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POPE FRANCIS AS A GLOBAL ACTOR

Where Politics and Theology Meet



EDITED BY
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Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy

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A generation ago, many social scientists regarded religion as an anachronism, whose social, economic, and political importance would inevitably wane and disappear in the face of the inexorable forces of modernity. Of course, nothing of the sort has occurred; indeed, the public role of religion is resurgent in US domestic politics, in other nations, and in the international arena. Today, religion is widely acknowledged to be a key variable in candidate nominations, platforms, and elections; it is recognized as a major influence on domestic and foreign policies. National religious movements as diverse as the Christian Right in the United States and the Taliban in Afghanistan are important factors in the internal politics of particular nations. Moreover, such transnational religious actors as Al-Qaida, Falun Gong, and the Vatican have had important effects on the politics and policies of nations around the world. Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy serves a growing niche in the discipline of political science. This subfield has proliferated rapidly during the past two decades, and has generated an enormous amount of scholarly studies and journalistic coverage. Five years ago, the journal *Politics and Religion* was created; in addition, works relating to religion and politics have been the subject of many articles in more general academic journals. The number of books and monographs on religion and politics has increased tremendously. In the past, many social scientists dismissed religion as a key variable in politics and government. This series casts a broad net over the subfield, providing opportunities for scholars at all levels to publish their works with Palgrave. The series publishes monographs in all subfields of political science, including American Politics, Public Policy, Public Law, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. The principal focus of the series is the public role of religion. "Religion" is construed broadly to include public opinion, religious institutions, and the legal frameworks under which religious politics are practiced. The "dependent variable" in which we are interested is politics, defined broadly to include analyses of the public sources and consequences of religious belief and behavior. These would include matters of public policy, as well as variations in the practice of political life. We welcome a diverse range of methodological perspectives, provided that the approaches taken are intellectually rigorous. The series does not deal with works of theology, in that arguments about the validity or utility of religious beliefs are not a part of the series focus. Similarly, the authors of works about the private or personal consequences of religious belief and behavior, such as personal happiness, mental health, or family dysfunction, should seek other outlets for their writings. Although historical perspectives can often illuminate our understanding of modern political phenomena, our focus in the Religion, Politics, and Policy series is on the relationship between the sacred and the political in contemporary societies.

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Editors

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Where Politics and Theology Meet

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PRAISE

“This is a rewarding collection of essays analyzing the ‘Francis factor’ on such critical global political issues as the environment, immigration and refugees, and socio-economic inequality.”

—José Casanova, *Professor of Sociology and Theology & Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, USA*

“In the five years since Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope Francis, there has been much discussion about his role both in the Catholic Church and more generally in international relations. This topical and wide-ranging survey of what Pope Francis has done in these regards is highly recommended. It shows how he has become a leading focus of concerns linked to human rights and international development and explains this in terms both of his theology and socio-political outlook.”

—Jeff Haynes, *Professor of Politics & Director of the Centre for the Study of Religion, Conflict, and Cooperation at London Metropolitan University, UK*

“This well-conceived and closely integrated edited volume focuses explicitly on the deeply theological grounding of Francis’ distinctive worldview and wide-ranging breadth of political commitments. In so doing, it persuasively captures the complex essence of this provocative and compelling Pope.”

—Tim Byrnes, *Charles A. Dana Professor of Political Science, Colgate University, USA*

“This book uses a distinct methodology to explain the moral engagement and political activism of Pope Francis. It does this through an analysis of his unique Latin American roots and Jesuit background; his people-oriented Catholic theology, and his advocacy for the poor and marginalized. I found this book to be invaluable for my own research and recommend it to anyone seeking to understand the positive, political role that religious leaders can play in an increasingly globalized and secular world.”

