



Benedict XVI: Battle For The Heart Of Europe

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Cardinal Ratzinger's election as the new Pope will have important strategic repercussions far beyond the merely religious. If John Paul II played a decisive role in the fall of totalitarian communism, Benedict XVI could be a revolutionary Pope for the Old Europe. That the former Pope was Polish and the current one is German clearly symbolizes the historic task laid out by Wojtyła and to be defined by Ratzinger.

The new Pope will have to fight against weak thinking, against moral relativism and against the consumer culture and hedonism in the West, his main battlefield. Winning the hearts and minds of young people will be his main strategic goal.

This struggle will have a significant impact on a Europe that appears to want to renounce its Christian roots, a Europe imbued with an accommodating spirit uninterested in resisting other religions' cultural colonization and fundamentalist proselytizing. Beyond the religious dimension of this process, it is obvious there lies the risk of a loss

of a loss of identity. And if Europe loses awareness of itself, it will not be willing to defend or guarantee its own security.

The new Pope's effect on Spain will be especially intense. No European political leader is a greater exponent of weakness and abandoning the defense of our values than Prime Minister Zapatero. Moreover, Mr. Zapatero has taken to aggressive secularism with the intention of erasing any trace of Christianity from our society. This is not just one of his political ambitions, it is fundamental to him.

What is certain is that this anti-religious policy will crash against the conceptual clarity, doctrinal strength and conviction of the new Pope. Benedict XVI knows all too well that victory for the spiritual New Europe he hopes to build, must confront the key battle it has before it in the continent's heart. But he will never succeed if he loses on the southern flank.

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