gathered on November 30 of the same year at the conclave in Venice, and on March 14, 1800, Cardinal Chiaramonti was elected pope and assumed the name Pius VII. The newly elected pope was born in Cesena as Barnaba Nicolò Maria Luigi Chiaramonti, on August 14, 1742, into a noble family as the youngest son of Count (*conte*) Scipione Chiaramonti and his consort Marchioness Giovanna Coronata Ghini. Barnaba had a family connection to the Braschi family on his maternal side — the family of his predecessor on the papal throne, Pius VI. He entered the Order of Saint Benedict 1756 at Abbazia di Santa Maria del Monte in Cesena as a youth, whereupon he took the name Gregorio. After his priestly ordination, he spent several years teaching at the colleges of his order in Parma and Rome before being consecrated as bishop of Tivoli in 1782. Three years thereafter, in 1785, he was elected bishop of Imola (Cheney, 2022). That same year, he was appointed cardinal (Browne Olf, 1941, 60).

It was in Imola that Cardinal Chiaramonti and his flock met the invading French army under Napoleon's command in 1797. They nearly missed the encounter in Imola, however the cardinal was invited to Rome by Pope Pius VI. The Treaty of Tolentino in 1797 brought peace, and the new city council sent a letter to the "Citizen Cardinal" asking him to return (Anderson, 2001, 58–62). In these circumstances, Cardinal Chiaramonti demonstrated a high level of pragmatism and reconciliation towards the new lords and even avoided confrontations with ideological republican rhetoric (Bokenkotter, 1998, 32). Pope Pius VI came into conflict with advancing revolutionary and republican ideas as he condemned the French Civil Constitution and the Revolution in general.

The assassination in Rome of the French general Duhot prompted the Directory to send General Berthier to occupy the city, depose the Pope, and establish the Roman Republic on the partial territory of the Papal State. He was then banished from Rome, spent a few months in Florence, and by the time war broke out, the French government ordered his transfer to France. The Pope finally reached Valence near Lyon. However, he died on August 29, 1799, exhausted by the demanding route across the Alps. During his stay at the Carthusian monas-

tery near Florence, on November 13 he issued a decree that the conclave shall convene »wherever the majority of cardinals can most conveniently assemble« (Browne Olf, 1941, 59). Existing rules for the conclave require that it be summoned at the place of the pontiff's death, thus Valence would be an extremely poor choice. The senior cardinal could now convene the conclave wherever he wished. Rome was not an option, because the Eternal City was occupied by Neapolitan troops. Venice became the most appropriate choice, mainly because it was on Habsburgian territory. This supposed advantage of Austrian protection turned out to be very one-sided, for it prolonged the election from December 1, 1799, to March 14, 1800 (Adams, 2015). The Austrian candidate, Cardinal Alessandro Mattei (Anderson, 2001, 84), was not able to achieve a majority, and finally, the compromise choice of Chiaramonti was now acceptable both to the cardinals and the Austrian Court (Baumgartner, 2003, 183–184).

The alleged Austrian favour had many limitations and uncertainties based on the intention to avoid French provocations and on sentiments in Italy which were increasingly republican. Rather strange is the fact that the conclave was held at the Benedictine Monastery of San Giorgio in Venice, located on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore. The apparent intention was to permit no publicity. The papal coronation and enthronement on March 21 took place in the San Giorgio Monastery, where the conclave had been held. Emperor Francis II refused to give permission for the Inaugural Mass in San Marco in Venice — a demonstration of the fact that the new Pope was held in low esteem, surely based on the outcome of the conclave. The ban was connected to the use of the papal tiara, the symbol (among other things) of political power. The right to wear the tiara represented the last ironic and discouraging *omen* for the new pontiff. A secondary but unsightly and humiliating detail was that the Pope was crowned with a papier-mâché tiara (McBrien, 1997, 482; Anderson, 2001, 90–94), because the papal regalia and vestments were confiscated (stolen) by the French authorities.

