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RELIGION AND THE STATE

Donatella Loprieno

A brief introduction

To examine the issue of the relations between religion and the Italian state it is necessary to consider the very close relations that the latter has maintained with the Catholic, Roman and Apostolic Church throughout history. Rome has always had a primacy of honor compared with the other core cities of Christian Europe (e.g. the role of the Church of Constantinople), universally recognized as the see of the Apostle Peter (Cardia, 2010: 22) and the center of world Catholicism. The almost millenary existence of a State of the Church (Papal State), which covered most of the (modern) regions of central Italy, before the unification of the country and the question of the role of Rome, see of the temporal power of the pope, but also capital of Italy (the so-called Roman Question), raised after 1861, have inevitably marked the issue of the creation and consolidation of the Italian state, thereby delaying the birth and progressive consolidation of lay ethics. Even if many other denominations exist and are embraced in Italy today, and, at least formally, atheism, agnosticism and indifferentism cannot be the direct cause of discriminations, there can be no doubt that the Catholic Church and its hierarchies are deeply rooted and play a key role at all levels of political and social life. Financial, fiscal and educational resources, in all their different aspects, which the Catholic Church benefits from, are incomparably more considerable than those enjoyed by other religious confessions (see www.icostidellachiesa.it). In ethically sensitive issues (end of life, medically assisted reproduction, scientific research, etc.) or in those concerning aspects to which the magisterium is particularly attentive (family, sexuality, legal recognition of homosexual relationships), a prominent role is still played in Italy by Catholic hierarchies and the unilateral ethics promoted by them. Instead, public decisions (whether taken or not) on the rights of the freedom of people, as in the case of homosexuals or sterile couples, or of those who want to die with dignity, in a democratic constitutional state should stand above any single and partial ethics of each religious confession and protect believers, non-believers and “individuals with different beliefs” in their earthly existence.

The presence of the state of the Vatican City, which is an absolute monarchy with the pope as its undisputed head, has therefore hindered, and still hinders, the full emancipation of politics and law from the religious dogmas and the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. The orientation of the ecclesiastical authorities to directly address the people and the political class in Italy has
been maintained intact, going well beyond the rules governing the relations between the two states (the Italian state and the Vatican state), thereby invading spaces that are undoubtedly “temporal.” On the other hand, those who hold the political power in Italy are, in many cases, not only willing to satisfy the Church’s desiderata, but even tend to anticipate them. Perhaps, the historical events of Italy have made its religious belonging so static and viscous that the Italian population, although strongly secularized, still finds it difficult to perceive itself as a lay, multiethnic and multicultural society.

That having been stated in general, this chapter has been structured as follows:

An initial and very short section will account for the “original” fracture between the newly born unified Italian state and the Catholic Church, as well as the attempts to set such a fracture by a compositional approach during the Fascist regime. In this section, we will place emphasis on the words of Carlo Arturo Jemolo, one of the most outstanding experts on religious matters in Italy, who, in his reconstruction of the relations between the state and the church in Italy, highlighted the need not to interpret the past through the present (Jemolo, 1974: 52).

A second section will analyze the constitutional provisions on the Catholic religion, other religious beliefs and, more generally, on the protection of religious freedom. In particular, the focus will be on how the Catholic Church has kept its traditional dominant position for about two decades after the entry into force of the Italian Republican Constitution of 1948. It was not until the late eighties that the Italian Constitutional Court formulated the supreme principle of the laicità (principle of secularism) of the state, which, however, has never implied indifference of the state to religions “but the State guarantee for the protection of freedom of religion, under the religious and cultural pluralism” (Decision No. 203/89). The actual implementation of the principle of laicità in Italy still faces great difficulties, since it is continually challenged and its content is too often even debased.

In this respect, the last section of the chapter will consider some aspects, already settled in a large number of European countries, which are in Italy still held hostage by a political élite that is too indulgent to the requests of the clerical authorities.

Unification and the Roman question

The unification of the Italian state, which had been divided into several small states, did not occur until the second half of the nineteenth century, more specifically in 1861. The annexation of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy and, therefore, the end of the Papal State and the temporal power of the popes took place on 20 September 1870 with the famous “Breach of Porta Pia.”

