

A Vatican Expense That Doesn’t Exist

The Vatican recently published information regarding the compensation of Cardinals and the Holy Father.

The figures themselves are not particularly surprising. Many Cardinals, especially those serving within the Vatican, reportedly receive between €3,000 and €5,000 per month.

What is surprising is something entirely different.

The Pope’s official salary is zero.

The Vatican covers his personal needs and expenses directly.

At first glance, this may appear noble, even admirable. It seems consistent with the spiritual nature of the office and with the tradition of a Church that has long distinguished service from personal enrichment.

Yet the more one reflects on it, the more a simple human question emerges.

If the Pope wished to buy a newspaper, an ice cream, a bottle of water, or simply pay for a coffee, could he do so entirely on his own?

The issue is not the amount of money.

The issue is autonomy.

A life in which every personal expense is absorbed by an institution is also a life in which privacy can disappear, solitude becomes rare, and even the smallest personal gesture risks becoming an administrative matter.

And yet, before he is His Holiness, he is a man.

A man born into a family.

A man with friends, memories, relatives, and personal affections.

A man who, despite carrying one of the most demanding responsibilities on Earth, should retain the dignity of managing at least a small part of his own resources.

This arrangement feels less like a spiritual principle and more like the inheritance of another age.

Not a theological relic.

A managerial one.

That thought led me to imagine a simple alternative.

Not an economic reform.

A corporate ritual adapted to human reality.

If Cardinals receive between €3,000 and €5,000 per month, why not structure compensation through:

— a fixed base allowance.

— a component linked to measurable objectives.

— a component linked to qualitative contributions.

— and a symbolic recognition for the Holy Father, equivalent to a small percentage of the institution's revenues.

Not to make the Pope wealthy.

Not to commercialize faith.

Not to transform the Church into a corporation.

But simply to connect responsibility with recognition.

In every organization, leadership ultimately derives its strength from the people it serves and coordinates. The stronger the community, the stronger the institution. The stronger the institution, the greater the legitimacy of its leadership.

The Vatican is not a corporation.

But neither should the most visible religious figure on Earth be placed in the paradoxical position of exercising immense authority while possessing no personal economic autonomy whatsoever.

This is not a theological argument.

It is a human one.

For two thousand years, the Church has preached communion, solidarity, and the idea that strength comes from unity rather than isolation.

Perhaps that principle should also apply at the very top.

Because individuals, by themselves, are rarely strong.

It is always the union that creates strength.

And if that lesson is true for believers, it should also be true for the man who has spent his life teaching it.

Praised be Jesus Christ.

Ferdinando

P.S. — I found myself wondering: if His Holiness depends entirely on the institution, and no one lends him a single dollar, how is he supposed to come and meet me?