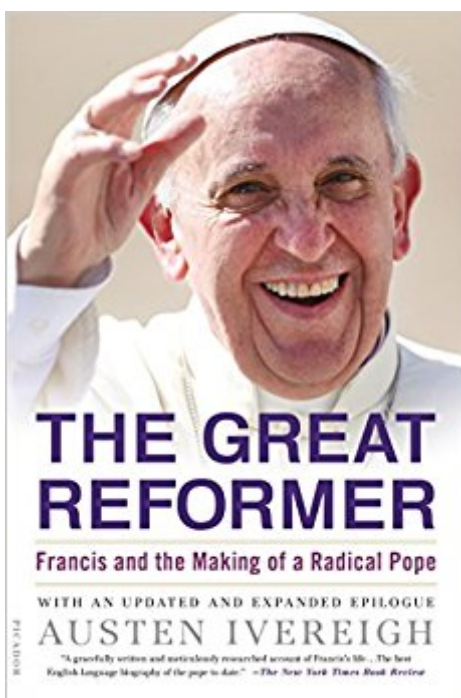


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# The Great Reformer: Francis And The Making Of A Radical Pope



## Synopsis

A Philadelphia Inquirer Best Book of the Year A biography of Pope Francis that describes how this revolutionary thinker will use the power of his position to challenge and redirect one of the world's most formidable religions Based on extensive interviews in Argentina and years of study of the Catholic Church, this biography provides never-before-explained context on how one man's ambitious program began-and how it will likely end-through an investigation of Francis's youth growing up in Buenos Aires and the dramatic events during the Perón era that shaped his beliefs; his ongoing conflicts and disillusionment with the ensuing doctrines of an authoritarian and militaristic government in the 1970s; how his Jesuit training in Argentina and Chile gave him a unique understanding and advocacy for a "Church of the Poor"; and his rise from cardinal to the papacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[A] gracefully written and meticulously researched account of Francis's life ... The best English-language biography of the pope to date." The New York Times Book Review  
"Consider this book the cornerstone of any collection on Pope Francis and twenty-first-century Christianity." Ray Olson, Booklist (starred review)  
"In a graceful style, Ivereigh illuminates Bergoglio's path.... His rigorous research unveils fascinating details and does not skip the controversies that intervened along the way."  
Kenneth A. Briggs, The Philadelphia Inquirer  
"The Great Reformer is a magnificent

book.... A tour de force of biographical research and good judgment. — John Cavadini, *Commonweal* — “In Austen Ivereigh’s engaging work, we come to more fully learn and appreciate the circumstances and influences that shaped Jorge Bergoglio’s journey: first as a young Jesuit leader, then as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, and now as shepherd of over one billion Catholics. The many fascinating events and challenges recounted in *The Great Reformer* demonstrate that the key to understanding Pope Francis and his vision for the Church begins above all by recognizing his unfailing faith in the love and mercy of Jesus Christ. — Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York and author of *Praying in Rome: Reflections on the Conclave and Electing Pope Francis* — “Well written, full of information; this is the best biography of Pope Francis to date. — Thomas Reese, Senior Analyst, National Catholic Reporter and author of *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church* — “‘You have to be normal,’ Pope Francis told the Jesuit Antonio Spadaro, setting the tone for their long interview last summer. ‘Life is normal.’ This is what’s especially remarkable about Austen Ivereigh’s biography of Francis: Ivereigh depicts Jorge Mario Bergoglio as an extraordinary figure by showing him in the settings of his ‘normal’ life, from the Jesuit Colegio Maximo to the bus shelters of Buenos Aires bus to the Casa Santa Marta in Rome. No recent pope has gotten a biography as sensible, as culturally adept, and as attuned to the ongoing moment as this one. — Paul Elie, author of *The Life You Save May Be Your Own* and *Reinventing Bach* — “Austen Ivereigh paints the story of the momentous papal transition of 2013 with accurate, vivid, graphic strokes and places the reader in awe before the brilliant canvas of contemporary Church history. *The Great Reformer* helped me to realize anew the sheer magnitude, power and influence of Benedict’s humble and courageous decision and Francis’ bold and daring revolution of tenderness inaugurated on March 13, 2013. If you wish to understand Pope Francis, read this book. — Father Thomas Rosica, CSB; CEO, Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation — “Probing, comprehensive, eminently readable and absorbing . . . In a growing list of books on the first Latin American pope, Ivereigh’s is uniquely well informed and persuasive. — Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Philadelphia — “Austen Ivereigh has produced about the best one-volume biography of Pope Francis that you’ll find. *The Great Reformer* explores the fascinating story of Jorge Mario Bergoglio’s life in Argentina, with its highlights and shadows. And in explaining where Francis came from, Ivereigh is able to give us a realistic and insightful account of what Bergoglio is up to as pope, and where he is taking the Catholic Church. — David Gibson, national reporter for Religion News Service and author of *The Rule of Benedict: Pope Benedict XVI and His Battle with*

