Q: Why is Pope Francis’s visit so historic?
1:01 He has a genuinely warm personality. Many people who were fans of Pope John Paul II like Pope Francis because they have a similar presence to the public. And when Francis first came out after the conclave and asked for people to pray for him, we knew there was something different about him. His humility is really attractive.

Q: How is Pope Francis changing Catholicism?
1:54 Pope Francis is changing the public face of the Church. And bringing an interior warmth to it. He is not changing Catholic Doctrine he is changing what the Church places emphasis. He’s not going to change the creed. He’s not advocating for women as priests or bishops. Maybe as deacons. What he is changing is emphases, especially on mercy. This is something has not been emphasized a lot in the past 25 years.

Q: As someone who works at a Jesuit school, can you please explain how Pope Francis’s background as a Jesuit affected his Papacy?
3:48 (restarts answer, so take second response) There are two ways Pope Francis’ Jesuit background have affected his papacy. The first is how he views himself and the larger world. He perceives himself as a sinner. He’s working out of a particular religious practice called the Examen. This is looking for God in all things during the day. And at the end of the day, asking where was God there. So for Francis, there is always room for improvement.

Q: What about his Jesuit lifestyle makes his papacy and leadership different compared to previous popes?
4:45 I think he’s different precisely because he sees himself as a sinner in need of improvement. If you see yourself in need of improvement, you cannot be harsh to other people. He has to be merciful, and his code of
honor says he has to be merciful toward others if he wants others to be merciful to him.

Q: I know you study women and the Church, so let me ask you some questions about that.

Have any of Pope Francis’s controversial statements such as the recent, temporary change he made to the abortion/reconciliation policy affected his popularity? What does that same policy change say about Pope Francis’s views on women in the church?

5:38 His proclamation on abortion is part of a year of mercy. So what he wants to do is to recognize that for many women, abortion is a complex issue—one that they may not be happy with, one that weighed on them. And he wants them to realize that although they may technically be excommunicated, the Church wants to welcome them back as quickly as possible. That’s about mercy. And it has caused conflict...

7:00 His changes on abortion are not changes in doctrine. Pope Francis and the Church are still Pro-Life. He still sees abortion as a sin. Some women have seen this welcoming back in a welcoming light.

How and why is Pope Francis trying to change the system of annulment within the Church? How are American Catholics reacting to this change?

815 What Pope Francis wants to change the procedure, not change the insolubility of marriage, to make the process for annulment more streamlined. Normally if someone is granted an annulment at the local level, it is automatically appealed to a second diocese, where there has to be a confirmation. He wants to get rid of the appeals court to make the process faster for couples.

Q: With all of these changes that Pope Francis is making to policy, is he changing Catholic Doctrine as well?

9:10 Pope Francis is the bishop of Rome, there for he cannot and will not unilaterally change Catholic Doctrine. We’re not going to see him saying Christ is not in the Eucharist. We’re not going to see him say that divorce is okay. He is putting emphasis on different areas of the Church such as the year of mercy, such as his reconciling people who have had abortions or annulments not quickly.
Q: Who is Blessed Junipero Serra, and why is there so much controversy around his canonization?

10:04 Serra was a Franciscan missionary to Mexico and then California. As a Franciscan missionary, his main goal was to save souls, to baptize and save the natives; Serra and the civil administration of upper and lower California could not imagine someone being part of the church, part of the Spanish realm, and not being settled in the city. So once they were baptized, native Americans in California were confined to mission territory, even if the rest of their family was outside the mission. If they tried to run away, they were brought back and punished. Serra tried to mitigate punishments, tried to keep the Spanish soldiers from preying on native Americans. The Pope will be explaining the question whom and for what is he a model. He is a model for spirituality? Why lift up the life of this controversial Franciscan now?

Q: What might the Pope discuss when he addresses the UN?

12:41 One of the themes Pope Francis will touch on will be similar to Pope Paul VI’s speech to the UN of “Never again War.” In recent speeches, Francis has been echoing that. However, today, war is more than just a clash between nations. The issue of war is much more complex than it was in the 1960s. And I think he’s going to go for the complexity of war and economic issues, No longer is war envisioned as a clash between two nations over territory or mineral riches. It’s seen in a much bigger context of access to water, the difference between the top one percent and the bottom 20 percent. It’s seen in the access to fertile land—it’s seen and in terms of migration. So the issue of war is much more complex than it was in the 1960s.

Q: How do you think this visit to the United States will be different than when other popes visited the US?

13:40 This papal visit will be different because Pope Francis brings a different personality, with a person that recognizes that the US Catholic Church is becoming more Hispanic. He’ll be speaking mostly in Spanish.

Q: What can we expect from the Pope’s address to Congress? Do you think his address will affect American politics in any way?

14:40 I think John Boehner is going to be very embarrassed that he invited the Pope because the Pope may not deliver a message the Republicans will be comfortable with. It will be about taking care of people at the margins. It
will be about involving lifting up those people and making for a more united States. It will be about the US as a world leader with real responsibilities. And I think this will polarize the US as it moves to the 2016 elections.

Q: Do you think that Pope Francis’s speech will have a big impact on the 2016 Presidential elections?

15:40 I think it will be immediate, but how fast it will fades depends on who takes up the message., and how that message is taken up.

Q: Do you think Democrats will like Pope Francis’ address or do you think he may say some things the Democrats do not believe in as well?

16:00 In the Democratic Party, there are people who will be most uncomfortable with what Francis has to say--like those who are in favor of Superpacs.. There are people who will take up themes from what Francis says and mix them in with their own themes.

Q: Is there anything you wanted to discuss that you think it is import that I might have missed?

17:00 Pope Francis places a heavy emphasis on Marian devotion. He mainly thinks of himself as the Bishop of Rome, not the Pope. Where ever he has gone on visits overseas, he has taken visits to Marian shines.