The journey to Rome for the new Pope was a difficult and politically laborious task. Bonaparte's victory at the Battle of Marengo in June 1800 brought about a collateral and unexpectedly favourable effect on the papacy in Rome. The Papal State was re-established, and Pope Pius arrived in Rome on July 3, just a week after these changes took place. One of his first decisions was to appoint Cardinal Ercole Consalvi as Secretary of State, a far-reaching decision that influenced his policy until the end of his pontificate.

## 2. *Concordat with the French State*

Having arrived in Rome and re-established temporal power in the Eternal City, it was clear to Pope Pius that the ascension to power in France of a new man was a fresh opportunity to normalize the compromised position of the papacy and especially of the Papal State. The momentum was recognized and achieved on both sides: the body of the late Pope Pius VI was still in Valence in France, where he died. The First Consul Bonaparte saw this as a key step toward rec-

conciliation between Church and State, providing at the same time the first true pontifical ceremony for Pius VII. Namely, the body of Pius VI was transported by ship from Marseille to Geneva and then escorted overland in a solemn funeral procession towards Rome, where his pontifical coffin was greeted triumphally and ceremoniously entombed. In the realm of internal politics, the “de-revolution process” was mild for it occurred under the umbrella of general amnesty for officials in the service of the “French” republic. Although principally conservative, Pius VII and his Secretary of State Cardinal Consalvi undertook a program of economic recovery, which included greater participation of lay people in the administration and development of new areas of the economy, as well as improvement of the judiciary system (Reinhardt, 2017, 743–745).

The main perspective of all these consolidation processes remained the relationship with France, now with the First Consul, who meanwhile strengthened his power in Italy with the victory at Marengo in June 1800. On the French side, a certain social and revolutionary appeasement pervaded the populace and political elites as well. The revolutionary exultation became even more suspicious, and the reality of social and family life leaned towards the normalization of civic, traditional, and even religious aspects of life. Reconciliation with the Head of the Church in Rome would be of the highest political relevance — domestically — in France and in neighbouring Italy. Conclusively, it was quite understandable that Napoleon’s first proposals for an agreement between the Holy See and France reached Rome almost immediately after the battle at Marengo. During the meeting with Cardinal Giuseppe Martiniana in Vercelli on June 25, 1800, Napoleon had already outlined his intentions in detail (Caiani, 2021, 130–132). He allegedly told the Cardinal: »Go to Rome and tell the Holy Father that the First Consul wished to make him a gift of thirty million Frenchmen«, thus expressing his enthusiasm for negotiations (W. Roberts, 1999, 42).

The importance and complexities of the future Concordat were evident in the choice of representatives by both parties. Each side had drawn up a three-member commission. The French party consisted of Joseph Bonaparte (Napoleon’s brother), Emmanuel Crétet, Counsellor of State, and Étienne–Alexandre Bernier, an unconstitutional priest and former rebel leader in Vendée, which is an evident expression of Napoleon’s will to heal the deep divisions in French society. Pope Pius’ VII team was more conventional: Cardinal Consalvi, Cardinal Giuseppe Spina, and Father Carlo Francesco Maria Caselli. The lack of French bishops was apparent: they were practically ignored. The reason for this neglect was purposeful — part of the episcopate was in exile, mostly political royalists; another part consisted of bishops elected by the Civil Constitution and immediately unwanted by the Church. The terms of the Concordat would offer a practical explanation for this step (Caiani, 2021, 100–103).

For the Church, the perspectives of the future Concordat were not without dangerous diplomatic and ecclesiastic consequences. The French king, Louis XVIII, living in exile, was strongly opposed to any agreement between the “republican king-killers” and the Pope, recognising in this act a certain legaliza-

tion of the regime. Some members of the College of Cardinals in Rome were also unwilling to participate in negotiations with Paris. The problem was also the existence of the French Constitutional Church, established by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy at the National Assembly in 1790 and condemned by Pope Pius VI. Although without stronger popular support, the Constitutional Church, especially its head, Bishop Grégoire, put pressure on the members of the circle of Napoleon's collaborators to obstruct negotiations (Anderson, 2001, 98–99).

