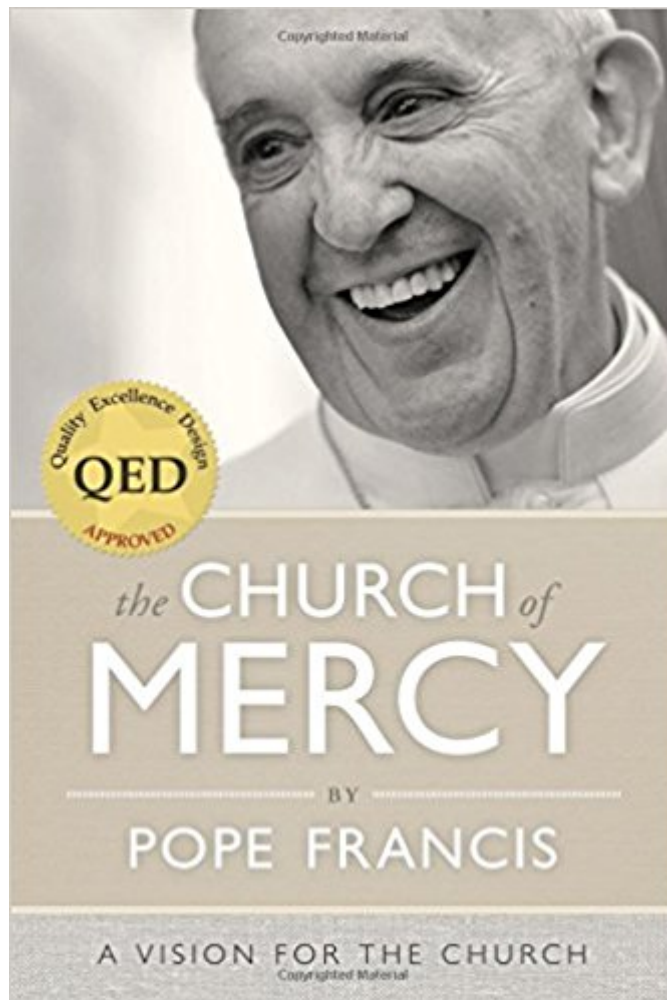


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The Church Of Mercy



Synopsis

"A magnificent book, bursting with profound spiritual insights, from a man who has quickly become one of the greatest spiritual teachers of our time." --James Martin, SJ, author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*

In the year since he was elected, Pope Francis's simple message of mercy, service, and renewal has spread to every corner of the world. Through his gentle demeanor, selfless actions, and welcoming call for service to others, Pope Francis has captured the attention of a world longing for an authentic message of hope -- we want to hear what he has to say. Collected from Pope Francis's speeches, homilies, and papers presented during the first year of his papacy, *The Church of Mercy* is the first Vatican-authorized book detailing his vision for the Catholic Church. From how to be citizens of the world to answering God's call for evangelization, Pope Francis's deep wisdom reminds us that the Church must move beyond its own walls and joyfully bring God's mercy wherever suffering, division, or injustice exists. Named *TIME Magazine*'s 2013 "Person of the Year," Pope Francis is helping the Church continue toward an authentic Christianity that is faithful to the Gospel and resonant with the world's greatest needs. *The Church of Mercy* encourages each of us to ignite the flame within to help share the light of Christ and revitalize the Church.

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Customer Reviews

"Refreshingly humane, focusing on people rather than institutions. Admirers of Francis and students of church history alike will find this a useful introduction to the pontiff's thought."- Kirkus

"I can't even tell you the sense of wonder and gratitude I am feeling reading *The Church of Mercy*. Every

Christian in at least the western world should read this man...at least read enough to know what Christianity has come upon or been given or will be watching develop over the next few years. This man sees, and is of, the Kingdom of God. Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence*"Church of Mercy is a book for our time: the memorable message of love, mercy, and compassion in the words of the man whose deeds incarnate these values in our time. Not only Catholics but every human being who values what is best in us will cherish this book. Michael Leach, author of *Why Stay Catholic?*"Catechists are used to making things simple so that those they teach, especially children, can understand God's Word. This is what makes Pope Francis such a natural catechist: he makes things simple. The Church of Mercy is a Godsend for catechists who will treasure the Holy Father's simple yet powerful and inspiring words which make faith in Jesus Christ accessible to everyday people in their everyday lives. - Joe Paprocki, DMin - National Consultant for Faith Formation"

In this major new work from Loyola Press, Pope Francis reminds us that the goal of Christian faith is not to be right, but to be holy, and that the way to holiness is through a merciful heart, open to God and the world. The pope's message is a daring invitation to reimagine the Church's whole approach to pastoral ministry and the new evangelization. - Fr. Matt Malone, S.J. President & Editor in Chief, *America Magazine* "Pope Francis understands the world he is in, and does not separate himself from it. He does not want a closed Church, but an open one, and knows that a bruised Church is better than an ill Church. This is a book for everyone." Joanna Thyer, *12 Steps to Spiritual Freedom* (Loyola Press)"What did we do to deserve such a man as Pope Francis? Every day the world drops its jaw in wonder at the work of art that is Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Read this book, and see how he is doing it."--Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M., author of *Falling Upwards* and *On the Threshold of Transformation*"A magnificent book, bursting with profound spiritual insights, from a man who has quickly become one of the greatest spiritual teachers of our time."- James Martin, SJ, author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*"I can't even tell you the sense of wonder and gratitude I am feeling reading *The Church of Mercy*. Every Christian in at least the western world should read this man...at least read enough to know what Christianity has come upon or been given or will be watching develop over the next few years. This man sees, and is of, the Kingdom of God." -Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence*

