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Sommario/riassunto	In March 2013, millions of people sat glued to news channels and live Internet feeds, waiting to see white smoke rise from the Sistine Chapel, signaling the election of the new pope. For two millennia, the papacy, leader of the Roman Catholic Church, has played a fundamentally important role in European history and world affairs. Transcending the religious realm, it has influenced ideological, philosophical, social, and political developments, as well as international relations. Considering the broad role of the papacy from the end of the eighteenth century to the present, this original histor

