Gianfranco Paglia: the Vittoriano is the sacred place where the Unknown Soldier rests

Published on 09/07/2026

The images circulating these days on social media — tables set, white tablecloths, and glasses raised on the terrace of the Vittoriano — represent a profound offense to the national sentiment and the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for Italy. Transforming the monument symbolizing national unity, the place that houses the remains of the Unknown Soldier, into an exclusive "location" for private dinners is an act that goes beyond inappropriate to verge on sacrilege.

Gianfranco Paglia: the Vittoriano is the sacred place where the Unknown Soldier rests

The warning from Gianfranco Paglia

The voice of those who embody military valor in Italy was immediate and firm. Lieutenant Colonel Gianfranco Paglia, Gold Medal for Military Valor and advisor to the Minister of Defense, shook consciences by defining the situation with words that leave no room for interpretation: "*The Vittoriano is not a mere postcard for tourists or a backdrop for summer nightlife, but the sacred place where the Unknown Soldier rests, symbol of the supreme sacrifice of all those who fell for our Country*".

For Paglia, the contrast between the sacredness of the shrine and the noisy commercialization of the area is intolerable. "*This demands absolute and inviolable respect. It is unacceptable to tolerate banquets, stalls, and wild barriers near a true sanctuary of national memory*".

Gianfranco Paglia: the Vittoriano is the sacred place where the Unknown Soldier rests

A duty of institutional decorum

The issue, also raised by the Vice President of the Chamber Fabio Rampelli, goes far beyond aesthetic criticism. It is a matter of identity. The honor guard, which watches over the tomb of the Nameless Soldier 24 hours a day, symbolizes the indissoluble bond between the State and its heroes. Allowing "private dinners" to take place just a few meters from that solemn silence means reducing the heart of our history to a mere commercial product, a sort of theme park where everything is for sale.

The institutions — primarily the Municipality of Rome — have the moral duty to intervene. Culture and entertainment cannot and must never be pursued at the expense of the dignity of the most precious identity symbols. As Lieutenant Colonel Paglia rightly reminds us: "*In front of our Fallen, there is no bargaining. That sanctuary of memory must be shielded and protected from any speculation*".

It is time for the Vittoriano to return to being what it was erected for: a secular temple, a place of reflection and homage, where the noise of the banquet finally gives way to the silence owed to those who, in the silence of war, gave everything for the Country.