~ ~ "This joy is born from knowing that with Him we are never alone, even at difficult moments, even when our life's journey comes up against problems and obstacles that seem insurmountable--and there are so many of them!"--Pope Francis, Homily on Palm Sunday, 24 March 2013"

The Church does not rest solely beneath the shadow of our steeple; rather, she embraces a

vast number of peoples and nations who profess the same faith, are nourished by the same Eucharist, and are served by the same pastors."--Pope Francis, General Audience, 9 October 2013

This Loyola Press paperback is the first Vatican-authorized collection of Pope Francis' writings released in the United States. It contains generous excerpts from the speeches and writings of his first year as head of the Catholic Church. Although there are a number of Pope Francis books floating around, mostly from his years before he became pope, this one is among the most inspiring. The topical arrangements are particularly well-chosen and there is a careful editorial hand at work here. This volume is not a cheap rush job -- like many of the books released to the U.S. market in the months after his election -- but a carefully produced volume done by an American Jesuit publishing house for the Jesuit pope. It provides ideal bedside reading and reflection material. I highly recommend it to anyone who is looking for inspiration and a spiritual boost.

It is no wonder that all who are exposed to Pope Francis are captivated by his embracing love and caring nature. These and other attributes are completely accessible in the teachings expressed in this slim volume on Francis' vision for the Church. His language truly touches the heart, mind, and soul. It resonates with the human hunger for spiritual nourishment and growth. Read it with marker in hand. You will wish to go back and remind yourself of what he has shared.

Pope Francis is widely popular with Catholics and non-Catholics alike. However, a book review is a book review and not a popularity contest. That said, the Church of Mercy, on its own merits, deserves four stars. I will explain later why not five stars, but first the positive elements. Without being simplistic, the Church of Mercy takes the readers to the fundamentals of Christianity. The reader is reminded that by emulating the teaching of Christ, caring for the poor, demonstrating compassion, avoiding materialism etc. one leads to a more fulfilling life and the life God wants us to lead. In one chapter, Pope Francis admonishes the clergy to "walk" with congregants. Specifically, to "walk" ahead when needed to show the way, "walk" alongside to be supportive, and to "walk" in back to make sure no one is left behind. While his advice is directed at the clergy, it is an example for lay Christians to follow. This is just one example where, in a new way, Pope Francis explains what the reader already knows about the Christian faith. One of the fundamentals of the Christian faith is that sins are forgiven. The Church of Mercy acknowledges this but does spend a lot of time on the issue. This is good. In our daily life, most of our behavior is neither sinful nor saintly. A church that stresses "we are all sinners" is a church that is unattractive to the vast majority of individuals

who, in the daily lives, are just going about their daily routine, neither saints nor sinners. In the Church of Mercy, Pope Francis reasserts the church's obligation to the poor. He also recognizes that charity includes the dignity and importance of work. Work provides financial stability and decreases the need for charity in the first place. As noted, in places the Church of Mercy Pope Francis is directing clergy how to better priests or bishops. (This reviewer found it enlightening that Pope Francis felt it necessary to remind bishops to promptly return phone calls from priests). However, the general reader is probably not particularly interested in the "CEO" aspects of being a Pope or Cardinal and this weakens the book. Also, the last chapter is the chapter is a very Catholic view on the Virgin Mary. Non-Catholics won't get much out of this chapter. As the final chapter is primarily of interest to Catholics and some of Church of Mercy is directed specifically to the clergy, this reviewer can give it only four stars. Pope Francis, the man, however, gets five.

Up front let me say that I am a lapsed Catholic. Once having touched the religion however I remain curious as to how others have retained their faith. With this in mind I ordered Pope Francis' book. I was not disappointed. The utter lack of elitism, privilege is their right from the start. His "who am I to judge" approach showcases this man's Goodness. Have you washed anyone's feet lately? I haven't - this Pope has! Throughout the book this man's love and compassion and mercy is openly on display. More men like Francis are needed in this world. I am not easily moved by cinematic or political personalities. I have been moved by this man's writings and heartily recommend that you look into the heart of Pope Francis by reading his book.

I really loved this book! Thank you Pope Francis! He is truly a humble man of God and his words reached my soul. If you want to get to know our new pope better, read this book. It's an easy read, not heavy or complicated. It contains some of his homilies and writings from 2013. One quote I'd like to share: "...with our faith we must create a 'culture of encounter,' a culture of friendship, a culture in which we find brothers and sisters, in which we can also speak with those who think differently, as well as those who hold other beliefs, who do not have the same faith. They all have something in common with us: they are images of God; they are children of God. [We must be] going out to meet everyone, without losing sight of our own position." There are many pearls of wisdom in this book. It has challenged me to do good things with my life. It's definitely directed my focus. I definitely recommend this book. Every Catholic, active or not, should read it!

Pope Francis' cited about the first saint from the Americas was: As she did with Saint Juan Diego

Cuauhtlatatzin, Mary of Nazareth offers [us] maternal comfort and love, and whispers in our ear: "Let your heart not be troubled." Am I not here, who am your Mother?" Francis is a future saint in Argentina's list for those who became canonized.

This book is basically a compilation of various homilies and talks given by Pope Francis during 2013. The thread that is meant to unite the different selections is the theme of mercy. Sometimes that "thread" gets lost in thoughts that are somewhat related to the theme but move away from it. Sometimes a selection is very short and ends without much development. It's an easy read and is user friendly for people who only have snippets of time to devote to spiritual reading while at the same time want something upon which meditate.

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