Viva il Papa!

Argentina’s Cardinal Bergoglio Elected Pope, Chooses Francis

By Francis X. Rocca and Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service

Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, 76, the leader of a large urban archdiocese in Latin America, was elected the 266th pope and took the name Francis.

He is the first pope in history to come from the Western Hemisphere and the first non-European to be elected in almost 1,300 years. The Jesuit was also the first member of his order to be elected pope, and the first member of any religious order to be elected in nearly two centuries.

The election March 13 came on the second day of the conclave, on the conclave’s fifth ballot. It was a surprisingly quick conclusion to a conclave that began with many plausible candidates and no clear favorite.

The new pope was chosen by at least two-thirds of the 115 cardinals from 48 countries, who cast their votes in secret in the Sistine Chapel.

His election was announced in Latin from the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica, to a massive crowd under the rain in the square below and millions watching around the world.

White smoke poured from the Sistine Chapel chimney at 7:05 p.m., signaling that the cardinals had chosen a successor to retired Pope Benedict XVI. Two minutes later, the bells of St. Peter’s Basilica began pealing continuously to confirm the election.

Pope Benedict XVI greets Argentine Cardinal Bergoglio at the Vatican in this Jan. 13, 2007, file photo. Cardinal Bergoglio was elected March 13 as the 266th Roman Catholic pontiff and the successor to retired Pope Benedict.

At 8:12, French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the senior cardinal in the order of deacons, appeared at the basilica balcony and read out in Latin: “I announce to you a great joy: We have a pope! The most eminent and most reverend lord, Lord Jorge Mario, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Bergoglio, has taken for himself the name Francis.”

The crowd in the square responded with cheers, applause and the waving of rain-soaked national flags.

Ten minutes the later the new pope appeared. He sought prayers for Pope Benedict and declared that the journey the Church had been on was about to begin.

“Now I would like to give my blessing. But first, I will ask a favor. Before the bishop blesses his people, he asks that you pray to the Lord to bless me, the prayer of the people for the blessing of their bishop. Let’s pray for me in silence,” he said.

Celsa Negrini, an older woman from Rome, said the new pope’s choice of name was “beautiful. Francis is the patron of Italy. It’s a humble choice, a choice of one who will reach out to the poor.”

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi told reporters it was “beautiful that a Latin American is chosen.”

“I don’t know him well, even though we are part of same religious family,” he said. “I greeted him the other day, but didn’t expect to see him again dressed in white.”

A respected Italian journal said Pope Francis had the second-highest number of votes on each of the four ballots in the 2005 conclave.

Pope Francis has had a growing reputation as a very spiritual man with a talent for pastoral leadership serving in a region with the largest number of the world’s Catholics.

Since 1998, he has been archbishop of Buenos Aires, where his style is low-key and close to the people.

He rides the bus, visits the poor, lives in a simple apartment and cooks his own meals. In many in Buenos Aires, he is known simply as “Father Jorge.”

He also has created new parishes, restructured the administrative offices, led pro-life initiatives and started new pastoral programs, such as a commission for divorces. He co-chaired over the 2001 Synod of Bishops and was elected to the synod council, so he is well-known to the world’s bishops.

The pope has also written books on spirituality and meditation and has been outspoken against abortion and same-sex marriages.

In 2010, when Argentina became the first Latin American country to legalize same-sex marriage, Pope Francis encouraged clergy across the country to tell Catholics to protest against the legislation because, if enacted, it could “seriously injure the family.”

He also said adoption by same-sex couples would result in “depriving [children] of the human growth that God wanted them given by a father and a mother.”

In 2006, he criticized an Argentine proposal to legalize abortion under certain circumstances as part of a wide-ranging legal reform. He accused the government of lacking respect for the values held by the majority of Argentines and of trying to convince the Catholic Church “to waver in our defense of the dignity of the person.”

His role often forced him to speak publicly about the economic, social and political problems facing his country. His homilies and speeches are filled with references to the fact that all people are brothers and sisters and that the Church and the country need to do what they can to make sure that everyone feels welcome, respected and cared for.