Following turbulent negotiations, a tenth draft was accepted, and the Concordat was finally signed in Paris by plenipotentiaries Joseph Bonaparte and Ercole Consalvi on July 15, 1801 (the 26th Messidor of the year IX, the official Calendar in France at the time). Papal ratification of the document arrived on August 15, 1801, with the Papal Bull *Ecclesia Christi* (A. Roberts, 2014, 316–318).

### 3. *Terms of the Concordat*

After the exchange of ratifications on September 10, 1801 (23rd Fructidor), the Concordat was proclaimed a law on April 8, 1802 (18th Germinal). The Concordat restored Catholicism in France, although conditions later appended to the agreement by Napoleon (the so-called “Organic Articles”) strengthened the government's control over the Church and restricted papal interventions in France (McBrien, 1997, 482).

The introductory declaration that »Catholicism was the religion of the great majority of the French« was a compromise, cancelling the position of the official state religion, and stressing the “democratic” majority's importance. The claims of religious freedom were preserved, in particular with respect to the Protestant minority. The bishops were obliged to take, at the hands of the First Consul, an oath of fidelity directly, however different from the unfortunate oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

The Church, in general, preserved the internal liberties of cult and doctrine, as well as the right to public worship. The appointment of bishops was the privilege of government (the First Consul), while the Holy See consecrated them for their episcopal service; that is, the Holy See would »confer the canonical institution«, with the possibility of deposition. This regulation was founded in terms of the Concordat of Bologna in 1516 between the Kingdom of France and the Holy See (W. Roberts, 1999, 58). The territorial organisation of (arch)dioceses was significantly changed: France was divided into ten archdioceses and fifty dioceses, with the obvious intention to mirror the political division of the State. The Church gave up all her rights in regard to land and other properties confiscated after the Revolution. As a certain compensation, the State would pay clerical salaries for bishops and priests, obviously an unproportioned exchange with different consequences for both the State and the Church in the future (W. Roberts, 1999, 46–49). Politically less important but, at the level of cultural identity, a very significant demand, was the return of the traditional Christian Calendar. The process of suppression of the Republican Calendar had begun by reintroducing

Sunday as a feast day beginning on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1802. The rest of the French Republican Calendar was gradually replaced and finally abolished in favour of the traditional Gregorian Calendar on January 1, 1806 (Shusterman, 2010, 208–211).

The actual French bishops were not excluded from the negotiations, instead, they were ordered to jointly resign from office, with the possibility of re-election under new terms. This was a mutually logical political concession that would enable the functioning of the Church in the new establishment. The bishops from the *ancien régime* were strong royalists, and mostly exiled, which was quite unacceptable to Napoleon. From an ecclesiastical point of view, the *évêques constitutionnels*, who had sworn an oath of allegiance to the Republic, were wicked, disloyal men, unworthy to be shepherds of the Church. Napoleon made a compromise: for his new episcopal assembly he had renominated sixteen members from the *ancien régime* hierarchy, and twelve among the constitutional bishops, amounting to an additional thirty-two new bishops. The new bishops were a good choice overall; they were active promoters of religious restoration and revival after the Napoleonic era (W. Roberts, 1999, 48–49).

Although not primarily the intention of either side in the negotiations, this “purification” of the episcopacy was an abolishment of the centuries old tradition of Gallicanism. Volker Reinhard summarized this new beginning as an “act of exorcism” from the Roman point of view. The memory of the shameful betrayal of the “revolutionary bishops” was erased, the “royal bishops” lost their wealth through revolutionary confiscations, and now the Pope’s formal legalization of this expropriation yielded a poor and obedient French Church, whose members were paid by the State and were without the legal and material basis to preserve the Gallican heritage (Reinhardt, 2017, 746). On an internal level, the Church had a significant advantage: priests were now under the control of the bishops, and the old hybrid system of patrimonies and local rights regarding appointments of parish priests and their payment was out of function. The priests were now controlled by bishops — and not directly by the State.

