

Books view Pope Francis from varied perspectives

REVIEWED BY ALLAN F. WRIGHT
CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE

"POPE FRANCIS: LIFE AND REVOLUTION" BY ELISABETTA PIQUE. Loyola Press (Chicago, 2014). 312 pp., \$22.95.

"FIORETTI: THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF POPE FRANCIS" BY ANDREA TORNIELLI. Ignatius Press (San Francisco, 2014). 185 pp., \$16.85.

"THE SPIRIT OF ST. FRANCIS: INSPIRING WORDS FROM POPE FRANCIS," EDITED BY ALICIA VON STAMWITZ. Franciscan Media (Cincinnati, 2015). 179 pp., \$19.99.

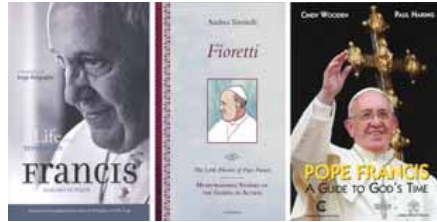
"POPE FRANCIS: A GUIDE TO GOD'S TIME" BY CINDY WOODEN AND PAUL HARING. Catholic News Service (Washington, 2014). 120 pp., \$21.95

Elisabetta Pique, an internationally respected journalist, had an inside track into the lifestyle and manner of leadership Pope Francis exhibits because of her personal and familial relationship with him years before he was elected pope. Her friendship with the current pontiff began in 2001 when she was acquainted with then-Archbishop Bergoglio as a reporter for Argentina's main newspaper, *La Nacion*.

Pique's "Pope Francis: Life and Revolution: A Biography of Jorge Bergoglio" gives an insider's perspective into the man who would become pope. The author introduces you to "Padre Jorge" and allows you to walk with him through various stages of his life, putting you in St. Peter's Square as he is elected pope.

It is said that the Holy Father thinks like a Jesuit and acts like St. Francis and the reader can easily distinguish these similarities throughout her biography. The pope remains a poor man for the poor no matter the level of hierarchy he rises to, even the papacy, a man true to himself and to Jesus Christ whom he serves.

The most fascinating sections of this book deal with the inner workings of the Roman Curia and the challenges the pope faces in dealing with corruption. To those who view the Catholic Church through rose-colored glasses, the level of dishon-



esty and vice within the church and those who govern and lead will be shocking. Sex scandals, financial corruption and questions of a "gay mafia" are treated head on with full transparency.

(In July 2013, Pope Francis was asked about reports of a gay lobby at the Vatican protecting certain priests by threatening to blackmail others. According to a Catholic News Service report, the pope said he was aware of such reports but emphasized the need to "distinguish between a person who is gay and someone who makes a gay lobby. A gay lobby isn't good.")

The reader of Pique's book needs to be prepared for some sudden shifts as the author tells her compelling story of this man in short sequences and not always as a fluid documentary. Her friendship with Pope Francis provides insight to a simple, humble, strong and steady leader who would be the first to tell you that he is a sinner.

Andrea Tornielli's book, "Fioretti," offers inspiring stories, encounters and excerpts from the writings and talks of Pope Francis through his first year as pope. The title echoes the "Little Flowers of St. Francis," the famous collection of stories about St. Francis of Assisi, whose name the pope adopted for himself.

Cynics may decry Pope Francis' leadership style, his breaking with tradition, his speaking off the cuff so his words are misunderstood or mistranslated by the media. Yet his actions and love for Jesus, the poor and those who are forgotten cannot be mistaken. The personal stories of his desire to be treated not as a prince of the church but as a fellow disciple inspire and call the reader to reflection and conversion.

These stories hone in on spiritual and social themes which are important to Pope Francis and those which he has "put on flesh" during his pontificate. Mercy, forgiveness, charity, prayer, justice, the Eucharist, Our Lady and many more themes are examined through the words and writings of Francis and by the reflection of Tornielli.

