



Pope Francis: His Life and Thought

Mario I. Aguilar

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The election of Pope Francis in March 2013 marked an important moment within the Roman Catholic Church, a moment of continuities and discontinuities. On the one hand he is the first Latin American and the first Jesuit to be elected to lead his Church; on the other hand he provides continuity through a focus on the needs of the poor that goes back to John XXIII and Vatican II. A traditional thinker, theologically speaking, since being elected he has spoken repeatedly of the need for the Church to be poor and to serve the poor. This is the first biography of the Pope to analyse his life and thought in the light of both Argentinean history and the original Spanish texts of his writings, speeches and homilies. Written by a world authority on Latin American religion and politics, Pope Francis looks at Bergoglio's development as a Jesuit and as a bishop from a Latin American perspective, relating his actions and homilies to the ecclesial developments in Latin America since Vatican II. Thus, important markers are the Bishop's conferences of Medellin, Puebla, Santo Domingo and Aparecida, as well as the controversy surrounding his actions during the Argentinean 'dirty war' when the military junta ruled Argentina in the 1970s and 80s. Francis is a Latin American and as Pope he is better understood personally, intellectually and theologically by using a frame of reference that examines his role within the changes in the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America over the past 50 years.

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