



Inspiration
from
POPE FRANCIS

Jorge Mario Bergoglio

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By Jorge Mario Bergoglio
Pope Francis

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CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Adoration	5
Beatitudes	9
Benedict XVI	13
Blessing	15
The Bread of Heaven	17
Catechists	21
Christian	27

Christmas	29
Church	31
City	35
Communicator	39
Cross	41
Death	43
Divesting Oneself	45
Education	47
Eucharist	53
Facing Fear	57
Faith	59
Family	63
Forgiveness	65
Fragility	69
Francis	73
Holy Spirit	75
Homeland	77
Hope	81

Humility	85
Jesus Christ	87
Joy	93
Lent	95
Life	99
Listening	101
Love	103
Mary	107
Mission	111
Missionaries	117
Neighbor	119
Old Age	121
Overcoming Obstacles	123
Prayer	125
Priests	127
The Saints	131
Search	133
Service	135

Starting Afresh from Christ	137
Stewardship	141
Work	143
Youth	145



INTRODUCTION

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, was born in Argentina on December 17, 1936, in the Flores neighborhood of Buenos Aires. From his youth he felt called to be a priest, and, after working as a chemical technician, he entered the seminary of Devoto. In 1958 he transferred to the novitiate of the Society of Jesus and studied theology at Saint Joseph seminary. Ordained a

priest in 1969, he was elected provincial superior of the Jesuits in 1973 at the young age of thirty-six. He exercised this charge during the very difficult time of Argentina's military dictatorship. After having served as provincial superior, he was the rector of *Colegio Maximo* from 1980 to 1986. Within a few years of his appointment as spiritual director in Córdoba, in 1992 Pope John Paul II named him an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires. After the death of Archbishop Antonio Quarracino, Bergoglio became the archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998, and in 2001 he was named cardinal.

On March 13, 2013, Cardinal Archbishop Jorge Mario Bergoglio made history when he was elected pope. He became the first pope from the Americas, the first Spanish-speaking pope, and the first pope to choose the name Francis. When he walked out onto the balcony of Saint Peter's Basilica, he asked the faithful gathered there and

those watching on television and the Internet to pray and ask for God's blessing on the Bishop of Rome. This gesture of a pope humbly bowing before the crowds, transmitted all over the world, has characterized the pontificate of Pope Francis.

This same sense of humility and closeness to the people he serves can also be found in the homilies and messages he gave as Archbishop and Cardinal of Buenos Aires. His words emphasize his care for children and the elderly; his concern for the most fragile: *cartoneros*,* the homeless, etc.; the high value he places on the pastoral work of priests, catechists, and pastoral ministers. He also challenged the laity and consecrated persons—in other words the whole Church—to come out of their parish settings and be a living presence in society.

* Street people who look in the garbage for paper and cardboard to sell. —Trans.

Cardinal Bergoglio didn't just speak or preach; he lived what he taught. He is an example of a priest in touch with his flock. He was known for getting around town via public transportation, speaking *with* people and not simply *to* them, and supporting the clergy in every slum and shanty village. And he would humbly beg everyone he met, "Please, I ask you to pray for me."

The thoughts that appear in this book are mainly taken from texts and homilies from 1999 to 2010. A few of his words given as pope are also included. We hope that these words will be a door through which you can enter the mind and heart of Pope Francis. We also pray that by reflecting on and praying with his words, you may be inspired to transform his thoughts into concrete actions that will serve as a path to bring you closer to Jesus Christ.



ADORATION

Because adoration is prostration, it humbly recognizes the infinite greatness of God. Only true humility can recognize true greatness while also recognizing the littleness that tries to be great. Perhaps one of the greatest evils of our time is that many adore the human and neglect the divine.

To adore is to look with trust at him who appears trustworthy because he is the giver of life,

an instrument of peace, the one who brings about encounters and solidarity.

To adore is to stand before all that is not adorable, because adoration makes us free and changes us into people full of life.

To adore is not to empty but to fill one's self; to adore is to recognize and to enter into communion with Love. No one adores what he or she does not love; you do not adore the one whom you do not consider your beloved. We are loved! We are wanted! "God is Love." This certainty brings us to adore with all our heart him who loved us first (see I Jn 4:10).

To adore is to discover the tenderness of God; it is to find consolation and rest in his presence. To adore is to experience Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Ps 23:4, 6).

To adore is to be joyful witnesses to Christ's victory and not to allow ourselves to be conquered by great tribulation. To adore is to joyfully anticipate the feast when we will meet the Shepherd, the only one worthy of adoration, who will dry all our tears and in whom we celebrate the triumph of life and love over death and hopelessness (see Rev 21–22).

To adore is to draw closer to unity, to discover ourselves as sons and daughters of the same Father, members of one family. As Saint Francis discovered, to adore is to sing praise in union with all creation and with all humanity. It is to repair the bonds that we have broken with our earth, with our brothers and sisters, and to recognize God as Lord of all things, as the good Father of the whole world.

To adore is to say “God” and to say “life.” It is to find ourselves in our daily life face to face with the God of life, to adore him through our life and

witness. It is to know that we have a faithful God who has stayed with us and who trusts us.

To adore is to say AMEN!



BEATITUDES

Jesus looks deep into the heart of each one of us, who come burdened with our worries and weighed down by work-related problems, and he says to us:

Blessed are you who are here in line asking
for bread and work.

Blessed are you who have a humble heart, and
who neither feel yourself to be greater

nor less than your brother and sister at your side.

Blessed are you who can be proud of not having any privilege except that of being my beloved child.

Blessed are you who have that righteous anger that is a hunger and thirst for justice. You know how to complain and protest, but without harming anyone; and you come first of all to ask your God and Lord.

Blessed are you who do good and, despite being misunderstood and criticized so often, don't lower your hope-filled arms.

Blessed are you who know how to cry with meekness and how to hope only in God.

Blessed are you not because of what you don't have, nor because all your sufferings will now be resolved (there is always

some suffering), but because the gift of God is so great that you can receive it only if your heart is immeasurably open. That is why Jesus calls blessed those who experience things that open and widen the heart.

We can say that when Jesus draws closer to our pain, we see things differently: Jesus speaks to us of the poor, the hungry, those who cry, those who are unjustly persecuted . . . but there is hope in the tone of his voice, so that even hearing it consoles us. Blessed are you who cry now, because you will be consoled, he tells us. And that word is like he himself wiping away our tears.

Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed: this is the beatitude of faith! In every time and in every place blessed are those who, through the Word of God—proclaimed in the

Church and witnessed by Christians—believe that Jesus Christ is the incarnate love of God, mercy incarnate. And this makes everything worth it for each one of us!



BENEDICT XVI

With great affection and profound gratitude I think about my venerated predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI. During the years of his papacy, he has enriched and strengthened the Church with his magisterium, his goodness, his direction, his faith, his humility, and his gentleness.

Benedict XVI has lit a flame in the depths of our hearts. This flame will continue to burn

because it will be nourished by his prayer, a prayer that will still sustain the Church in its spiritual and missionary path.