In previous centuries, religion-based law had a key role in Europe. The alliance between the throne and the altar found its logical justification insofar as each of the two orders could have recourse to the powers of the other to better control the subjects of the former, who were at the same time also the believers of the latter. In the historical process, which led to the birth of the modern separatist state and started in the late eighteenth century, the political and legal framework progressively separated “from Christian religion and from any specific religion as the foundation and haven” (Böckenförde, 2007: 34). It has rightly been pointed out that separatism identifies with modernity in that it “expresses the need of the community to free from any authoritarian clerical tie” (Cardia, 2010: 73), thereby introducing the issue of laicity in continental Europe in a modern sense. In this process of the foundation of the state and of public institutions, the religious profile of individuals has little importance insofar as they are taken into consideration by laws exclusively for their status as citizens. Summarizing the concept, we could affirm that the European states in the nineteenth century developed an exclusively “profane” profile, becoming emancipated from the sacred and confining the religious
aspirations and feelings of individuals to the private sphere. The universality of the new organization of political power is no longer based on the dogmatic heritage of one of the various religions, but it is anchored to a system whose objectives are things and values of this world. If in the liberal state model, politics and law must be desacralized as a matter of principle and need, it is not surprising that the Catholic Church has refused the ideology of liberalism as a whole, perceiving the separatist change as a clear departure from the natural order of things. The conflict was more political than religious and the state was in need of defending itself from an alternative project promoted by the Church. In brief, the historical assertion of secularism “as a positive political value, took place against the Church, not with the Church and, even less, by the Church” (Zagrebelsky, 2010: 11).

As we have already anticipated, one of the thorniest issues of the newborn Kingdom of Italy was the so-called Roman Question, originating from the historical events which led to the liberation of the city of Rome on 20 September 1870 and its annexation to the Kingdom of Italy. The solutions devised by the Law of Guarantees of 13 May 1871 for regulating relations between the Kingdom of Italy and the Holy See, although internationally appreciated for their balance, left the Holy See dissatisfied, and it maintained its opposition on principle against the Italian state until 1929.

For their part, the first governments of the unified Italy tended to award the state the functions that are typical of a legal system1 that had above all to become emancipated from the interference of the Catholic Church, which, instead, asserted its will to deal with sacred issues but also and especially with earthly ones. The anti-unitary vocation of the Papacy should be attributed to the lack of participatory “‘patriotic’ grounds which prevented the development of an ‘Italian National Church’ over time. Nothing comparable to what would be the homeland churches of the great European nations, indeed incorporated in the universal Church, but national first of all” (Bellini, 2011: 14).

Some documents issued by the Church can be mentioned in confirmation of the Holy See’s attitude of refusal and hostility towards the Italian liberal state and modernity, in general. The encyclical2 Quanta cura (1864) and its annex Syllabus listed, for example, pantheism, naturalism, rationalism, indifferentism (i.e. freedom of religion), socialism and communism among the main errores. The so-called Non expedit,3 a policy of the Holy See pronounced for the first time in 1868 and reasserted several times in subsequent years, prohibited any possibility of Italian Catholics cooperating with the institutions of the state and participating in political elections and, therefore, in the political life in Italy. Inevitably, such a policy, which was not revoked until 1919, caused a delay in the creation of a Catholic party able to adjust to the mechanisms of a liberal democracy. It should be pointed out, however, that in liberal Italy religious pluralism has never been a feature of the nation and that Catholicism has never had real competitors. Catholicism, for better or worse, whether accepted or refused, was the reference religion of the Italian people. In other words, historically, there has always been poor familiarity with religious pluralism and the consequences it has for the legal system.

Part of the earthly power lost by the Catholic Church at the time of separatism4 would be recovered with the agreements of the 1920s–30s, at the price, however, of a strategic and political alliance with the totalitarian states of Fascist inspiration based on surrenders, silences and complicity. When the Lateran Pacts were signed on 11 February 1929, the Fascist Italian state and the Catholic Church settled the Roman Question and finally made “peace.” The Lateran Accords of 1929 were peculiar in that they were made up of two separate acts which were different both formally and substantially. The treaty provided a new solution to the Roman Question, by creating the state of the Vatican City, setting out the relations between the latter and the Italian state, and recognizing the independence and sovereignty of the Holy See and