The majority of the French clergy was traditionally hostile towards the idea of the Concordat, and Gallicanism was strong in large segments of French society (Lefebvre, 2005, 162). The “triumph” over Gallicanism quickly changed to great discontent when Bonaparte promulgated the so-called Organic Articles, published as an appendix to the Concordat. It consisted of 77 Articles, a set of regulations of ecclesiastical laws and life, which relegated administrative and certain spiritual matters to temporal concerns of the State. The First Consul Bonaparte reinforced the religious praxis of Louis XIV; the Four Articles of the Clergy Assembly of 1682 were now again compulsory in seminary curricula, and the publication of papal decrees in France required government approval (Chadwick, 1981, 487–490; W. Roberts, 1999, 44–50).

#### 4. *The consequences and effects of the Concordat*

Like most key events in world history, such as the Edict of Constantine or the Peace of Westphalia, the Concordat of 1801 is not evaluated primarily as a formal agreement with its points, clauses, and interpretations, but mainly by its effects in the epochs that follow. Therefore, the judgment is necessarily multi-layered and even contradictory because it depends on the point of departure, i.e., the starting point of the power or powerlessness of the parties involved. The position of doctrine and practice of the Church in the eighteenth century, as well as royalist circles, perceives the Concordat as the ultimate defeat and humiliation of the Church, which will remain in a penitent position directing French Catholicism towards Ultramontanism. The harsh judgment of the famous monarchist Joseph de Maistre who assesses the weakness of Pius VII to be a greater crime than the weakness of Alexander VI, illustrates well the sternness of this position (Anderson, 2001, 116). Pius VII saw in the new perspectives the possibility of attaining space for elementary freedom for the Church in France, whose sacrifices would not be insignificant: the Church overcame the constitutional Church, which was in the process of disintegration, and above all, it was the price for the ending of an effective persecution that had lasted more than a decade (Martina, 1995, 21).

The successful campaign in Italy secured Bonaparte's personal authority in France. His position of strength gave him an advantage, not only over foreign enemies but also against domestic opposition, especially the troublesome *brumairiens*.<sup>1</sup> The long-lasting conflict with the Church was an obvious ballast. With a "Constantinian" intuition, he realized the futility of a struggle against the Church and put forward a process of reconciliation. Bonaparte had no sentimental obstacles to sacrificing the constitutional bishops together with the bishops of the *ancien régime*, avoiding in one coup the antagonism between the victors and the vanquished. The positive results were obvious: the confidence of Catholics in the new Church order was steadily growing; the Church could slowly rejuvenate its clergy and reopen seminaries, while conflicts among the clergy would gradually diminish, and half secretly, female religious congregations would re-emerge. The experience of strong testimony and martyrdom was discreetly present among the members of the Church, and nostalgia for the "good old times" was not a dominant and destructive sentiment (Lyons, 1994, 77–90; Martina, 1995, 21–26).

From the point of view of the effects on the future of the Catholic Church, the elimination of Gallicanism was an epochal interruption in the old ecclesiastical order, networked in the feudal system of power of old privileges, with legal and traditional exceptions of all sorts. When Pope Pius VII, by means of the Papal Bull *Tam Multa*, demanded the resignation of all Catholic bishops in France, it was a mortal blow to Gallicanism. Earlier tradition saw the episcopal sees received by divine right from Christ, not as revocable offices entrusted by the grace

1 The supporters of *The Coup d'état of 18 Brumaire* (9 November 1799), which abolished the Directory and brought Bonaparte to power as First Consul of France.

of the Pope. Such a degree of complete deprivation of a national episcopate done without previous legal procedure is a historic precedence. Was this act of papal sovereignty an important step towards the development of the doctrine of papal jurisdictional mediation (Walsh, 1965, 152–154)? In the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor aeternus* of the First Vatican Council of 1870, it was said that »Bishops receive their spiritual jurisdiction not directly from God but immediately through the Pope« (Denzinger & Hünemann, 2002, 1821–1840).

The Concordat in France was partly in effect until 1905, when the new provision known as the French Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State (*Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Églises et de l'État*), established state secularism and the complete separation of State and Church. The only exception was Alsace–Lorraine, then a part of the German Empire where it remains in force under the local law of Alsace–Moselle (Mayeur & Rebérioux, 1984, 227–232).

