

individual litigants and their lawyers, nor the general public and their politicians, know the true reasons for any particular decision because the unanimous judgement is necessarily a compromise or amalgam of the views of those individual judges willing to vote in favour of the particular outcome.

The difficulty with the vision of Europe articulated by the Abbot of San Miniato is that it gives its blessing to a Europe which is monolithic, which does not admit of dissent and which works in secrecy. This may well be a model inspired by Catholic Christianity, if the methods and workings of the Roman Curia are seen to be characteristic of an institution based on Christian principles. The problem is that, unlike the Church, the European Community is a union of democracies. The experience of Britain has been that democratic institutions are not threatened, but instead thrive on dissent, scepticism, opposition and openness. There can be strength, unity and loyalty in diversity. It is this truth that the European Community should be seen to be embodying, rather than to be seen as a re-creation, in the sphere of politics, of a monolithic, nineteenth century ecclesial vision.

## On Becoming a Cardinal

Hamish F.G. Swanston

No commemoration is without its controversy, as the burghers of Genoa and Columbus, Ohio, have been discovering this year. And there may be some, in Lorenzo, Nebraska, or Lorenzo, Texas, to murmur about the sack of Volterra in 1472, or the revenge taken on the Pazzi conspirators in 1478, but in Florence they are confidently celebrating the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Il Magnifico. Perhaps Lorenzo de' Medici was not quite as finely magnificent as his grandfather, Cosimo II Vecchio, but it does seem largely right to recall a man who put his extraordinary energies into the seeking-after peace between the Italian

states, the encouragement of artists, and the education of his children, in especial the graceful direction of his second son, Giovanni.

Almost from his birth, on 11 December 1475, Giovanni had been dedicated to the cardinalate by his pious father. And from 1 June, 1483, when he was confirmed and tonsured by the bishop of Arezzo in the Medici family chapel, Lorenzo insisted that the whole household, parents, brothers, sisters, address the youngster as 'Messire', even in those garden games at Careggi in which, as Machiavelli sneered, their father might roll with them on the grass. Tonsuring made Messire Giovanni capable of benefices and, ever forward-looking, Lorenzo had spent some time the previous year sounding out patrons of some conveniently vacant abbey or bishopric. The King of France actually nominated Messire Giovanni as Archbishop of Aix within a week of his tonsure, but a few days later Lorenzo was noting in his *Ricordi* the disappointment of discovering the old archbishop to be not yet dead, not even a little unwell. However, his son became, in quick succession, abbot of Saint Martin de Fonte-Dolce, San Giovanni di Passignano, and Monte Cassino, and had soon collected a clutch of canonries in the Tuscan cathedrals. All this with the blessing of Pope Sixtus IV who was not thought to be a friend of the Medici, on account of his having been rather too much in-the-know about that 1478 plot to murder Lorenzo and his brother at High Mass.

On the death of Pope Sixtus and the election of Giambattista Cybò as Innocent VIII, things looked rather more hopeful for Messire Giovanni's career. Lorenzo at once began to pester the new Pope to nominate the nine-year-old boy to the College of Cardinals. The rough and tumble Piero, Lorenzo's eldest son, was sent to congratulate the Pope on his election and to ask that Messire Giovanni should, in his turn, obtain deserved promotion. 'Remind His Holiness', Lorenzo wrote after him, 'that your brother has been properly trained for the priesthood; I am myself keeping a close guard on his habits and his reading'. Piero was not to admit a pause in his praise of his learned and pious brother. Francesco Cybò, the Pope's son, who had married Lorenzo's daughter, Maddalena, was put to like use. So, too, was Lorenzo's brother-in-law, Rinaldo Orsini, installed as Archbishop of Florence after his sister's sensible marriage. He, poor man, found himself quite out-witted on his visit to Rome. All these relations failing him, Lorenzo turned to the professional diplomats. Giovanni Lanfredini was established as his agent in Rome and set to discover cardinals who might second the Medici proposal, and to persuade the others not to voice their opposition in consistory. On Ascanio Sforza's agreeing to urge Messire Giovanni's claim, Lorenzo rushed to acknowledge a

favour which, he averred, was as great as if the milanese cardinal had 'raised me from the dead'. To Pope Innocent, he was writing in marginally stronger terms: 'I beseech you to grant this as eagerly as I beseech God to grant my salvation', '*con quella efficacia che farei a N.S. Dio la salute dell'anima mea*'.