147
the pontiff. Annexed to this act was a Financial Convention whereby Italy, “in consequence of the events of 1870” agreed to a number of financial commitments as an indemnity “through the loss of the patrimony of S. Peter constituted by the ancient Pontifical States.” The other document of the Lateran Pacts was concluded to “regulate the position of religion and the church in Italy.” The Concordat reactivated – also from a formal point of view – the religious confessionality of the State, thereby making the Catholic religion “the only state religion.” Article 1 of the Lateran Treaty specifies that “Italy recognizes and reaffirms the principle established in the first Article of the Statute of the Kingdom, according to which the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion is the only State religion.” This provision, although not having immediate legal application, has become, over time, the prism through which many other provisions of the Concordat could be read and construed in favor of the requirements of the Catholic confession on the one hand, and on the other hand it left a distinct confessional hallmark on the Italian legal system, to the detriment of the freedom of other faiths existing in the Italian state. Suffice it to mention, among the other things, the crime of defamation of the Catholic religion, which, envisaged for the first time in the Sardinian Code of 1859 and dropped from the new criminal code of 1889, was reintroduced in the Rocco Code of 1930. The secular punishment for defamatory behavior – even if eroded by the constitutional doctrine – has crossed the threshold of the twenty-first century. In the micro-system of Articles 402–6 of the Rocco Code of 1930, within a general authoritarian framework, the provisions laying down penalties for the crime of defamation of the Catholic religion and to a lesser extent of other “admitted beliefs” was derived not from the consideration of religion as an individual interest, but from its consideration for the purposes of the preservation of the political–institutional context, or of the social peace, or of the defense of the community’s religious identification, or of a greater ideological control. All these matters would inevitably be in conflict with the new system of rights of freedom, under the sign of pluralism, outlined by the new Constitutional Charter of 1948.

The protection of the freedom of religion in the Republican Constitution of 1948 and the supreme principle of the laicità of the state

On 2 June 1946, after two decades of Fascist dictatorship and the atrocities of World War II, Italian male and female citizens were called to the polls to chose between the Republic and the Monarchy and elect the members of the Constituent Assembly whose task was to draft the new Constitution. The Constituent Assembly was characterized by different political orientations: left-wing, liberal and Catholic. It was inevitable that these different orientations emerged, encountering and clashing with each other, in the elaboration of the constitutional provisions which, directly and indirectly, affected aspects of religious issues. If on the one hand, the overall result cannot be considered as the exclusive outcome of any of the political powers participating in the Constituent Assembly, on the other hand it turned out to be thornier and more complex than was expected by the protagonists themselves. It was not by chance that Art. 7 of the Constitution, on the subject of relations between the Italian state and the Catholic Church, was the provision most hotly debated by the Assembly and it is still today open to diverging (if not opposite) interpretations, to such an extent as to be considered a “complete constitutional monstrosity” (Viano, 2008: 15). The central issue to be solved was the status to be attributed to the Lateran Pacts in the future context of democracy and pluralism. Relatively more straightforward was the approval of Article 8 on the position to be given to non-Catholic religious confessions. Many members of the Constituent Assembly, and especially the lay wing, perceived the disparity between the Catholic Church, protected by the Constitution’s explicit reference to the Lateran Pacts of 1929, and the other religious confessions, which were not sufficiently
protected by safeguards on individual religious freedom. The first paragraph of Article 8 ("All religious confessions are equally free before the law.") grants the same amount of freedom and absolute equality of treatment in the enjoyment of the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution to all religious confessions. However, whereas the Catholic Church is “independent and sovereign” from the state, other religious confessions “have the right to organize themselves in accordance with their own statutes, provided that these statutes are not in conflict with Italian law”; whereas relations with the Catholic Church are regulated by the Lateran Pacts (whose amendments, where agreed upon between the Italian state and the Catholic Church, do not require any constitutional review), those with non-Catholic confessions are “regulated by law on the basis of accords between the state and the respective representatives.” As can be easily inferred, the constitutional text contains an undeniable inconsistency in the treatment of non-Catholic religious confessions (same freedom, but different treatment).

