

Citation metadata

Author: Xue Jiao Zhang
Date: Mar. 2016
From: Cross Currents(Vol. 66, Issue 1)
Publisher: Association for Religion and Intellectual Life
Document Type: Essay
Length: 5,296 words

Main content

Article Preview :

In 2013, Pope Francis became the 266th successor of St. Peter in the Roman Catholic Church. He chose the name Francis as his papal name in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. It is more than a name he shares with St. Francis of Assisi. In Pope Francis' encyclical letters and his speech, he uses the language of St. Francis and his early biographies to tie contemporary environmental theory to the Franciscan lineage. The mission and message of Pope Francis mirror those of the beloved saint who lived over 800 years ago. At that time, numerous saints emerged in Christian history. Grounding in the Gospel values and the spirit of Jesus' teaching, these saints followed the footprints of Jesus and revealed God's Providence to all on earth through the way they lived and the commitment to God. One of them was St. Francis of Assisi, who was born in a merchant family in 1181 and died as God's servant in 1226. Mentioning about St. Francis, most people would connect him with the animals, the birds, and the entire creatures so often. Or, people would refer to his famous poem "The Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon." However, these are just the tip of the iceberg of this saint's life. The core values of St. Francis' lifelong journey are truly derived from his continuous conversion to God and his profound contemplation as entry into its deepest gift--the mystery of life, the presence of God in life, and mirrored by life (Dennis et al, 147). Through the various autobiographies and miracles of St. Francis of Assisi in the Church, it is not difficult to find that God's Providence has been unfolded through generations to generations, even today. Pope Francis, the current Pope of Roman Catholic Church, is the first Pope from the Americas, from the Jesuit order, and to choose the name Francis. Pope Francis was the rector of Buenos Aires's Jesuit Seminary in 1980. He was exiled by the Jesuits to Cordoba as confessor in 1990 because of his intolerance as a rector. Unexpectedly, the humiliation generated from this exile empowered him to be humble. It brought about an intense conversion in Pope Francis' life. It was because of this experience that Pope Francis began to say, "Please pray for sinners!" After two years of his exile, he became the Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires. He totally remodeled his style of leadership from dictatorship to participative (Alff). Obviously, what Pope Francis has experienced in his life has an immense impact on how he lives out his papacy today as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. He is a contemporary model of St. Francis of Assisi. His Franciscanism is particularly embodied in the language he uses in his writing.

Repairing and restoring are the keys in the conversion experience of St. Francis of Assisi. In the spirit of emulating what Francis did, Pope Francis applies these two keys to his papal encyclical on environment. Thomas of Celano, who was received...

[Access from your library](#)

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Source Citation

Source Citation

Zhang, Xue Jiao. "How St. Francis influenced Pope Francis' Laudato Si." *Cross Currents*, vol. 66, no. 1, Mar. 2016, p. 42+. Accessed 7 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A458268439

Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

[Access from your library](#)

Footer

- [About](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)