The Pope, however, had secured his election by promising, quite invalidly, not to create any new cardinals until death had reduced their number to a couple of dozen, and, quite lawfully, not even then to promote anyone less than thirty years old. He therefore hesitated. Only after five years of Lorenzo's beseeching did he yield. On 8 March, 1489, Messire Giovanni was nominated Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria in Domnica.

Pope Innocent would not, however, allow the thirteen-year-old's immediate investiture. He insisted that whatever the diligence Lorenzo had exercised in seeing to the Deacon's progress in greek and latin literatures, there was no substitute for a solid grounding in Canon Law. So, eager to get him into the sacred purple, his father sent him to Pisa, to the university he had himself re-founded. There Messire Giovanni attended the classes of the indefatigable canonist Bartolommeo Sozzini. Lorenzo, worried perhaps that his son would forget some of his humanist learning sent Bernardo Dovizi of Bibbiena with him to run the undergraduate's household. They were all terrified that the aged Pope would die before Messire Giovanni had completed the three-year course stipulated by papal order, for this would throw the cardinalate, not *in petto* and yet not wholly public, into horrid doubt. 'You really must leave all this to me', the Pope said soothingly to Piero Alamanni, another of the Florentine agents in Rome, 'it may be that I will publish Messire Giovanni's promotion any time now'.

It was an element in this Pope's statecraft to keep as many influential persons as possible in anxious expectation, so, despite his acknowledging that Messire Giovanni had proved to have a real talent for Canon Law, it was not until the very day that the three years were up, 9 March, 1492, that Messire Giovanni in a modest coat, accompanied by Pico della Mirandola and a few servants, descended the short path from the family's Fiesole villa to the local abbey. There he was solemnly invested with the *pallium*, the *biretum*, and the tasselled *galerus*. In return the cardinal imparted a plenary indulgence to those who had attended his little ceremony. Piero then brought the long-trained prelate, whom now only the family could address as '*Messire*', home to the Via Larga where Lorenzo sat ill in his great chair. Three days later 'my scholar son', *il savio*, as Lorenzo distinguished him from Piero the wild, *il pazzo*, and Giuliano the good, *il buono*, set off for

Rome.

The unobservant Piero wrote the next week to assure the cardinal that their father was well again. And on 25 March, the cardinal wrote a nice, unsophisticated, little note to his father about 'Our Lord the Pope', who had remained remarkably taciturn throughout his first audience, '*non gli parlai quasi niente*', and at their second meeting had been chiefly concerned that the youngster remember to return the courtesy calls of the other cardinals, 'my brethren, now'. Lorenzo, who knew he was dying, whatever Piero might like to think, dictated in return the long letter setting out his idea of the cardinal his son should be.

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On the preliminary announcement of Messire Giovanni's being named cardinal, Lorenzo had been innocently eager to assure Alamanni that the good news was 'so much the greater being the less expected'. Now, in April 1492, he was determined that his son should not suppose he had achieved this greatness. His cardinalate had come not by his own merits but by the surprising will of God, '*non i meriti vostri, Prudentia o sollecitudine, ma mirabilmente esso Iddio v'ha fatto Cardinale*'. There must certainly be no sitting-back in the comfortable knowledge that a cardinal's position is no less secure than high, '*non manco sicuro che grande*'. It would be disgraceful if others, growing older, improved themselves, whilst he fell from the virtues of his youth. He must remain, in chapel and committee room, the very model of a modern cardinal, *santa*, and *honest*, and so *esemplare*. But then, of course, Messire Giovanni knew all this. It was a great comfort to his father that, in the past year, the cardinal had several times, quite without being told, gone to confession and communion. There was, Lorenzo assured him, nothing better than perseverance in this sort of thing, '*in simili modi*', if he wished to continue in God's grace.