On the whole, the right of religious freedom has become a key element within the framework of the whole set of rights and freedoms protected by the Constitution. It is guaranteed in its individual and collective expression by Article 19 ("All persons have the right to profess freely their own religious faith in any form, individually or in association, to disseminate it and to worship in private or public, provided that the religious rites are not contrary to public morality."); it is closely linked with the principle of equality formulated in Article 3, which guarantees equality and equal social dignity without discrimination of religion, with the “personalist principle” laid down by Article 2, according to which “The Republic recognizes and guarantees the inviolable rights of the person, as an individual and in the social groups where human personality is expressed. The Republic expects that the fundamental duties of political, economic and social solidarity be fulfilled.” This core constitutional provision outlines a polyhedric idea of the human person, whose protection is not limited to primary needs, which are indeed fundamental, but it extends to a more intimate sphere: the need for moral freedom, self-determination, self-actualization, as well as active and conscious participation in democratic institutions. Freedom of religion is also referred to in a variety of other constitutional provisions regulating issues connected to it: the right to freedom of thought, the rights to freedom of association and assembly, the freedom of art and science (and their teaching); the moral and legal equality of spouses on which marriage is based.

The different collocation and content of the formulations chosen by the Constituent Assembly to regulate relations with the Catholic Church and the other religious confessions have contributed to maintaining the undisputed supremacy of the Catholic confession vis-à-vis all other religions, especially in the first years of the Republic’s life, and the predominance of the religious culture of the majority. In religious matters (as well as in other sectors) the laws adopted during the Fascist period remained in force and public bodies continued to act as if the Constitution did not exist. It was legislation very favorable to the Catholic religion and discriminatory against other minority confessional groups and non-religious and irreligious ideologies. Throughout the sixties and the seventies, Italian society underwent an important process of secularization with the emergence of a new lay conscience. In the sectors in which, in previous years, legislative policy had been more subject to the Catholic Church (sexual morals, the concept of family, the role of women and abortion) new issues were introduced: divorce, law on abortion and the new family law, to mention but a few.

The new idea of civil ethics and the separation of them from religious morality paved the way – in the early eighties – to the end of the long process of the revision of the Concordat of 1929. On 18 February 1984, the so-called “new concordat,” which is still in force, was concluded in Villa Madama. From a formal point of view, the new concordat is a bilateral and consensual amendment of the Concordat of 1929, even if from the point of view of substance,
several amendments and innovations were introduced. It was certainly necessary to “update” the anachronistic old concordat in line with the constitutional, social and cultural evolution of Italy but also with the renewal of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council. In the Additional Protocol to the new concordat, the contracting parties in relation to Art. 1 (“The Italian Republic and the Holy See reaffirm that the State and the Catholic Church are each in their own way independent and sovereign and committed to this principle in all their mutual relations and to reciprocal collaboration for the promotion of man and the good of the Country.”) mutually stated that the principle of the Catholic religion as the sole religion of the Italian state, originally referred to by the Lateran Pacts, should no longer be in force.

The 1984 Agreement, despite several contradictions, triggered a number of transformations consolidating the pluralism embodied in the Constitution and fostering actual secularism. Many agreements have been progressively concluded with different religious confessions on the basis of the provision of Art. 8 of the Constitution⁸ and, above all the Constitutional Court⁹ has rendered secularism the supreme principle of the Italian legal system. With decision No. 203 of 1989, the Italian Constitutional Court started the important and difficult process of the definition and development of the supreme principle, that is the principle of laicità, which is not expressly mentioned in the Constitution, although it permeates it. Such a principle stemmed from Articles 2, 3, 7, 8, 19 and 20 of the Constitution and outlines one of the profiles of the form of State envisaged by the Charter of the Republic. It “does not imply indifference to religion, but the State guarantee for the protection of freedom of religion, under the religious and cultural pluralism” (Decision 203/89). Starting from this decision, the Italian Constitutional Court has progressively set out the principle of laicità and its corollaries, expunging the provisions which – in an anachronistic way and in contrast to the Constitution – awarded extra protection to the Catholic religion. In more recent decisions, the principle was set out as the “neutrality of the State in religious matters” (Decision 235/97), “equidistance and impartiality of legislation with respect to all different religious denominations” (Decision 329/97) and “distinction between civil matters and religious matters” (Decision 334/96).

What has become of the principle of laicità and its corollaries?