While not overtly political, Pope Francis has not tried to hide the political and social impact of the Gospel message, particularly in a country still recovering from a serious economic crisis.

After becoming archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998, he created new parishes, restructured the administrative offices, took personal care of the seminary and started new pastoral programs, such as the commission for divorces. He mediated in almost all social or political conflicts in the city; recently ordained priests have been described as “the Bergoglio generation”; and no political or social figure missed requesting a private encounter with him.

Jorge Bergoglio was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina’s capital city, Dec. 17, 1936. More ELECTION. page 3

Pilgrims holding umbrellas wait for smoke to rise from a chimney atop the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican March 13.
March 18, 2013, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Text of Pope Francis’ Remarks from Balcony after His Election

Catholic News Service

Brothers and sisters, good evening. You know that the task of the conclave was to give Rome a bishop. It seems my brother cardinals went almost to the ends of the earth to find one.

I thank you for your welcome.

The diocesan community of Rome has its bishop. Thank you.

First of all, I would like to offer a prayer for our bishop emeritus, Benedict XVI. Let us all pray together for him that the Lord bless him and that the Mother of God protect him. “Our Father who art in heaven. . . . Hail Mary, full of grace. . . . Glory be to the Father . . . .”

Now let’s begin this journey, bishop and people, this journey of the Church of Rome, which is the one that presides in charity over all the churches – a journey of brotherhood, love and trust among us. Let us pray for one another. Let us pray for the whole world that there be a great brotherhood. I hope this journey of the Church that we begin today – and I will be helped by my cardinal vicar, here present – will be fruitful for the evangelization of this so beautiful city.

Now I would like to give my blessing. But first, I will ask a favor. Before the bishop blesses his people, he asks that you pray to the Lord to bless me, the prayer of the people for the blessing of their bishop. Let’s pray for me in silence.”

(He gave his blessing “urbi et orbi” (to the city and the world)).

Brothers and sisters, I’ll leave you. Thank you so much for the welcome. Pray for me. We’ll see each other soon. Tomorrow I want to go to pray to Mary so she would watch over all of Rome. Good night. Have a good rest.
**Bishop McFadden Calls Election of Pope Francis ‘A Work of the Holy Spirit’**

By Jon Reed  
*The Catholic Witness*

The election of Pope Francis as the 265th successor of St. Peter is “truly a work of the Holy Spirit,” Bishop Joseph P. McFadden said in a press conference a little more than an hour after the election of the new Bishop of Rome.

Addressing reporters, diocesan staff and several youth from San Juan Bautista Parish in Lancaster who were visiting the Diocesan Center March 13, the bishop said, “I am confident that this man will be given every gift he needs to fulfill this essential role in the Catholic Church.”

Standing before a row of news cameras, the bishop spoke to members of the media on several topics about the Holy Father, including his background, his first message delivered that day from the balcony overlooking St. Peter’s Square, and the Church’s relevance in the world today.

The election of a pope from Latin America acknowledges the fact that the Church encompasses the whole world, he pointed out.

“The cardinals, in selecting Pope Francis, give the understanding that the Catholic Church is global,” he said.

Asked to reflect on what he would like to see at the top of the pope’s ‘to-do list,’ Bishop McFadden said he thinks the most important things that Pope Francis can do are to reaffirm the Church’s love for the poor and the marginalized, to direct the Church to its main mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ as the savior of the world, and to speak to the downtrodden and the lowly to show them the Church is not alone.

“His first message, Pope Francis called us to be brothers and sisters. He called us to acknowledge that we are one human family, and that we’re called to love each other,” the bishop pointed out.

Bishop McFadden called Pope Francis “a great intellectual who is able to walk among the people” and expressed his confidence that the new pope will continue—as his predecessor did—to “encourage all believers in Jesus Christ to come together in unity in the expression of our faith.”

Upon the announcement of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI on Feb. 11, throughout the interregnum and the cardinals’ gathering in Rome, and during the course of the conclave, the eyes of the world were turned to the Vatican and the Catholic Church. It’s an ironic sign, the bishop said, given that secular society often considers the Church to be behind the times or irrelevant.