—Jo Renee Formicola, *Professor of Political Science
and Public Affairs, Seton Hall University, USA*

“The essays collected in this volume address two major questions: how do the theological ideas and religious commitments held by Pope Francis shape his political views? What is the global impact of the papacy of Francis? The contributing authors bring an array of scholarly competencies and cultural backgrounds to the task of answering those two questions. The editors are to be commended for providing a valuable book that will enrich the understanding of anyone seeking insight into the significance of Pope Francis for our global society.”

—Kenneth R. Himes, *O.F.M., Professor of Theological Ethics,
Boston College, USA*

“This collection of intellectually stimulating essays from social scientists and theologians unpacks the relationship between theology and politics in the era of Pope Francis. Employing the perspective of Pope Francis as a global actor, the volume melds a rich span of public policy issues and geographical regions with theological and historical insight. An invaluable resource for scholars and students of political science and theology, as well as anyone interested in the theology and global impact of Pope Francis.”

—Susan Crawford Sullivan, *Associate Professor, Sociology,
College of the Holy Cross, USA*

*Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings
above all who need to change.*
—Pope Francis on Twitter, June 18, 2015

FOREWORD

Pope Francis has established a distinct narrative about his papacy, one that has been remarkably positive and resilient. It has resisted counter-narratives both inside and outside the church that might be critical of his papacy. However, this popular narrative is not the whole story, and this edited volume aims to add depth and perspective to the political and theological self-understanding of Francis, and to situate his papacy within an analysis of global Catholicism as expressed within a variety of particular locales.

The popular narrative about Pope Francis has been much more successful than that of his immediate predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI. Benedict will certainly be remembered for one key feature of his papacy, that of his voluntary resignation from it. Remembered as well will be the theology of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger during his long tenure as prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Pope Benedict might also be remembered for attributing his name, albeit in a secondary way, to what in politics in the last year or so has come to be known as *The Benedict Option*.

One reason that this present book is so timely is that Francis's impulse is not at all in line with *The Benedict Option*, at least as interpreted by Rod Dreher.¹ However, I, as a Benedictine monk, would not say that the Francis approach is antithetical to the spirit of Saint Benedict of Nursia (the more immediate attribution for Dreher's title), especially as Franciscans and Benedictines have had very friendly relations since the time of Saint Francis. And while I acknowledge that Francis's religious background is Jesuit (and not Franciscan), I think it entirely appropriate that part of the genesis of this present book took place at a Benedictine institution of higher education, my very own Saint Anselm College.

Another reason to single out this present edited work is the communitarian nature of the academic product, which arose not out of a group of individual authors writing loosely related articles around a common theme, but out of four separate meetings of the various authors over two years, including one here at Saint Anselm at an academic symposium entitled “Where Theology and Politics Meet: Pope Francis as a Global Actor,” in the fall of 2016. The authors have been engaging each other on Francis and his political Catholicism both in writing and in person, and this volume is a fruit of that engagement.

While Francis to date does not have the same theological *œuvre* as his predecessor, the current work examines his politics and his theology, and how they interact in tandem. While Francis and Benedict are clearly both sons of the same church, and both fully in line with post-conciliar thought, Francis’s outlook and emphases are distinct. This work aims to investigate this distinction.

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Brother Isaac Murphy, O.S.B.

NOTE

1. Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2017).

PREFACE: WHERE POLITICS AND THEOLOGY MEET

Pope Francis’s commentary on 1 Corinthians 11: 17–34, appearing in his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, is illustrative of how he views the world. Specifically, the early Christians disputed who should participate in worship. They argued over whether the existing order of social divisions should be maintained, or if something novel was required. Reflecting on that passage, Francis finds commonality with the social division of today:

We do well to take seriously a biblical text usually interpreted outside of its context or in a generic sense, with the risk of overlooking its immediate and direct meaning, which is markedly social. I am speaking of 1 Cor 11:17–34, where Saint Paul faces a shameful situation in the community. The wealthier members tended to discriminate against the poorer ones, and this carried over even to the agape meal that accompanied the celebration of the Eucharist. While the rich enjoyed their food, the poor looked on and went hungry: “One is hungry and another is drunk. Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the Church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?” (vv. 21–22).¹