The years following Decision No. 203 of 1989 have been characterized not only by “the persistent failure to implement the constitutional principle of laicità, but also by a subtle neutralization of the principle itself, pursued through the introduction of provisions which . . . have led to the depletion of the innovative profiles of the constitutional model of laicity” (Fiorita, 2011). In recent years, moreover, the intervention of the Constitutional Court has become less frequent, while ordinary and administrative courts have provided a minimal and, in too many cases, even an elusive interpretation of this principle.¹⁰ The substantiality of the political interest and of the millenary attitude of the Church to the potestas indirecta in temporalibus has continued to prevail over the abstract purity of the principle. The issue is very subtle: laicity is never denied, but provisions favoring the Catholic Church are justified and legitimated through interpretations redefining the concept of laicity itself, emptying it of its emphatic and libertarian content.

It seems that, especially over the last two decades, the decrease in the political unity of Catholics¹¹ and the loss of appeal of Catholic morality have been flanked by the temptation of a part of the Catholic hierarchy to compensate for a lack of authority and authoritativeness (e.g. the scandal of pedophilia) by increasing pressure on politics “to support with the authority of the political power and the judiciary the moral rules which the Church is no longer able to impose on consciences” (Prodi, 2005: 266–7). How else could we explain the several non possumus with which the Holy See opposes any possible form of recognition of unions between people of the same sex? Or abortion? Or medically assisted reproduction? Or euthanasia?
The non possumus of the Catholic Church and the fullness of rights of Italian citizens

Very often, in public discussions and in parliament in Italy, references to encyclicals eclipse or completely nullify references to the articles of the Constitution. On an almost daily basis, the Italian Episcopal Conference or the pope himself lavishes non possumus on matters or problems they consider “ethically sensitive” and, thus, of their competence in that they are the sole guardians “of morals supported by truth and reason” (Zagrebelsky, 2010: 101). But, is it possible to recognize a certain ethical/moral superiority in the believers of any religious denomination and in its highest representatives, which leads the public powers to favor any, and only, one instance? Contraception, abortion, scientific research, conception and death, recognition of loving unions between homosexuals, discrimination, and physical and verbal violence against homosexuals are only some of the issues with which Italian citizens are confronted every day. No doubt that, if desacralisation of law and politics is seriously taken into account, these are issues of public ethics which need law provisions with general scope and validity for everyone (believers, non-believers, and individuals with different beliefs) and, therefore, for those who pursue a discordant ethos vis-à-vis the values that are considered as the only right, moral and natural ones for the Catholics. The question for non-religious Italian citizens is not the tout court exclusion of the Catholic religion and its institutionalized agencies from the public sphere, but simply the refusal to attribute a special status to their non possumus or to their non-negotiable values.

Well aware that it cannot lead any battle against divorce or abortion (which has actually become complicated by the possibility for medical and paramedical staff to exercise conscientious objection) or against other institutions that are now part of the cultural and ethical background of Italian society, the Catholic Church is concentrating a large part of its efforts against the legal recognition of loving and sexual relationships between people of the same sex. Such efforts have clearly been evidently well invested, since no legislation on unions between homosexuals has been passed in Italy so far. In 2000, the Pontifical Council for the Family issued an interesting document titled Family, marriage and “de facto unions,” stating that “with the pretext of regulating one context of social and juridical cohabitation, attempts are made to justify the institutional recognition of de facto unions. In this way, de facto unions would turn into an institution, and their rights and duties would be sanctioned by law to the detriment of the family based on marriage. In today’s open and democratic societies, the State and the public authorities must not institutionalize de facto unions, thereby giving them a status similar to marriage and the family, nor much less make them equivalent to the family based on marriage.” According to Vatican hierarchies, lawmakers in all European countries (except for Greece), in having recognized rights and duties to members of gay couples, have used their power arbitrarily “because the original nature of marriage and the family proceeds and exceeds, in an absolute and radical way, the sovereign power of the State.” The (unexplained and unexplainable) option is that the orientation “of discriminating against marriage by attributing an institutional status to de facto unions that is similar, or even equivalent to marriage and the family, is a serious sign of the contemporary breakdown in the social moral conscience, of ‘weak thought’ with regard to the common good, when it is not a real and proper ideological imposition exerted by influential pressure groups.”