“There were 5,600 registered journalists in Rome, and for the last two days, the whole world had been focused on a chimney on top of a building in Rome. If the Church is not relevant and doesn’t make a difference anymore, it’s rather fascinating for the world to reject what is there,” Bishop McFadden said.

“Yes, the Church has its problems. Yes, the Church has had troubles. Yes, the Church has not been faithful in proclaiming the Gospel the way it should. But I think all believers, deep in their hearts, understand that the message that the Church delivers is a message that resonates with the human heart,” he said.

Addressing the youth of the Church and turning to speak directly to the group of children present from San Juan Bautista Parish in Lancaster, Bishop McFadden said, “You’ve studied history, and here today you are part of history. Here you are at the Diocesan Center when the cardinals chose a new pope—what a historical moment!”

“I want the young people to realize that Pope Francis loves each one of you. He wants us to realize that we have a great faith and a great savior, and that it’s important to follow him and be his disciples,” he said. The Lord calls you to love each other and to bring love to the world.”

The bishop also expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming World Youth Day in Brazil, which he will attend with diocesan youth and young adults in July to celebrate with the Holy Father, the former Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

“I think Brazil better get ready now for twice the number of people they were expecting, because I think all of South America will now be heading to Rio de Janeiro to be with the Holy Father at World Youth Day,” the bishop said. “I’m excited myself to be in his presence during his first trip to South America and his origins.”

(View an online video of the press conference on the diocesan Web site, www.hbgdiocese.org.)
By Jen Reed

**The Catholic Witness**

For Father Anthony Dill, a diocesan priest, and seminarians John Kuchinski and Kyle Sahd, being in St. Peter’s Square during the election of Pope Francis was a tremendous blessing and a joyous occasion they will never forget.

In separate e-mails to *The Catholic Witness* March 14, the three recounted their experiences of the previous day in the Square, from the moment that white smoke first appeared from the Sistine Chapel’s chimney, until the Holy Father had the faithful a good night.

Father Dill said he entered St. Peter’s Square at about 5 p.m., while the two seminarians, who are studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, had joined fellow seminarians in the Square near 7 p.m., following Evening Prayer.

With the throngs of people gathered, they fixated their eyes on the chimney. The first billows of smoke appeared gray in color, but then turned unmistakably white. Bells pealed and the crowd erupted into cheers.

“The joy I felt when I realized that white smoke was billowing from the chimney was immense, since the Church had united and found another Chief Shepherd, continuing the unbroken line of successors to St. Peter, the first pope,” said Mr. Sahd, a member of Holy Trinity Parish in Columbia.

The occasion marked the first time that Father Dill had been in the Square to wait to see smoke. Once the white smoke appeared, “there was brief mayhem,” he said. “People started collapsing their umbrellas and jostling closer to the balcony where the new pope would come out. I got gradually pushed forward as I slipped into a faster current within the sea of people migrating towards the basilica. I ended up being in the center, about a hundred yards from the stairs in front of the church.”

Mr. Kuchinski, a member of St. Leo the Great Parish in Rohrerstown, said that upon the positive signs that a pope had been elected, the crowd in the Square surged forward to be as close as possible to the balcony where the Holy Father would appear.

“The atmosphere was incredible,” he said of the hour between the smoke signal and the pope’s appearance. “Everybody kept asking, ‘Who is it going to be?’ and ‘What name is he going to take?’”

Around them, people sang and prayed the Rosary. With every movement or preparation – such as the appearance of the Swiss Guard, the performance of the Roman police band, and the lighting of the rooms behind the balcony – the crowd again swelled with cheers and anticipation.

St. Peter’s Square quieted though as French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the senior cardinal in the order of deacons, appeared at the basilica balcony. When he announced, in Latin, that Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio had been elected pope and had chosen the name Francis, there was some bewilderment among the crowd, as most didn’t seem to know the cardinal.