This commentary brings us to the heart of this volume: it argues that Pope Francis might be understood to be a singular global actor precisely because he seeks to reframe political dialogue by crafting morality-based approaches to many of the world’s contentious political, economic, and social issues. As the Vicar of Christ, he rails against man-made convention and social divisions, and has consequently placed an increased emphasis on the spiritual and material needs of all people, including those served by the Catholic

Church as well as those of other confessions, and those without a belief in God. Pope Francis asks each of us to help the other in any way we can, to build a more just global society. To accomplish that goal, as the chapters in this volume will discuss, politics is meeting theology in most novel and unexpected ways.

NOTE

1. Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, The Vatican Website, March 19, 2016, 185, https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amorislaetitia_en.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The idea for this book started as a discussion between three professors at the Tombs restaurant in Georgetown in October 2015. They were there to celebrate the book launch of their volume, *Religion and Politics in a Global Community: the Portuguese-Speaking World in Comparative Perspective*, at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University. During their conversation, the three of them were astonished at how much of the discussion at the book launch revolved around Pope Francis and his global influence. At that point, Alynna Lyon suggested a novel idea: that we should work on a volume specifically geared to better understand his role as a global policy entrepreneur. Both Christine Gustafson and Paul Manuel found this to be an excellent suggestion, and thus this volume was born!

Over the last few years, we discussed the project with a variety of scholars and practitioners, including political scientists, historians, theologians, and an official of the Holy See. A number of the contributors first presented papers on this topic at the 2016 annual meeting of the New England Political Science Association in Newport, Rhode Island. The New England meeting gave us a valuable chance to reflect on the themes of the volume and integrate them into a coherent whole. One of the topics that runs across many cases is how Pope Francis handles traditional church theological teaching on the one hand (i.e. abortion, same-sex marriage, human rights, social inequality) and engages all people of “good will” in a

quest to find solutions to pressing global political challenges (i.e. poverty, global warming, acts of terror) on the other. The scholars in this proposal subsequently met at a research symposium on Pope Francis at Saint Anselm College on October 7, 2016. That symposium gave us a chance to identify some key themes for the volume, and to offer constructive criticisms to each other. Our final meeting took place at the 2017 annual meeting of the New England Political Science Association in Providence, Rhode Island. We continued our discussion over two panels: one focused on theological issues; the other on the global impact of Francis. These panels provided the occasion for lively discussion among the panelists and the audience, as well as for a review of second drafts of chapters. At the point, we knew we had the final shape of the volume.

There are many people who made this volume possible. We are grateful to our colleagues at the University of New Hampshire, Saint Anselm College, and American University for providing helpful and thought-provoking environments. We are especially thankful to Ted Jelen and Mark Rozell, the series editors at Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy, for their support of this project. Sadly, Ted Jelen passed away as we were finishing the manuscript. We are indeed indebted to Ted for his many insights and great wisdom. Both of our editors at Palgrave Macmillan, Chris Robinson and Michelle Chen, as well as John Stegner, our editorial assistant at Palgrave, have been very patient with us. We are indebted to the anonymous reviewers of the original proposal for this volume for their very useful comments, as well as to the many people who offered valuable observations at our research symposium on Pope Francis at Saint Anselm College, including Montague Brown, Abbot Mark Cooper, O.S.B., Mark Cronin, Daniel Daly, Michele Dillon, Fr. Peter J. Guerin, O.S.B., Nicole Leapley, Kevin McMahon, and Brother Isaac Murphy, O.S.B. Tom Banchoff, vice president for global engagement and the founding director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, and Melody Fox Ahmed, the associate director for programs at the Berkley Center, graciously welcomed our book launch in 2015, which served as the basis for this volume. Steven Lichtman of Shippensburg University and the executive director of the New England Political Science Association worked closely with us in organizing our conference panels in 2016 and 2017. We are most

grateful to Heather Dubnick for her masterful copyediting job. Our project enjoyed the generous support of the Center for the Humanities at the University of New Hampshire, and from the Saint Anselm College Fund for Catholic Social Teaching. Finally, we would like to thank our families for their support of our work. *We dedicate this work to them.*