All this was the more important because, howsoever more friendly Our Lord the present Pope was than Our Lord his predecessor, it was evident to every decent Florentine that Rome remained the sink of every iniquity, '*sentina di tutti i mali*'. In 'the City', according to the old rule his father has ever been putting before him, the cardinal must endeavour to keep his conscience still clear of saying anything that might offend, and, indeed, now that he's in Rome, he might be well advised to keep quiet altogether and let the others talk. Lorenzo has in mind not only the moral dangers of a conversation which is not '*caritativa*', but also the political dangers of a conversation with those who could not look upon the rising Medici without '*invidia*'. Messire Giovanni would be

surrounded by jealous men. He must realise how irritating it must be to those cardinals of nobler families that he has been so honoured. There would certainly be some in the Curia not at all reluctant to see the banker's son fall into vice. They might even offer to corrupt him. Lorenzo observes, tartly, that if all these nobles took care to be good cardinals the Church would always be sure of having good Popes. 'So do try to be that sort of cardinal, so that if they were all like you, we could be confident of such an universal blessing'. Perhaps this seemed rather too isolating a version of his son's vocation. At any rate, Lorenzo went on to allow that there were a number of good and learned men in the Curia. His son would have to seek them out. And then, again, it would not do for Messire Giovanni to get a reputation for a precocious seriousness. Lorenzo, maintaining their humanist tone together, was frustrated in his attempt to chart his son's course between the *Scilla* of immorality and the *Carridi* of hypocrisy. 'You'll know what I mean when you're older'.

For the present, Messire Giovanni is to take particular care not to keep old cardinals waiting in the sacristy, he is to engage in polite talk on general subjects with every one of his brethren, and he had better not trouble the Pope with requests for favours for the family yet awhile. Lorenzo had learnt that the temperament of His Holiness, (whom he habitually shortened to 'S.S. '), made it more likely that he would be the more liberal the less he were pestered. Indeed Messire Giovanni must realise that '*humilita*' and '*modestia*' will get him through most situations in Rome. He ought, for example, to dress rather less grandly than the others. It would not, papa judged, be fitting for him to wear silk. If he must show off, he had better start collecting antiques, and establishing a fine library, and persuading scholars to join his household. And if he must go out to dinner, abandoning the plain food that his Florentine cooks would prepare, then he must see to it that he invite others to dinner considerably more often than he accepts their invitations. Always he is to be generous, gentle, humble; always he is to remember that he is not only the youngest of the present cardinals but the youngest cardinal ever.

These recommendations reflect a father's natural hope that his son will be just like him, only grander. They reflect Lorenzo's own management of his life in the *Via Larga* and in the half-dozen or more country houses he owned in the Tuscan countryside. He was himself a famous collector of antique statuary, carved gems, and beautiful books, and a delighter in the conversation of Pico and Politian and Chalcondyles. And an eater of plain home-cooked meats. There is a familiar bank-managerial tone, too, in his remarking that setting-up a

house is bound to get a young man into debt. Lorenzo asks only that his son bring his outgoings within the compass of his income gradually, '*a poco a poco*'. He could not reasonably ask for more. He had never been able to restrain his own expenditure. Messire Giovanni inherited a gene of generosity.

In one thing, however, Lorenzo had disciplined himself with conspicuous success. He now lays it down as his final, chief, gleaning from experience. This is '*una regola sopra l'altre*': 'Get up early each morning'. The cardinal who rises '*ogni mattina di buona hora*' will stay healthy, his desk will be regularly cleared, he will have due time for serious reading, and he will not have to rush the saying of the Office. There's no further advice he can give his son. 'Keep well'.

A few days after dictating this letter, on 8 April, 1492, Lorenzo died at his Careggi villa. Giovanni, presiding a week later at a requiem in S. Maria sopra Minerva, broke into such sobbing that he had to leave the sanctuary. But within a month, Stephano di Castrocaro, yet another Medici agent in Rome, was reporting back to Florence that the cardinal stayed up too late at night and would lie too long abed in the morning.

The new edition of the *Lettere*, Florence, 1977ff, Gen. Direttore, Nicolai Rubinstein, having reached so far only to Vol. VI, (1481–82), 1990, it is necessary still to accept the text of Lorenzo's 1492 letter printed as Appendix XVII to William Roscoe, *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, 2 vol., 1796, 9 ed. revised by Thomas Roscoe, 1847. This text was derived by Roscoe from Angelo Fabroni, *Laurentii Medicei vita*, ii, 1784, Appendix, p 312. Mgr Fabroni rather romantically distinguished this letter as Lorenzo's 'swan song'. There is a lively translation in L. Collison-Morley, *The Early Medici*, New York, 1936, p. 204ff., a shortened version of Roscoe's translation in H.D. Vaughan, *The Medici Popes*, 1908, pp 23-27, and a more literal translation in Colonel G.F. Young, *The Medici*, 1909, I, Appendix VIII, all, alas, out of print.