

Krystina Nealon

Professor John Crow

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### Power of Pope Francis Changes the World

In March of 2013, Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected as the 266<sup>th</sup> pope of the Roman Catholic Church (Ivereigh 368). He is the first American citizen to obtain the role as the pope, adopting the name as Pope Francis. The name 'Francis' itself is very symbolic with the message attached from St Francis, which encourages simplicity of life with God in the presence, hospitality to everyone, and care for the poor (Duncan). The environment, global climate change, the happiness of the people, and abortion are all aspects that have a powerful meaning to him. Some may argue that the Pope has done little to change the Catholic Church. On the contrary, Pope Francis of the Catholic Church has many immense influences that have led to economic development, poverty, shortage of priests, human rights and freedom within Cuba, as well as the right to life, among other reasons. Pope Francis' charisma and leadership to influence his cardinals and Catholics is already evident in how he is addressing the years of sexual abuse scandal and shortcomings while leading Catholics worldwide toward a deeper faith.

For many believe that Jorge was a bad guy, but he really is only a good and loving person who has made terrible choices and many mistakes. Continuously, he asks the people to pray for him and forgive him for his sins of the past (Duncan). As the leader of

Jesuits in Argentina he says, “I had to learn from my errors along the way, because to tell you the truth, I made hundreds of errors. Errors and sins. It would be wrong for me to say that these days I ask forgiveness for the signs and offences that I might have committed. Today I ask forgiveness for the signs and offenses that I did indeed commit.”

Disregarding the exposure of clerical sexual abuse, Pope Francis was named Person of the Year by the *Time* magazine in the year of 2013 (Duncan). In June, a Vatican tribunal was setup to hear out the cases against some bishops accused of covering up some clergy abuse, feeling terrible for the failure of responsibility to protect the children (Coday). He had a rough upbringing, but evolved into something better. The impact of economic crises in Argentina and his people and children trapped in poverty has changed his view and life forever.

Economic issues are an important concern among Americans and other people in different countries as well. Pope Francis was able to balance towing scales of income inequality within the United States and provided the proper care to those who are poor around the world (Mondalek). When he addressed the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis urged the senators and representatives to spend its money on the environment and more significantly, the people needing food and shelter. The main factor that is based upon the happiness of people is their future, which is supported by the people financially, providing the poor with some income, and spending the extra money to help protect natural resources (Mondalek). Deep poverty has been recognized in countries and so has the distribution of wealth among other people other than Americans. With the help of Pope Francis, Catholic Charities USA have launched a commitment to help the poor (O’Connell). A new campaign called #End45, meaning “Raise a Hand to End Poverty”

reflecting 45 million people in the United States, is trying to attract more people to help one another. To do so, people post pictures and videos on social media accounts with “End45” written on the palms of their hands. Bringing hope, peace, and wisdom to countries like Cuba, it is evolving into a place for people who want to live without fear.

Again, the happiness of the people is extremely significant to the Pope as well as the environment we all live in today. Caring for the planet and all living things is a course of moral action and should be recognized more harshly with action to do something to improve the health of the climate. The Pope believes that there are many factors that contribute to global warming, but human activity is one that is known and can be changed. To back up this statement, he says, “Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production, and consumption in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes, which produce or aggravate it” (Marsh). The more the issue of protecting the Earth is brought up, the more likely it is to be solved by the world. Pope Francis is doing what he can to make this concern more prominent than others.

As previously mentioned, the Pope enjoys helping people who are in desperate need whether it be for money, food, shelter, or even freedom. He took a visit to Cuba in September to create some peace for the people of Cuba and made it clear that, “we serve the people, not ideas” (O’Connell). The people of communities look up to leaders for support and the Pope believes that the Catholic Church will strengthen the people, giving them confidence. According to the article “A ‘Francis Effect’ in Cuba”, the Cuban authorities have agreed to build more churches in hope that the people of Cuba will openly practice their faith without the fear of punishment or imprisonment. Talking

amongst each other about possible mutual interests is another method that can unite the people (O'Connell). He is worried about the children of the future and wants to make things right for communities and families.

Having the thought of future children in mind, the topic of abortion is a huge topic within the thoughts of Pope Francis and the Catholic Church. During the first few months after his elected position of power, his view upon abortion states that the practice itself is 'horrific' (Tollefsen). As time moves forward, he then expresses how his belief system is that God frees everyone, be prochoice and not be satisfied with death over life, and not enslave people of our time, but rather set people free (Flamini). The choice for abortion is a serious and difficult decision depending on the scenario. Overall, the truth about abortion is that it is considered a mortal sin by destructing a new form of life. The Pope makes it clear that God forgives serious sins, but only if those who sin are willing to ask God for the forgiveness that they need (Lopez). The Catholic Charities, the project previously stated that Pope Francis supports, has a service called Project Rachel (Tollefsen). This is a confidential place for anyone including grandparents, fathers, mothers, and others come to be healed after a large impact of abortion (Tollefsen). With Pope Francis and his positive thoughts about forgiveness and mercy, those experiencing hard times can get through it and live a life without regret or anxiety.

Another social subject discussed by people is gay marriage, which is when two of the same sex become a legal union through marriage. The pope usually avoids using words like abortion, euthanasia, and gay marriage within his speeches to crowds of people. A person who seeks the Lord should not be judged whether they are homosexual

or not and everyone should be treated equally based upon race, gender, or sexuality. The Pope states, “I used to receive letters from homosexual people who are ‘socially wounded’ because they tell me that they feel like the church condemned them. But the church does not want to do this” (Ball & Levitz). Words like these show compassion to these individuals who are in fact being wounded by what others say. Priests should also be advised what to say and how to speak in public about homosexuality or gay marriage. The church needs to move ahead and accept the teachings and people of the church providing support, patience, and fulfillment. With acceptance from the surrounding people, whether it is the priest, the Pope, or even the cashier at the grocery, homosexuals should not be looked at any differently than those who are with the opposite gender.

The great reformer, Pope Francis himself, has brought many positive aspects to the United States and other countries as well. He is consistent on ensuring that economic policies help improve life opportunities for all and continues to try to help those who are in need. He intends to clean up the Vatican City banking system to gain more accountability and provide more aid to the less fortunate. By believing and achieving, he continues to build welfare projects to help expand this idea. These programs are necessary, it is ultimately up to the governments to assist the non-profits institutions or else the poor population will continue to grow year after year. Additionally, community bonding is important to the Pope since he took a trip to Cuba to help construct better relationships and to build churches for the people to worship and express their faith. Supporting pregnant women through their dark times and good times is something that has become more profound within the Church’s approach to abortion. People may not have liked who the Pope was in the beginning, but when new people come into power it

takes some time to get used to. By recognizing current issues, explaining them to the people, and doing something about fixing them, Pope Francis and his image have grown into something more than only being called the Pope. He is now looked up upon as a trustworthy person that the people can go to for guidance and inspiration.

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