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Manchester, NH, USA
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Christine A. Gustafson
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PART I

Where Politics Meets Theology Under
Pope Francis

Eluding Established Categories: Toward an Understanding of Pope Francis

*Alyssa J. Lyon, Christine A. Gustafson,
and Paul Christopher Manuel*

Pope Francis scrambles our categories. In a very short time, he has managed to change the way many view the role of the church, and perhaps even the role of religion in politics. The 266th pope is distinct from other popes in several regards. He is the first Jesuit pope, the first from the Global South, the first from the South American continent, the first to “tweet,” as well as the first non-European pope in 1200 years. In 2013, he received accolades from popular culture and was named *Time* magazine’s “Person of The Year.”¹ He is also the first to take “Francis” as his papal name, invoking Saint Francis of Assisi. In harmony with that fifteenth-century Italian saint, we can clearly see an emphasis on both the poor and the natural world under Pope Francis. Indeed, the motto he chose for his pontificate, *Miserando atque eligendo*, may be translated into

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English as “by having mercy, by choosing him,” or perhaps “lowly but chosen.”² This papal motto, which invokes the mercy Jesus showed toward sinners in the New Testament, also signals a leadership style that is refreshingly humble, forgiving, and yet, optimistic and resolutely engaged with the world. He adamantly embraces the poor, defends the marginalized, attacks greed, and champions the environment. In this regard, he is unapologetically political, often chides world leaders, and frequently comments on global economic systems. He is media savvy; aware of optics, placement, and messaging; and prefers the unassuming Fiat to the iconic “Popemobile”—a very twenty-first-century pontiff.

At the same time, Francis’s papacy also retains important traditional elements: he espouses established teachings on morality, sexuality, and marriage; he is an “Italian” pope, as the son of Italian immigrants; and he lobbied against gay marriage when he was Cardinal of Buenos Aires.³ As John Allen aptly noted, “Pope Francis will try to live up to his namesake, Francis of Assisi, as a man of the poor and of peace, but that doesn’t signal any retreat from the moral and cultural positions associated with the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI.”⁴ As such, there are both progressive and conservative elements to Pope Francis. The Argentine priest Carlos Maria Galli notes the irony, observing that “Pope Francis is popular, but he is not a populist.”⁵ Scrambled categories, indeed.

A SINGULAR GLOBAL ACTOR

Many political science and international relations scholars tend to think about political or moral leaders in terms of preestablished left–right, or progressive–conservative categories. That is, a leader who favors traditional morality is typically placed on the right, conservative side of the political scale; by contrast, another leader open to new forms of human association would be placed on the left, progressive side of that same scale. Similarly, a leader favoring free-market capitalism would be placed on the right, conservative side, and one who prefers more state-run welfare programs on the left, progressive side. These categories tend to help social scientists make sense of the political life of a given society, but there are limits to their utility.

Pope Francis overturns the appellation of such simplistic classificatory schemes. He genuinely confuses most political observers because his papacy does not fit neatly into any such scheme. To this point, Father Carlos Maria Galli noted that “to understand Francis, you don’t need labels. You need to understand where he comes from.”⁶ Likewise, Emma

Green observed during the Pope's visit to the United States, "Francis does not fit neatly into American categories. To understand him and his agenda, it's more helpful to look at America through his eyes than to look at him through an American's eyes."⁷ For instance, as noted above, Pope Francis has argued in favor of traditional marriage as well as state-run welfare programs to help the poor, policies associated with both the right and the left. Social science lacks the vocabulary required to grasp this seeming contradiction. We agree with both Galli and Green's assessment, and we argue that social scientists must move beyond a one-dimensional, instrumental way of understanding religious leaders such as Francis—an approach that is unable to grasp his papacy. One purpose of this volume is to do just that—to broaden our understanding of Francis's distinctive blending of theology and politics as well as his ability to authentically embrace normally dichotomous views.