“I didn’t even know who Jorge Bergoglio was or anything about him,” said Father Dill, who was ordained last summer and is currently studying in Rome. “Some Italian people next to me started shouting ‘Who?’ ‘Who is it?’ One of the seminarians near me, Matthew Fish from Washington, D.C., started filling in the back story of this former cardinal, that he was a Jesuit from Argentina. Everyone was shocked at this pick, including me. I was so amazed and pleased to see the first Jesuit pope.”

Along with the faithful who were gathered, Father Dill, Mr. Kuchinski and Mr. Sahd were overwhelmed at the sight of the new pope, standing on the balcony overlooking the Square.

“I will never forget my opening words, because they were so simple: ‘Fratelli e sorelle, buona sera!’ (Brothers and Sisters, good evening!) Right away, we were able to see that he is a man of tremendous humility. I was blessed to be able to be there to receive his blessing,” Mr. Kuchinski remarked.

Mr. Sahd said he was struck by the pope’s humility, simplicity and love.

“It struck me that when Pope Francis asked all of us to pray with him for Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, he chose the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be prayers; prayers that all Catholic men, women and children know, regardless of age, all across the world!” he exclaimed. “When we prayed, it showed the universality of the Church and how we all are united in Jesus Christ! When Pope Francis left the balcony, I felt a deep sense of gratitude to God for sending us another Peter, who will guide us in the Truths of the Faith and to Jesus Christ.”

“It was such an unbelievable feeling to simply be one person amidst a sea of people following along with a pastor reciting the Our Father together aloud, outside in a public square, just begging, talking to God as a group of his children and asking him to sustain us with our Daily Bread,” said Father Dill, a native of St. Teresa Parish in New Cumberland. “That was my favorite part, that he wanted us to pray a simple prayer together and to enjoy some silence together. The silence we held together caused us to feel and be conscious of the Spirit there in the Square, as opposed to just seeing and hearing a man speak.”

The priest and seminarians said they will never forget their experience.

“I was a tremendous joy for me to be able to be there to see and pray for our new Holy Father,” Mr. Kuchinski said. “I am looking forward to seeing what good things the Lord has in store for his Church.”

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By Jen Reed

**The Catholic Witness**

Students in the after-school program at San Juan Bautista Parish and Resurrection Catholic School in Lancaster watch a news telecast in The Catholic Witness’ newsroom shows white smoke from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel.

**San Juan Youth Celebrate Historic Day at Diocesan Center**

Students in the after-school program at San Juan Bautista Parish and Resurrection Catholic School in Lancaster as they arrive in the Cardinal Keeler Center to give a press conference on the election of Pope Francis. The students were at the Diocesan Center in Harrisburg that day as part of a school tour.

By Jen Reed

**The Catholic Witness**

Students in the after-school program at San Juan Bautista Parish in Lancaster had their eyes and ears open for news about the papal conclave when they arrived for a visit of the Diocesan Center in Harrisburg March 13.

They had been learning about the conclave and praying for the election of a new pope for the past few weeks as they watched news from the Vatican during the after-school sessions offered at the parish.

So when they saw the white smoke televised from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel during a tour of *The Catholic Witness* newsroom and the Diocesan Communications’ studios, they erupted with excitement.

“We have a pope!” they shouted as they watched the scene unfold before their eyes. Several students snapped photos on their cameras and iPads to capture the moment. They marveled at the timing of their trip to the Diocesan Center, and said they hadn’t expected that a pope would be elected that day.

As the world waited for the introduction of the new Holy Father, the students, who are in grades 1-6 at Resurrection School in Lancaster, watched with anticipation. They greeted Pope Francis with joy.

“It was exciting to be here today during the election,” said Steve Pizzo, coordinator of the after-school program, which offers tutoring across all grade levels and academic subjects. “We were able to sit and watch as the pope was introduced. The kids were snapping pictures and asking questions. They had a wonderful time.”

The students also attended the press conference that Bishop Joseph P. McFadden held that afternoon in the Cardinal Keeler Center. Prior to addressing reporters, the bishop spoke with the students about the significance of the pope’s selection of the name Francis, and about their participation in the historic day.

“It was great to watch the kids experience this day,” Mr. Pizzo said. “Now they can go back to school and tell their teachers and classmates that they were part of history watching the election here.”

