Towards Arezzo: some starting points

by Gaetano Quagliariello

The epochal changes underway and, in particular, those connected to the development of social media, have brought with them important novelties that are modifying the very genetics of democratic-representative political systems. In particular, three closely related phenomena stand out:

·   the time for the electoral body to pass judgement on the actions of its representatives is increasingly shrinking. So, the imperative mandate prohibited by the Italian Constitution is becoming a practice in fact, because the elected person is led to answer less and less to his conscience, very little to his party, very much to what followers and polls impose on him;

·   the problems that politics is supposed to take care of are increasingly becoming long-term issues (such as climate change, the demographic crisis, the environmental sustainability) but, in the face of this reality, political careers are becoming increasingly unstructured and the result of chance: they can be born or die in a blink of an eye. And, also because of this, the elected is naturally driven to forget the most relevant issues in favour of short-term logic;

·   territorial representation loses more and more importance: many constituencies are represented by elected who have no connection to their history, culture and values. And voters, especially when voting for the national level, feel less and less the influence of a profitable exchange between their suffrage and a hypothetical advantage for their territory.

These and other changes at the level of representation certainly make it much more complex for moderate or, at any rate, non-populist formations to count on and gather support. However, they cannot be ignored and this immediately poses some questions to which answers will be sought in the dialogues "To Caesar and to God", organised in this edition in Arezzo on 2 and 3 December. We anticipate some of these questions here:

A. is the way for moderates to count to organise themselves into a party or, instead, to seek spaces in more extreme parties to condition them from within? Or that of activating other instruments, different from the traditional party form?

B. is there a political-cultural backwardness that the moderate, Christian, liberal area must overcome in order to try to become a protagonist again?

C. do traditional political families, which have a no less traditional projection at the European level, still have an ideal sense or are they merely contingent aggregations held together by vague sensitivities and more perceived conveniences?

D. do institutional systems (like the French semi-presidentialism) based on the direct election of the Head of State, given the changes taking place, benefit or penalise the moderates' quest for protagonism?