While we note his ambitions, it is instead the open and humble leadership style of Pope Francis that has charmed the world. Without significant changes to church doctrine, he is engaging a variety of conversations on a global scale that in some regards were inconceivable under prior popes. This volume asks what this leadership approach might mean for politics and public policy and thus also explores the relationship between theology and politics from the perspective of Pope Francis as a global actor. Recognizing that his approach is both consistent with and distinct from his immediate predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI and John Paul II, the volume questions whether Francis has found a new way for the nonsecular to make a contribution to civic dialogue in an era when moral teachings are often isolated from society. Has Pope Francis figured out how the Catholic Church can pursue a religious mission in an unreceptive milieu and have a real impact on policy? Has he found a new way for theology and politics to meet?

Finally, these questions also lead to more general lines of inquiry about the role of the Catholic Church and the pope in the twenty-first century. Modernity includes an emphasis on the secular and may even postulate that religion is antiquated and holds little place in contemporary life, where science guides epistemology. Thus, when the church enters the public square, how does it do so, and to what effect? What are the impacts on both church and state, and what place does religion have in a contemporary political life? Can theology engage with science and provide direction for solving contemporary global challenges (e.g. environmental damage, poverty, and conflict)? Pope Francis's leadership stands in defiance of a secular worldview, one that proclaims there is no place for religion in

modernity. In fact, Francis highlights that modernity has proven to be fallible—it has problems which include significant inequalities in humans’ life chances, terrorism, and for some, a path into a moral abyss.

This volume, aptly subtitled “Where Theology Meets Politics,” proposes a new encounter between the disciplines of moral theology and the social sciences in order to properly situate the papacy of Francis. Its contributors explore the connections among Francis’s theological foundations, his personal history and experience, his public words, writings, and deeds as pope, and his potential impact on the challenges facing the public square. Doing so from a global perspective, we believe, offers greater clarity about this singular moral and political actor. Together, the chapters ask how Francis’s moral theology informs his engagement in public narratives on morality, obligation, poverty, identity, and stewardship of the natural environment. We now turn to a brief overview of some of the recent scholarship on Pope Francis.

SCHOLARSHIP ON POPE FRANCIS

Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), research about the theology or political approach of sitting pontiffs was scarce. There was a change after the council, when scholars started writing books and articles on the social and political teachings of popes, but it remains a relatively new field. In the time since his 2013 election as pope, Francis has drawn widespread interest. Works that treat Francis and his papacy tend to fall into three categories: biographical works that explore his formation, life, and experiences in Argentina; devotional hagiographical work that focuses on his religious writings and ministry; and a more scholarly body of work that analyzes his thinking and policies. We would place our own volume in the latter category, though we have benefited from the contributions of all three bodies of work.

First, there are many books that examine Pope Francis’s background, training, and life in Argentina.⁸ These works are generally well researched and provide the reader with a deeper sense of Francis. In particular, they offer valuable insight into the life experiences and in many cases the theological ideas that have shaped Francis’s words and deeds as pope. Paul Vallely, in *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots* (2015), adds a twist to this generally positive literature, with a specific focus on some of Francis’s

questionable actions when he served as the Jesuit provincial superior in Buenos Aires during Argentina's Dirty War, raising some tough questions about the limits of his leadership abilities.⁹