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**Diocesan Priest, Seminarians Share Joy from St. Peter’s Square**

By Jen Reed

**The Catholic Witness**

Bishop Joseph P. McFadden speaks to children from San Juan Bautista Parish in Lancaster as he arrives in the Cardinal Keeler Center to give a press conference on the election of Pope Francis. The students were at the Diocesan Center in Harrisburg that day as part of a school tour.
U.S. Cardinals Describe Pope Francis as Ideal Choice for Modern Times

By Carol Zimmermann

Catholic News Service

Two U.S. cardinals described Pope Francis as an ideal choice to lead the Church in the modern world.

“He is the perfect choice for this moment in the Church,” said Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl March 14.

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told reporters March 13 that the pope met all of the cardinals’ qualifications.

He said they wanted to “choose the right man” who would be “a man of God, a man of good pastoral governance, with a sense of Church universal and a good communicator.”

“He fills those bills,” he said.

He also said the pope’s nationality is a plus.

“Where he comes from is free of gravity and we got a lot of good gravity with a man coming now from Latin America. You talk about a booster shot to the church in the Americas. This is going to be a real blessing.”

The cardinals noted that the pope has a style that will appeal to many Catholics.

Cardinal Wuerl said the pope’s style reflects the Church’s emphasis on new evangelization, “inviting people to take a look again at the Church’s Gospel message.”

“He is the perfect choice for this moment in the Church,” he said.

He also said it was significant that the pope chose the name Francis, pointing out “that’s a very spontaneously, gracious person. He was demanding of himself and others ... but he did it in such a way that you couldn’t help but love him.”

Dolan said it was “magnificent” when the pope asked everyone in the square to pray in silence for him and pronounced “St. Peter’s Square when he was first an- greted the massive crowd assembled in St. Peter’s Square when he was first announced.”

Both U.S. cardinals noted the pope’s style was particularly obvious in the way he greeted the massive crowd assembled in St. Peter’s Square when he was first announced.

Cardinal Dolan said it was “magnificent” when the pope asked everyone in the square to pray in silence for him and the whole square was completely hushed. He also loved how the pope led everyone in praying the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be, saying that was similar to “what a good teacher or a good catechist would do.”

He said another aspect of the pope’s personality was revealed right before the pope was supposed to appear to the crowds. Many people inside the apostolic palace wanted to speak with him first, but the pope had heard that it had been raining and said he should go to the balcony first because he didn’t want to keep the people waiting.

“That’s a very spontaneously, gracious remark to make,” the cardinal told reporters March 13 that Pope Francis met all of the cardinals’ qualifications they were seeking in a new pope.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, right, prepares to board a bus with other U.S. cardinals from the Pontifical North American College to attend the Mass for the election of the Roman pontiff in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican March 12. Cardinal Dolan told reporters March 13 that Pope Francis met all of the cardinals’ qualifications they were seeking in a new pope.

Cardinal Dolan was one of a group of cardinals who were not surprised by the news of the cardinals’ selection of the pope.

“Scherer is still a young cardinal; we expected him to be a front-runner,” he said.

He noted that Pope Francis has “firmness in faith and gentleness in dealing with people.”

He said it was significant that the pope chose the name Francis, pointing out “that’s a very spontaneously, gracious person. He was demanding of himself and others ... but he did it in such a way that you couldn’t help but love him.”

Dolan said it was “magnificent” when the pope asked everyone in the square to pray in silence for him and the whole square was completely hushed. He also loved how the pope led everyone

Latin Americans Say Election is Recognition of Global South

By Ezra Fieger

Catholic News Service

Latin Americans said the election of the first pope from the region is recognition of the role the global South plays in the Church’s future.

Pope Francis, the 76-year-old Ar- gentine who served as archbishop of Buenos Aires as Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, comes as both a surprise and a source of hope for Latin Ameri- can Catholics.

“This is the news of the century. This is a moment of happiness for all of us,” Archbishop Oscar Vian Morales of Guatemala City told a news conference March 13. “We have received the news with great joy.”