Stances of this kind, which are legitimate if addressed to the faithful and not so legitimate when addressed to the state and the public powers that belong to everyone (believers and non-believers) and whose mission is completely earthly, are at the basis of the criticism energetically promoted by Vatican hierarchies and especially the current pope against relativism. The condemnation of the cultural predominance of relativism (an all-encompassing formula including
a large range of things that are often very different from one another), is in conclusion a
“condemnation of the pluralism of the ethical views of life and the establishment of a sole assertion
that is legitimate in that it is ‘true,’ as compared to all other assertions that are illegitimate, in
that they are ‘false’” (Zagrebelsky, 2010: 95). The fear of relativism could be interpreted as the
request not to confine religion exclusively to the private sphere of the individual. Anyone who
is up to date on Italian current events through the media well knows how intensely and loudly
the voice of the Catholic Church is raised in the public sphere. No day passes without the
Italian media covering the opinions of the pope or the Italian Episcopal Conference on all the
main items on the political agenda. What is disquieting for non-religious Italian people is, rather,
the consequences that would follow from the unquestionable meddling of the Catholic Church
in the public sphere: “the recognition of a new ‘temporalism,’ with the attribution of a power
of social government to the Church” (Rodotà, 2009: 133), which could stray from the principle
of the separation of orders, embodied in Article 7 of the Constitution and establishing the supreme
principle of the laicità of the state.

If the principle of the laicità of the state and its corollaries were taken into account seriously,
as in other Western democracies, then the Church’s magisterium should not affect the develop-
ment and the content of public decisions. On the other hand, Italian lawmakers should show
greater autonomy and, finally, assume the responsibility of lay choices in ethically sensitive issues.
However, Italian lawmakers, even the most progressive ones, were totally unable to pass provisions
(even very “soft” ones) on issues such as unions between people of the same sex or end-of-life
treatment (euthanasia) and, in contrast, they approved a very severe, or even liberticidal law on
medically assisted reproduction.

A kind of short-sighted cultural backwardness seems to pervade large sectors of Italian society,
which is manifestly not yet mature enough for laicity. In 2013, journalists asked the political
leaders who were candidates for the government of Italy what family meant for them, what
they intended to do for homosexual couples and whether they considered it acceptable for
homosexual couples to be able to adopt children. They did not dwell too much on other much
more ethically relevant issues such as the fight against organized crime or environmental crimes
or corruption. Is it because they scrape together more votes by fighting against gay people rather
than mafia?

Notes
1 By way of illustration, mention is made here of the so-called leggi eversive of 1866–7, the introduction
of the institution of government authorization for clerical entities to purchase assets, the Casati law
on education, depriving the Church of a role in the education of children and the young to the advantage
of public schools; the introduction of civil marriage (Civil Code of 1865) and finally the Crispi Law
of 1890 calling for the nationalization of all charitable institutions belonging to the Catholic Church.
2 Encyclicals are pastoral letters written by the pope and addressed to the bishops of the Catholic Church
and through them to all the faithful on matters of doctrine, morals or social issues.
3 “It is not expedient,” in English.
4 It should not be forgotten that the theoretical scheme of the liberal, separatist State was rarely fully
implemented even in legal systems which more coherently adopted such a system (see Cardia, 1980:
40ff.).
5 Art. 7 of the Italian Constitution states: “The State and the Catholic Church are independent and
sovereign, each within its own sphere. Their relations are governed by the Lateran Pacts. Changes to
the Pacts that are accepted by both parties do not require the procedure for constitutional amendment.”
6 Art. 8: “All religious confessions are equally free before the law. Religious confessions other than the
Catholic one have the right to organize themselves in accordance with their own statutes, provided
that these statutes are not in conflict with Italian law. Their relations with the State are regulated by
law on the basis of accords between the State and the respective representatives.”
Adopted with Law No. 121 of 25 March 1985 (Ratification and implementation of the agreement with additional Protocol, signed on 18 February in Rome, bearing amendments to the Lateran Concordat of 11 February 1929, between the Italian Republic and the Holy See).

There are currently eleven approved agreements.

The Constitutional Court is the body entrusted by the Italian Constitution with the task of deciding (inter alia) on the conformity of laws with the Constitution itself.

The regional administrative court of Veneto, in a judgment of 17 March 2005, No. 1110, argued that the display of the crucifix in State schools is at the basis of the principle of laicity itself, in that it is a symbol of a system of values of freedom, equality, human dignity and religious tolerance. The issue of the display of the crucifix in Italian state schools was brought before the European Court of Human Rights, which, in its ruling on the case Lautsi and Others v. Italy, of March 2011, declared that such display was in conformity with the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights.

There is no large political party such as Democrazia Cristiana, which represented the Catholic world in a unitary manner from 1946 until the early 1990s.

References


