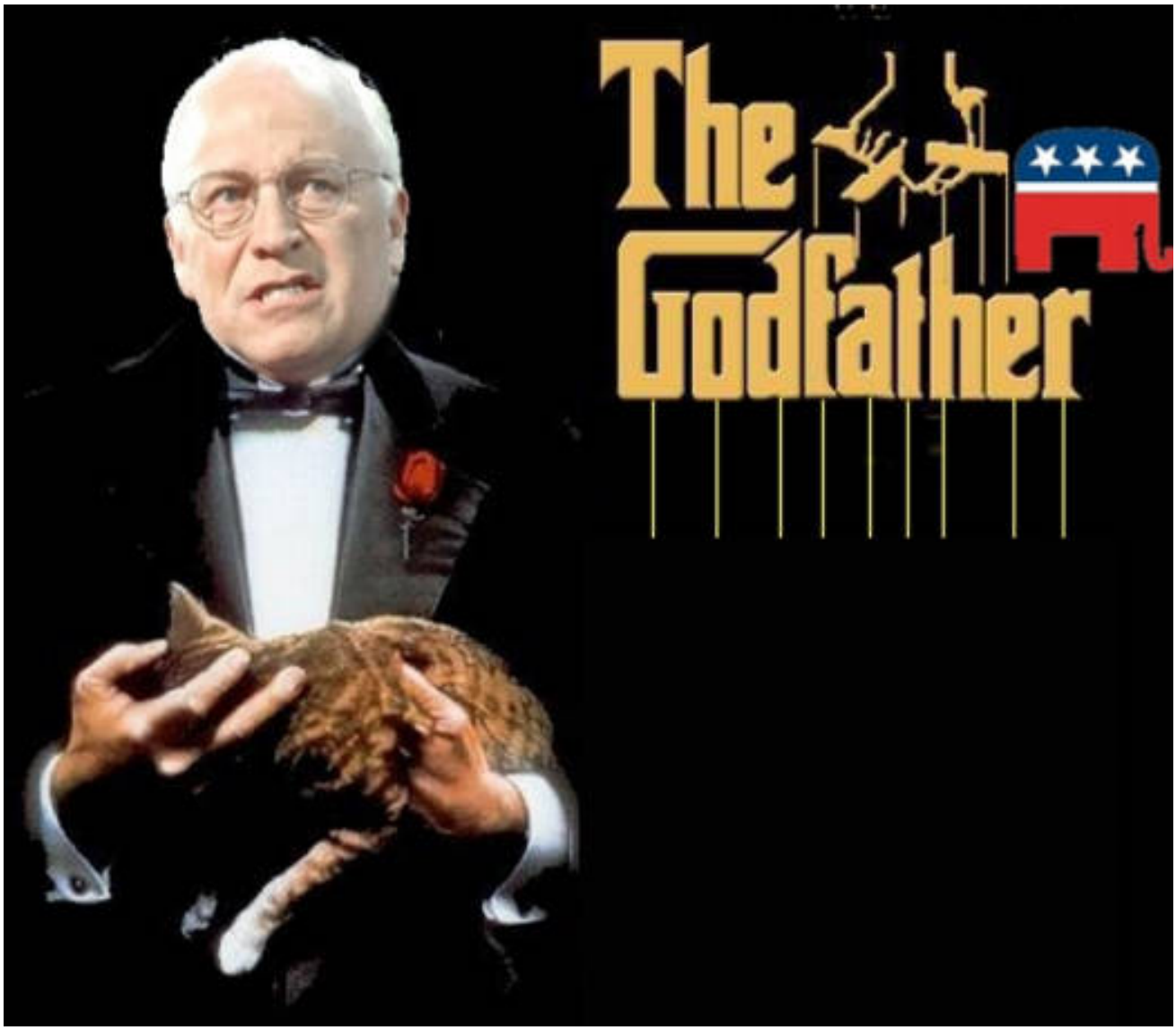
Pizzini!

George De Stefano (December 26, 2008)



Little year-end messages from Zu' Giorgio

A pizzino -- pizzinu in Sicilian -- is a small piece of paper on which mafiosi write brief, coded messages to their colleagues in crime. Police found hundreds in the hut where capo di tutti capi Bernardo Provenzano had been hiding until he was arrested in 2006. Inspired by Zu Binnu, as his friends called Provenzano, I'm sending you, my readers, some of my own pizzini. They obviously aren't clandestine notes since they're right here on the World Wide Web. They're also in inglese, not in Sicilian, and certainly not in the crude encryption code Provenzano used to throw off the cops. But like his, they're brief messages, which is the point. So here are a half-dozen pizzini for the holidays and the end of 2008, a dismal year that I certainly won't miss.

Pizzino #1: Don George Bush and his underboss Cheney totally screwed up our thing. For them, though, it's tutte cose buone – they're going out unimpeached and unindicted. But do they have to rub it in our faces with this farewell tour of theirs? Cheney's saying that thanks to him the underboss is as important as the don, and the don's bragging about whacking Iraq. Where's a little omertà when you need it?

Pizzino #2: That Obama guy is something else! He campaigns for and wins the votes of the gays. Then he gets some bible-thumping, anti-gay disgraziato to give the invocation at his inaugural. Not even triangulatin' Bill Clinton would've tried that one. I guess that's some kind of "change."

Pizzino #3: That Obama guy is something else! He ran as an anti-war candidate. But now he's keeping Bush's defense secretary, doesn't contradict the generals who say that we probably won't be out of Iraq in 2011, and wants to send more Americans to die in Afghanistan. Peace out, dude! (Yeah, farther and farther out of sight.)

Pizzino #4: What's with that Ratzinger guy, anyway? I swear, picciotti, he's obsessed with the gays. First he says the UN shouldn't demand the decriminalization of homosexuality in countries where they throw you in jail, and maybe execute you, for being gay, because that would discriminate against the jailers and the executioners. Now he's going on about how heterosexuality is threatened and needs to be protected. Really? I didn't know that straight people were an endangered species.

Pizzino #5: Some of the Republicans out on Staten Island are still big-upping their boy Vito Fossella. The conservative, family values, soon to be ex- congressman got busted for drunk driving in Virginia. Then it came out that the married Fossella had a kid with the gumad he kept in that great state. But at a party for Vito an old paisan tells a TV reporter that “no way am I gonna nail him to the cross” for his misdeeds. If Fossella were a liberal Democrat, the old paisan would be ready with the hammer and nails.

Pizzino #6: Matri mia, what’s going on with Italians and immigrants? In Campania, a gang burns down gypsy homes and camorristi shoot Africans. In Torino, a black kid gets killed for supposedly stealing biscotti. In Rome, the government proposes fingerprinting gypsy kids and creating separate classes for immigrant schoolchildren. The only black member of Italy’s parliament says “basta.” Italians, he says, “are better than this.” I’m waiting for Italians to prove him right.

Buon Natale e Buon Anno a tutti!

Source URL: http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/op-eds/article/pizzini

Links
[1] http://www.iitaly.org/files/5898godfnewyorker21230078968jpg