Pope Francis, who reportedly fin- ished second in the conclave that elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, has long advocated for a better life for Argentina’s poor, carrying a message of social justice that resonates in a re- gion where roughly three in 10 people are poor.

“We’re very happy. ... This is a man who has always represented the inter- ests of the impoverished,” said Jesuit Father Jesus M. Sariego, representa- tive of the Jesuit mission in Central America, based in El Salvador. “In terms of what this represents in the world, this is a signal of the impor- tance and support” for our work.

While Church participation wanes in areas of the world where it had long flourished, such as Europe, Latin America is home to nearly 40 percent of the world’s Catholics, and Africa is the Church’s fastest-growing region.

“The global South is where the Church should focus,” Father Sar- iego said. Although millions of Latin American Catholics have defected to evangelical sects or secularism, more than 70 percent remain Catholic.

In Brazil, the world’s most Catholi- c country by population, Auxiliary Bishop Leonardo Steiner of Brasilia, secretary-general of the Brazilian bishops’ conference, said: “It is a mo- ment of much happiness for all of us. We were surprised with the election of a Latin American pope.”

Brazil is home to roughly 124 mil- lion Catholics, or one of every 10 around the world.

“The choice of a Latin American shows that the Church is opening up; that it is looking out for the [univer- sal] Church and not only for Europe,” Bishop Steiner said.

In the run-up to the conclave, specu- lation had mounted that Cardinal Odil- lo Scherer, archbishop of Sao Paulo, was a front-runner.

On March 13, inhabitants of the little town of Cerro Largo, where Card- inal Scherer was born, flocked to the church hall at the city’s main church when they heard about the white smoke coming out of the chimney at the Vatican.

“We were a little disappointed, but that does not mean we will not pray for the new pope,” Rozane Scherer, Cardinal Scherer’s cousin, was quoted by a Brazilian TV station as saying. “Scherer is still a young cardinal; we will continue bet on him.”

Brazil will likely be Pope Francis’ first official international trip when he visits for World Youth Day in July.

In a statement, the organizing com- mittee for the event – already expect- ed to draw at least 2 million – said, “Young people around the world are happy with the ‘yes’ given by Pope Francis and with his visit to Brazil in July for the [World Youth Day] in his first international apostolic trip.”
My Take: What it Means for One of My Brothers to become Pope

By Father James Martin  
Special to The Witness

Pope Francis is the first Jesuit pope in history. When I heard his name announced, after shouting aloud, my first thought was how improbable it all was. But why? Why was a Jesuit pope so hard for people (including me) to imagine? And what would St. Ignatius Loyola, the 16th-century founder of the Jesuit Order (more formally known as the Society of Jesus), have thought? Let’s take that first question first. Why was it so improbable? For two reasons.

First, most cardinals come from the ranks of the diocesan clergy. That is, most study in diocesan seminaries and are trained to work in the more familiar Catholic settings of parishes - celebrating Masses, baptizing children, presiding at marriages and working closely with families in their parish. Their lives are perhaps more easily understood by the public at large. They begin as parish priests, and later are appointed bishops and cardinals and, later, are named cardinals by the pope.

Members of religious orders, like the Franciscans, Dominicans and Jesuits, live a different life. We take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and live in communities with one another. (By contrast, parish priests receive salaries.) We are also not as focused on parish life. In this country, for example, the Jesuits are known mainly for their educational institutions: middle schools, high schools and colleges and universities like Boston College, Georgetown, Fordham and all the schools named “Loyola.” So our lives are different from those of the diocesan clergy; not better or worse, just different. So members of religious orders may seem more “unfamiliar” to cardinals. Thus, not many popes in recent history have been from religious orders. When choosing a leader, then, the cardinals naturally prefer someone from their “world.”

But not this time. Perhaps they felt it was time for a change. A big one.

Also, the Jesuits were sometimes viewed with suspicion in a few quarters of the Vatican. There are a number of reasons for that, some of them complex. The first is, as I mentioned, our “differentness.” Second, our work with the poor and people on the margins sometimes struck some as too experimental, radical and even dangerous. “When you work on the margins,” an old Jesuit said, “you sometimes step out of bounds.”