A second genre of hagiographical devotional works focuses on Francis's ministry, perhaps best illustrated by Mark Shriver's *Pilgrimage: My Search for the Real Pope Francis* (2016).¹⁰ As the nephew of President John F. Kennedy—the first and thus far only Roman Catholic elected president in the United States—the words of the Kennedy/Shriver family on religion continue to resonate with many American Catholics, especially those who associate with the Democratic Party. In his book, Shriver speaks to how Francis's emphasis on faith, love, hope, and mercy, and his commitment to the marginalized, has brought Shriver, and others, back into a regular communion with the church.¹¹

A third category of work on Pope Francis focuses on his theological and political thought. More academic in nature than the other genres, these works provide the reader with an opportunity to understand how he thinks, and how he engages in the public realm. Francesca Ambrogetti and Sergio Rubin, in *Pope Francis: Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio: His Life in His Own Words* (2013); John Allen Jr., in *The Francis Miracle: Inside the Transformation of the Pope and the Church* (2015); and Mariano Fazio, in *Pope Francis: Keys to His Thought* (2017)¹² are three fine examples of this genre. Francis's speeches, encyclicals, and other public pronouncements have also been published, which affords a treasure trove of material to study his logic and political devotions.¹³ This volume seeks to contribute to this scholarly conversation.

The 2014 volume by Uruguayan philosopher Alberto Methol Ferré and the Italian-Argentinian journalist Alver Metalli, *El papa y el filósofo* [The Pope and the Philosopher], is a particularly valuable contribution on how Francis engages modernity. A close friend of Pope Francis, Methol Ferré provided Francis with the philosophical construct he calls "libertine atheism" to evaluate the role of the church in the contemporary world.¹⁴ Libertine atheism—or the idea that society must categorically reject any moral system derived from religious or other nonrational sources—is, in the words of Francis, "the new opium of the people."¹⁵ According to Sandro Magister, the Pope considers libertine atheism—a Marxism-inspired idea and practice—to be both a dangerous and a failed contemporary way of life, precisely because it separates truth from its origins in goodness and justice.¹⁶ Methol Ferré, whom the pope calls the "brilliant thinker of the

Rio de la Plata,”¹⁷ therefore suggests that the remedy to that practice is not in philosophical debate, but rather engaging in a corrective practice, one that connects truth to its origins in a merciful and just God. Ferré holds that the “church is the only subject present on the stage of the contemporary world that can confront libertine atheism. To my mind only the church is truly post-modern.”¹⁸ He further adds that the church is able to make “the heart burn” and is singularly capable of restoring happiness to a confused and fallen world.¹⁹

Theologians Juan Carlos Scannone, Carlos María Galli, Diego Fares, Antonio Spadaro, and Massimo Faggioli each offer sober academic assessments of Francis’s papacy.²⁰ These works all suggest that Francis’s native country of Argentina has informed his current approach to theology. Scannone, who was the Pope’s teacher, provides the seminal statement on how Francis views the world in his 2016 article published in *Theological Studies* called “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People.” This approach is a unique Argentinian response to the economic challenges of the contemporary period, famously deliberated at the May 2007 Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America at the Shrine of Our Lady of *Aparecida* in Brazil. Specifically, the final document of the conference calls for a preferential option for the poor, an emphasis on popular religion, and the development of a missionary movement designed to find Christ among the poor. Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, now known as Pope Francis, chaired the committee responsible for that final document.²¹ Scannone explores how national conversations in Argentina began incorporating general ideas from liberation theology, and then argues that this phenomenon informed Francis’s current understanding of how theology should meet politics. This understanding eventually led to Francis’s 2013 call for “a Church that is poor and for the poor,” and undergirds his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.²² Similarly, at an April 4, 2016, presentation at Boston College, Argentine priest Carlos Maria Galli, who is also a friend of Pope Francis, counseled that “to understand the pope, one must follow him home,”²³ implying an engagement with the theological approach called “theology of the people.”