The French Concordat served as a model for similar arrangements made with the Church in territories controlled by Napoleon, especially in Italy and Germany. They had very different backgrounds and prehistory, and as such, were practically doomed to fail. The French Concordat had the urgency to resolve one national problem and achieved it, albeit imperfectly, and with a perspective for improvement. The Italian and German concordats were imported from abroad, creating resistance and a common feeling of intrusion upon an inadequate model (Lyons, 1994, 234–235; Walsh, 1965, 154–157).

The most “exciting” period in the relations between Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII took place after the signing of the Concordat. Historians often lend great significance to these turbulent events, which are summarized in the following lines. In 1804, the Pope was invited by Bonaparte to his imperial coronation. Against the advice of his counsellors, the Pope went to Paris to take a passive part in Napoleon’s glamorous, significant, but bizarre coronation on December 2. The Pope was probably living in the hope of modifying parts of the Organic Articles or restoring some papal territories still occupied by France, but nothing of the kind occurred (Kelly, 1986, 303). Earlier, as a sign of benevolence toward the future emperor, in January 1803, Pius VII appointed Abbé Joseph Fesch, Archbishop of Lyon, and Napoleon’s uncle (half–brother of his mother, Madame Letizia). This relatively peaceful period in their relations deteriorated due to Pius’ constant concern for the preservation of the sovereignty of the Papal State, which involved him in a series of confrontations with French dominance in Europe. His refusal to support the continental blockade of England was a reason for Bonaparte to occupy Rome again (February 2, 1808) and for the annexation of the last remnants of the Papal States (May 17, 1809). The Pope responded by excommunication (June 10), without mentioning Napoleon by name. As a response Bonaparte demonstrated his power in response: the Pope was to undergo five years of exile. His first internment was at Savona near Genoa (July 5, 1809) in virtual isolation; later he was transferred to Fontainebleau near Paris (June 1812) where Napoleon personally inflicted pressure on him to draft a new Concordat,



however without lasting success. After the Russian failure and defeats in 1813, Bonaparte sent him again to Savona in 1814, finally returning shortly to Rome on March 24, 1814, only to escape again, now to Genoa, after Napoleon's return from Elba. This long turbulent exile finally ended with his return to Rome on June 7, 1815 (Kelly, 1986, 303; Reinhardt, 2017, 747–752; Jordan, 2012, 137–138; Anderson, 2001, *passim*). Bonaparte was exiled to St. Helena the same year.

Returning to Rome, the Pope allowed himself one small sign of revenge: one of his first decrees after his return to Rome (August 1814) was the Papal Bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*, which re-established the Society of Jesus after its suppression by Clement XIV in 1773 (Cross & Livingstone, 2005, 366). However, this contained no revenge at all against Bonaparte: it was a correction of an ultimatum of the Christian Monarchs from the ancien régime (Reinhardt, 2017, 754). Pius VII did not want to intensify hostilities: his principle was to cause no suffering on either side, nor did he encourage popular revolts (Tyrol, Spain, Calabria) against the “godless Frenchmen” (Markham, 1965, 323). He will write to his best associate, Cardinal Consalvi: »The dutiful and courageous initiative of 1801 made Us long forget and forgive subsequent injuries. Savona and Fontainebleau were but actions of a misguided mind, aberrations of human ambition, whilst the Concordat was a saving act undertaken in a Christian and heroic spirit« (Anderson, 2001, 387).