In the early 1980s, because of tensions between the Jesuits and the Vatican, Pope John Paul II “intervened” in our internal governance. After a strokel felled our superior general, the pope appointed his own representative as our leader (rather than allowing the normal procedure, which was for us to elect a successor). That was his right as pope, but it still disconcerted many Jesuits. A few years later, we elected a new superior general and the warm relations were restored. Still, the cloud persisted in some quarters of the Vatican, which meant that a Jesuit pope was too far-fetched to even imagine.

With a Jesuit pope, that cloud has been if not removed then lifted much higher.

What does it mean to have a Jesuit pope? Several things.

First, the new vicar of Christ is thoroughly steeped in the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, who founded the Jesuits in 1540. Pope Francis has twice in his life, as all “fully formed” Jesuits do, participated in the Spiritual Exercises, the monthlong silent retreat that focuses on the life of Jesus Christ. The Exercises call on you to use your imagination to enter into the life of Jesus in prayer. So Pope Francis, we can assume, is an intensely spiritual man who has plumbed the depths of the life of Christ in a particularly Jesuit way. Since his election Wednesday, I have heard at least a dozen Jesuits say, “Well, I don’t know much about him, but I know he made the Exercises.”

Second, Jesuit training is extremely long. Pope Francis entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1958, at the age of 22, and was not ordained until in 1969. (That’s about the average length of time of training for a Jesuit priest. I entered in 1988 and was ordained in 1999.) So the new pope is an educated man who also has experience in a variety of ministries, which he would have been assigned to during his long training. Typically, a Jesuit in training is asked to do work with the poor, tend to patients in hospitals, teach in schools, and all the while perform what St. Ignatius called “low and humble tasks,” for example, like scrubbing out toilets and mopping floors.

Third, the new supreme pontiff knows poverty. Jesuits are supposed to take our vows of poverty seriously. This means in the novitiate living on a pittance, doing work that we call “low and humble tasks,” for example, like scrubbing out toilets and mopping floors.

Fourth, Jesuits are asked to be, in St. Ignatius’ Spanish tongue, disponible: available, open, free, ready to go anywhere. The Jesuit ideal is to be free enough to go to the street to help the poor, or to the favela in Latin America to the Papal Palace in Vatican City. We are also, likewise, to be “indifferent”; that is, free enough to flourish in either place; to do anything at all that is ad majorem Dei gloriam, for the greater glory of God.

Fifth, we are not supposed to be “climbers.” Now here’s a terrific irony. When Jesuit priests and brothers complete their training, they make vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and a special vow to the pope “with regard to missions”; that is, with regard to places the pope wishes to send us. But we also make an unusual promise, alone among religious orders as far as I know, not to “strive or ambition” for high office.

St. Ignatius was appalled by the clerical climbing that he saw around him in the late Renaissance, so he required us to make that unique promise against “climbing.” Sometimes, the pope will ask a Jesuit, as he did with Jorge Bergoglio, to assume the role of bishop or archbishop. But this is not the norm. Now, however, a Jesuit who had once promised not to “strive or ambition” for high office holds the highest office in the church.

On that second question: What would St. Ignatius Loyola have thought?

St. Ignatius famously did not want his men to become bishops and even resisted the Vatican at times to prevent that from happening. On the other hand, he was disponible enough to know that rigid rules needed to be broken. Plus he was also devoted to doing anything he could for the Church, and so to ask his Jesuits to do the same. In one of the founding documents of the Jesuits, Ignatius announces his intention to “serve the Lord alone and the Church, his spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth.” Anything for the “Greater Glory of God,” as our motto goes, and for the service of the Church. Ignatius would say, So, frankly, I think St. Ignatius would be smiling at one of his Sons not only serving the Roman Pontiff, but being one.

I sure am.

(Father James Martin is a Jesuit priest, editor at large of America magazine and author of The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything. His article is reprinted here with permission.)
Newly-elected Pope Francis, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina, waves after praying at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome March 14.

CNS/LESSandro BIANCHI, REUTERS