



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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Superman or Common Man?

Dear Regis friends:

It's been one year since the announcement that Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina would become Pope Francis, the first pope from Latin America and the first Jesuit to become the Holy Father. It has certainly been quite a year for him, for the Catholic Church and the world in its response to him. But as he has recently reminded some of his most ardent fans, he is not Superman, but rather a normal, simple person who compares himself to the rest of us.

As I've listened to Pope Francis engage the world, I find him repeating three main themes - Listening, Hope and Love.

LISTENING

Pope Francis said, "Our goal is less to proselytize others than to LISTEN to their needs, desires, disappointments, despair and hopes. We must restore hope to young people, help to the old, be open to the future and spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace."

To some this may be just a change in tone from the Vatican, but I think it has a deeper challenge for all of us. Pope Francis seems to suggest that we have become less able to listen to each other because our communities have become more secular and less able to notice God in our lives. We are in many ways less connected to the suffering of those around the world and in our own neighborhoods. Pope Francis also has suggested that as a Church we may have become too focused on our own internal Church concerns and conflicts and not focused enough on the central message of the Gospels.

HOPE

Like John Paul when he came to Denver in that wonderful summer 20 years ago, Pope Francis seems to have a special connection to the young, a way of energizing them, pointing the way to possibilities for them and steering them toward the deepest hope we all have to engage in lives of meaning and purpose. Hope was particularly evident during World Youth Day in Brazil where he spoke of hope of the Christian message as an antidote to their deep concerns over unemployment, the future of the planet and the insensitivity of the world they are entering into as adults. For



someone who interacts with college students continuously, I know the challenges that come in working with the young people in these uncertain times.

LOVE

As Pope Francis repeats his theme of love as a primary message, not only to the young but to all of us, he points to the power of selfless love and compassion. He is challenging each of us to find the selfless love each of us has for others.

Like many Jesuits, I'm occasionally asked how Pope Francis' Jesuit formation and life has influenced him. While there is no way of knowing exactly which of our life experiences have shaped us, I do see elements of Ignatian Spirituality and aspects of Jesuit life and practice in his way of proceeding so far.

SIMPLICITY AND HUMILITY

Pope Francis' genuine sense of personal simplicity and humility encourages us to make this good world a better place for all using our own unique gifts and capacities.

COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING

Pope Francis wants to motivate us to find a deep respect for our own lives, experiences and perspectives so we can better engage those whose opinions differ from our own. He encourages us to seek love, compassion and understanding to engage the world, including those of different faiths or no religious beliefs.

I'm interested in hearing your thoughts on how Pope Francis has touched your heart over the past year. I encourage you to share them on [Facebook](#) or with others in the Regis community.

Thanks for all that you do for Regis.

Fr. John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
President of Regis University