Fact Sheet: How Pope Francis Differs From Predecessors

Who He Is:
- Refuses to wear ermine-lines capes like other popes.
- Refuses to ride in bulletproof Mercedes limousine. Takes the bus.
- Calls himself “Bishop of Rome.”
- Speaks casually.
- Doesn’t live in the Apostolic Palace, but in a guest house. Dines in its cafeteria.
- First Latin American Pope.
- Before becoming a priest, worked as a bouncer at club.
- Makes point of doing things for himself.
- Priority is service to the poor.

What he’s done:
- First to use term “gay,” rather than “homosexual” or “those suffering from same-sex attraction,” reflecting a different attitude toward the LGBT community than his predecessors. “Certainly many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender Catholics have found a lot of solace and sorts of things with all Pope Francis has had to say,” explains J. Patrick Hornbeck II, Associate Professor of Theology at Fordham University. “His line, ‘who am I to judge?’ has led many people to believe
that he does support same-sex marriage or at least civil unions for same-sex people.

- Stated to transform the Synod of Bishops (the advisory body for the Pope) to decision-making body, not a ceremonial rubber stamp.
- Personally contacts people through letters and phone calls.
- Is changing the way the Church relates to women who have had abortions. Pope Francis and the Church are still Pro-Life; however he wants to make it easier for women who have had an abortion and to be forgiven for doing so. “It has always been the case that a priest could forgive women in confession near the time of her death if she had had an abortion,” explains Hornbeck. “The Pope said that when women are in these circumstances they should not have to go through an additional level of bureaucracy in order to access the forgiveness of the Church. So I think one of the things that we’re seeing here is the Pope being consistent on a message that he’s emphasized since he was elected. Which is one of the most important things Christians believe about God is that God is a God of mercy. And that God wouldn’t want to put too many barriers in the way of people experiencing the mercy of God.”
- Washed the feet of laity on Holy Thursday vs. just feet of priests.
- Initiated new programs to assist the homeless in Rome.
- Has support from non-Catholics, according to Brenna Moore, Associate Professor at Fordham “Pope Francis has returned to the humanistic style characteristic of the Second Vatican Council, keeping the message focused on people on the margins of society in a joyful, loving way that draws people in. So many of his actions are about connections beyond the Church walls,” she says.

**Statistics:**
Has been phenomenally popular, garnering approval ratings of over 90 percent in the USA.

The latest surveys show the Pope has an approval rating of over 67 percent amongst Americans of all religions, and over 90 percent amongst Catholics, according to latest surveys.

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