In a similar vein, and as mentioned above, this current volume seeks to make an original theoretical contribution in its examination of the myriad encounters that theology and politics are having under the papacy of Francis. It contributes to the scholarly literature by including chapters by

both theologians and political scientists, many of whom dialogue with Scannone's article, in the effort to show how the theology of the people helps to account for how the pope thinks, what he sees, and what he does. This volume asks whether Francis has found a new way for theology and politics to meet, both in the scholarly discussion and in practical policies.

KEY QUALITIES OF THE PAPACY OF FRANCIS

Before turning to a description of the volume's structure and contents, we think it useful to discuss two defining elements of Francis's papacy. These emerge over the course of the book and provide recurring and unifying motifs to, what are in other respects, very diverse chapters. These elements highlight that although Francis maintains fundamental consistency with church teaching and doctrine, his pragmatic and pastoral approach to global leadership, as well as his engagement with the town square are innovative. Let us briefly examine each.

A Pragmatic and Pastoral Leader

We must be careful not to overthink Pope Francis. He is a moral leader who emphasizes concrete reality over abstract thinking. Francis presents his beliefs through his actions, not merely by writing or speaking them. Pope Francis is informing individuals and modeling (through thought, word, and deed) a life that is simple and spiritually powerful. He is not the first pope to do this. However, his efficacy has been significantly enhanced by his deeds; not only is he writing about compassion and humility, but he is also living it and modeling such a way of life. Henna Inam helpfully observes that this pragmatic pope, with his emphasis on authenticity, integrity, and transparency, has surprised the world with his common, "man-on the street" touch:

This Pope is known to get out of the Popemobile (in the U.S. visit it was the Jeep Wrangler) to connect with people lined up to see him. He is the first Pope to spread his message on social-media platforms, tweeting in nine languages. He posts online video messages. He is approachable and human, often taking selfies with people. His talks about his love of soccer and tango. To influence others we have to first connect with them authentically, human to human, even if you do happen to be the Pope!²⁴

As such, Inam and others have praised his unorthodox and transformative leadership approach to the papacy that contains elements of both progressive and traditional views.²⁵ He was named pope during a very difficult time in the life of the church, which was trying to recover from the sex abuse scandal as well as facing financial mismanagement, inside-the-Vatican palace intrigue, staff in-fighting, and an increasing distance between the clergy and the flock around the globe. Since his March 2013 election, Francis has sought to address these varied problems, as well as simultaneously committing the church to serving the poor and being a good steward of the planet earth. Just days after his election as pontiff, he shared his hope that the Roman Catholic Church should be “a poor Church, for the poor,”²⁶ a welcoming place for all, especially those in greatest need.

Pope Francis’s 2016 book *The Name of God Is Mercy* continues this pragmatic line of thinking. This work features a conversation between the Pope and Vatican reporter Andrea Tornielli; in Francis’s responses, we can discern a singular, simple, and direct approach to the challenge of our times. His first thought is that the world is in desperate need of unconditional love and mercy. He wants Roman Catholics, and indeed all people of good will, to engage the world in a humble, simple fashion, by offering forgiveness, love, and support to all who ask for it. Interestingly, he also offers a pragmatic explanation of his famous response of “who am I to judge?” to the question about the role of LGBT persons in the church. He explains that his words do not represent a new teaching or a novel engagement with modernity, but rather are informed by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997), which emphasizes on both obedience to the law of God and unconditional love and compassion for the other.²⁷

Another noteworthy example of this pragmatic leadership approach took place in 2017, when the Pope decided to replace the headline theologian German Cardinal Gerhard Müller as prefect of the important Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with Archbishop Luis Ladaria Ferrer, a Jesuit from Spain. It appears that Müller and Francis shared many disagreements over how to properly interpret and apply Catholic doctrine, and especially around his 2016 papal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* [The Joy of Love].²⁸ That document caused an uproar among conservative theologians because it allowed for a more merciful application of church teachings, especially to topics like divorce, sexual morality, and access to communion. Whereas Müller favored a strict reading of moral