Napoleon's biographers (among them his literal “biographer” L. Tolstoy) stress almost repeatedly that Napoleon was a man without conviction, ideology, and faith, and for that reason, men fundamentally motivated by ideology or faith (or both) were an enigma to him (Jordan, 2012, 137; Nicholls, 1999, xii; Tolstoy, 2006, 1741). Within a short timespan following Waterloo, much of the B(u)onaparte family found refuge and papal protection in (the now undisputedly papal) Rome: Madame Maria Letizia, Napoleon's mother, with her daughter Pauline (Maria Paola) Bonaparte Borghese, and her sons Lucian and Louis, former king of Holland. Napoleon's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, also came to Rome (A. Roberts, 2014, 462–465; Martina, 1995, 24). Pope Pius used to walk with the Emperor's mother on the Palatine Hill or Appian Way, comforting the old lady while she spoke of the “troubles of the good Emperor”. Through Consalvi, the Pope intervened through the Prince Regent of England and the allies in order to mitigate Napoleon's living conditions on St. Helena (Anderson, 2001, 386).

## Conclusion

The long battle between secular powers and the Pope's conviction regarding his specific duty and role within Christian Europe had ended. There were no truly victorious nor defeated sides in this struggle, and the conflict continued. This conclusion shows one of Pius' important features: for most of his pontificate, at least until 1815, he did not have any powerful allies, except occasionally Great Britain and Imperial Russia. Here the ironic emphasis is underlined by the fact that these are non-Catholic countries. The Pope consciously subjected

himself, and after the end of the Napoleonic era, the situation normalized relatively painlessly, without conscriptions, mass persecutions, or institutionalized revenge. Pius VII was primarily a Benedictine monk, by no means a politician, and his evaluation of people and events was not exclusively political. Pope Pius VII suffered greatly under Napoleon and was on the brink of fatal illness in Paris in 1812. After Napoleon's fall, however, he expressed no revenge.

On July 16, 1823, the Basilica of St. Paul's–Outside–the–Walls, one of the most ancient and beautiful Roman Basilicas, burned down in flames. The Basilica and monastery were particularly dear to Pius, who had spent years there as a young Benedictine. To spare him further suffering, no one informed him of the disaster. On August 20, 1823, Pope Pius VII peacefully passed away. Today, the meticulously restored Basilica stands to be admired by pilgrims and tourists. Had the pious (Pius?!) Benedictine monk heard the news of the destruction of the Basilica, he most certainly would have responded reflectively in the spirit of his order's motto: *ora et labora*. The future belongs to Providence, in any event.

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*Crkva i sekularna država: Konkordat iz 1801. godine**Prigodom dvjestote obljetnice smrti pape Pija VII.*

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*Sažetak*

*Kontakti pape Pija VII. i Napoleona Bonaparte, zajednička europska društvena i politička scena, kao i njihov osobni odnos, zanimljiva je tema za povjesničare, no ne manje i za književnike i psihologe, sve do martiroloških karakterizacija relacije progonitelj–mučenik. 200. obljetnica smrti pape Pija VII. (20. kolovoza 1823.) prigoda je komemorirati ključne događaje koji povezuju te dvije, tako oprečne, osobnosti. Riječ je o donošenju (i provedbi) konkordata iz 1801. godine između Francuske Republike i Svete Stolice. Po sebi suhoparni diplomatski čin postao je pionirski uvod u nove relacije između Crkve i (sekularne) države koje su tijekom vremena od onodobnoga “nemogućega” dogovora postale politička samorazumljivost suvremenoga svijeta. Politički iznuden konkordat s jedne se strane može razumjeti kao demokratski plašt kojim se Crkva stavlja u službu režima, koji nije krio takve ambicije. Već i sumarna analiza posljedica konkordata pokazuje istinu da je povijest uvijek sklizak teren za nametanje velikih ideja. Tako konkordat iz 1801. primjerice oslobađa Crkvu od stoljetnih spona galikanizma, koji je Bonaparte jednim potpisom gurnuo u prošlost. Od toga sporazuma između sekularne države i Crkve katolici se trajno privikavaju na dvojakost, nepredvidivost, pa i apsurdnost političkih uspjeha i poraza. Od iskustva pape Pija VII. naovamo njegovi nasljednici na Petrovoj stolici gotovo bez iznimke nasljeđuju imperativ neprekinutoga razlučivanja nijansi između civitas Dei i civitas terrena.*

*Ključne riječi: Pio VII.; Napoleon; konkordat; crkva–država; revolucija; Papinska država*

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