the Modern World. "Easily the best treatment of Pope Francis' Argentine background in English, written by someone who knows Catholicism inside and out. Masterful, indispensable, and gripping." John L. Allen Jr., Associate Editor, *Cross* and *The Boston Globe*. "Ivereigh has written the best available chronicle of the formative events in the life and thinking of Jorge Mario Bergoglio and demonstrates how his call for a 'Church in permanent mission' extends and deepens the 'New Evangelization' proclaimed by St. John Paul II." George Weigel, author of *Evangelical Catholicism*

Austen Ivereigh is a British writer, journalist, and commentator on religious and political affairs who holds a PhD from Oxford University. His work appears regularly in the Jesuit magazine *American* and in many other periodicals. He is well known on British media, especially on the BBC, Sky, ITV and Al-Jazeera, as a Catholic commentator.

Fascinating - who knew that there are "bergolismos" in the Spanish speaking world (words that Card Bergoglio coined to express precise actions that had no word prior)? A lot of Argentine history to set the stage for the youth, formation, and early experiences of the man who became Papa Francisco, and which clearly colours his view of the world today. The concept of "pueblo fiel" as the ultimate deposit of God's truth rather than some committee, or quasi-governmental body, at the Vatican, explains his going out to the people and embracing them (quite literally in some cases!), explains his desire to be with the pueblo fiel whenever possible, and when not to be at least with the world as much as possible. It is an easy, but fast paced, read for someone with a historical interest, a little more attention needed to get the philosophical and theological intent of his pontificate, but worth the study.

THE GREAT REFORMER: FRANCIS IN THE MAKING OF A RADICAL POPE by Austin Ivereigh, Henry Holt and Company, 2014, 445

Pages [https://www.amazon.com/Great-Reformer-Francis-Making-Radical/dp/1250074991/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1466027118&sr=1-1&keywords=the+great+reformer+francis+and+the+making+of+a+radical+pope+by+austen+ivereigh](https://www.amazon.com/Great-Reformer-Francis-Making-Radical/dp/1250074991/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1466027118&sr=1-1&keywords=the+great+reformer+francis+and+the+making+of+a+radical+pope+by+austen+ivereigh) Austin Ivereigh writes a convincing life story of Pope Francis. Frank, Mary, Dylan and Jason gave this me this book for my birthday.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Francis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis) Ivereigh shows how the conflict between the elite and the poor, between the liberals and conservatives, the military and Marxists and the pro- and anti-Peronists shaped the history of Argentina and the Argentine Catholic church. The ongoing and

