La soppressione dei conventi nel Ticino

The suppression of the convents in Ticino

Abstract

1803 was the beginning of the canton Ticino, in the Italian speaking part of Switzerland. Its first governments had to confront the task to unify the territory and to create the specific structures of a state. The cultural atmosphere was neither favorable to the Church nor, even less, to its freedom, but no power could avoid the collaboration with priests and religious, which were members of the educated class and first of all the authorities respected by the people. For the first thirty years of the independent canton, filled with difficulties and instability, a collaboration between the liberal political class and clergy was in fact possible. This collaboration favored the hope that membership of the Church and the values of liberalism were not principally opposed to each other and that the well-being of the ecclesiastical institutions could be defended by the parliamentary system. After 1839, in the governments of Ticino the radical positions took over the majority, without respecting the will of the people. In the Church, on the other part, rigid positions came out to condemn liberalism and its principles. From 1848 (the first suppression of 8 religious houses) until 1859 (civil separation from the dioceses of Milan and Como), a progressive wave of anti-clerical laws made the life of the Church in Ticino difficult. This crisis, however, revealed the profound roots of faith in clergy and the people so that thirty years after a new political leadership was confirmed. The consecrated life experienced a religious springtime of vocations in many congregations dedicated to the service of the poor, founded between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.