often violent fights educated Francis. While much of his wisdom, good genes, common sense and good nature came from a family of Italian immigrants and faithful Catholics, he got particular strength and wisdom from his grandmother Rosa. The Jesuits and their discipline added to his intellect and spirituality. Their arguments and politics were part of his increasingly polished intellect and political savvy. Pope Francis is equally critical of Marxism, fascism, socialism, capitalism, liberals and elitists. He regards capitalism and socialism as failed systems. Both lead to violence and social upheaval. Both failed to increase social justice. He believed that the Catholic Church needed to reform and to reform from below. The indigenous and indigent should lead the reform. This is definitely not church reform imposed by the clergy or the pope. He believed in the collective wisdom of the people. Apparently when you meet him, you feel; you have his full attention. He seems totally focused on you and your concerns. He is not a CEO who rushes through an interview to get to more "important" things. In short he comes across as an intelligent, well disciplined, bright, warmhearted, decent and politically skillful human being. I think I would enjoy his company and enjoy discussing current Christianity, its problems and possible solutions, with him. You also will come to understand more about the intricacies of the Catholic Church and its internal politics. You will see the interaction of the church with the elite, the powerful and the poor. You will respect the imposed and self-imposed discipline of the Jesuits. It is a harder discipline than the learning and practice of medicine. [...] It also becomes obvious that the Catholic Church is not a monolithic structure. Instead you see all the divisiveness, though the fights are less vicious than current American politics. Ah me, whatever else we are all human and mostly too human. Organized Christian religion seems to have lost its way. We need a new Reformation. As in all human organization Christianity has become over supplied with detailed rules and leaders who have lost their and our way. We need a return to the simple beliefs and practices described by Christ. If we humans can do this, the future is assured. Pope Francis might be able to help us give birth to better future. I wish him well and I think his vision is appropriate for the current world. My scotch ancestors gave up on the Catholic Church and became Presbyterians. My German ancestors followed Martin Luther out of the Catholic Church and became German Evangelical and Reform. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical\\_Church\\_in\\_Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Church_in_Germany) The Irish ancestors remained Catholic until my grandfather Klein forced my Irish grandmother to leave the church. She never stopped missing the church and I suspect one of the reasons my father was a serious agnostic, was sympathy with his mother. If Pope Francis is able to help reform the Catholic Church, using the model he advocates, I probably will become Catholic. Frank

The author has set himself a difficult task: to make into a coherent and readable narrative biography, theology, and political context. Ivereigh does it well. The book made me realize that our current pope has faced many sorrows in his life and that his great call to mercy is based on his personal knowledge of humankind and great faith. I have purchased two copies of this book to circulate among friends.

This is the best book on Pope Francis that I've read. It illustrates how profoundly immersed he is with "the people." He is truly a man whose ministry is "from below." Ivereigh illustrates time and again how the "discernment of spirits," steeped in the Gospels, is the fundamental template for Francis' decision making. So, it's no wonder he is doing and saying things contrary to a ministry "from above" and based on ideology (read here Pope JohnPaul and Benedict) rather than the Jesus of the Gospels. I found the book to be the best "retreat" experience I've had in a long time.

This is a well written and impeccably well researched book about the newest Catholic Pope, Francis. It is the story of a young man taught and formed by the Jesuit order, then shunned when he followed his spiritual call to cultivate his life after Jesus Christ, and prayer. It gives real hope to many millions of Catholics, who have been praying for reformation for years. With central beliefs of love and mercy, and LISTENING to God's holy people, the poor, destitute, and broken hearted, there is real hope for a Universal Church.

This is a good biography. Particularly useful is the first chapter which delves deeply into the historical background of Argentina. The political situation gets a little hard to grasp, but the essence is the manner in which Francis is able to deal with political allies and foes in a gentle pastoral manner. This is what we need right now.

I started reading this book on Pope Francis prior to his visits to Cuba and the US. I was moved to read more about this pope after reading his encyclical letter on "Caring for our Common Home" where he equates the destruction of wildlife and natural ecosystems as a moral issue as, in his view, these are all of God's creatures and should be cared for and protected rather than exploited and degraded. I am not a Catholic nor a Christian (essentially non-religious) but still find the Pope's life of great interest and his message of critical importance as we humans collectively verge on making planet Earth inhospitable to life, including humans.

An outstanding book...across the sweeping background of modern Argentina the reader gradually senses the development of a man who knows his place, not only in the history of his native land but in the developing history of the world and the Catholic Church. Rather than a 'great reformer' one senses in the pages that he is a contemporary prophet, driven by the Spirit.

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