"The Spirit of St. Francis: Inspiring Words from Pope Francis" is a collection of quotes from Pope Francis. In a short period of time, this shepherd who came from the ends of the earth has managed to transmit to us the joy of the Gospel through simple words and profound gestures that have moved many to take up their cross and to follow Jesus in simplicity. The book offers the words of Pope Francis as delivered in his Angelus addresses, daily homilies, general audiences and brief Tweets, containing messages that are uplifting, challenging and spiritual. An excellent book for those who desire inspiration for each day.

CNS Vatican correspondent Cindy Wooden and photographer Paul Haring have put together the words of Pope Francis with compelling photographs taken within the Holy Father's brief pontificate through which the reader can glimpse the heart of the man who leads the Catholic Church by word and deed. In "Pope Francis: A Guide to God's Time," the author provides an overview of the liturgical year and offers an introduction to the biblical themes Pope Francis sees as being most important.

This beautifully illustrated book offers more than just outstanding photographs for it delves into the heart of the good news which can be found in mercy, forgiveness, love and in an encounter with Jesus Christ.

Also of interest: "Reflections from Pope Francis: An Invitation to Journaling, Prayer and Action" by Susan Stark and Daniel J. Pierson. Tarcher/Penguin (New York, 2015). 293 pp., \$15.95.

"Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives" by Cardinal Walter Kasper. Paulist Press (Mahwah, New Jersey, 2015). 128 pp., \$16.95.

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Bishop hopes 'fictional memoir' has appeal for Catholics, non-Catholics

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WASHINGTON— "I'm no author," averred retired Bishop Francis A. Quinn of Sacramento.

Well, he is now.

Bishop Quinn, at age 93, has become a first-time author, telling his life story in what he termed a "fictional memoir," chronicling the lives of three priests from their days in a high school seminary in "Behind Closed Doors: Conflicts in Today's Church."

Anyone interested in buying it online shouldn't look for "Bishop" in the author's name. Instead, he used Francis Anthony Quinn.

In a telephone interview with Catholic News Service from the assisted-living facility in Sacramento where he lives, Bishop Quinn said, laughing, "I figured it ('bishop') would draw some people but scare others off; they think it's going to be a religious book. And it could scare off non-Catholics, people of other faiths, thinking this was just going to be a Catholic book."

The three main characters are David Carmichael, wanting to be well-liked but quiet and unsure of himself; Ladd Franklin, a restless, questioning sort who eschews parish ministry for Catholic Relief Services; and Tyler Stone, who is accused of sexual misconduct near the end of his priestly ministry.

Bishop Quinn said there's "50 or 60 percent" of himself in the character of Carmichael — the only one who, like him, is ordained a bishop — about 50 percent in the Franklin character, as Bishop Quinn himself served many years overseas with CRS, but only about 10 percent in the character of Stone, putting Stone's upbringing in Tucson, Arizona, on a parallel with his own. The bishop hastened to say he had never, unlike Stone's character, been accused of any sexual misconduct during his priestly ministry.



The dramatic tension in "Behind Closed Doors" comes courtesy of the Caprice family. There's Msgr. Gordon Caprice, the super-smart and super-skilled seminarian who becomes a chancery big shot; his sister, Willow, who has an unrequited love for Ladd Franklin and becomes a career Foreign Service officer ("the relationship with Willow is strictly fictional," he said); and their father, George,

head of a group called Guardians of Doctrine — GOD for short — ready to pounce upon any pastoral, theological or liturgical abuse, real or imagined, and protest it to the highest levels necessary.

The book's chronology begins in the years before World War II, although not much time is spent on the war because, at Bishop Quinn's fictional seminary, students weren't allowed to listen to the radio. It ends decades later, with the appointment of a new archbishop for the make-believe Archdiocese of San Tomas.

While written as fiction, the characters are "based on reality, people that I've known, or priests and bishops that I've known," Bishop Quinn told CNS. "Those things like the visit to Russia and the visit to the Philippines, being awakened in the middle of the night with a gun at my head and a flashlight in my eyes, that really happened, but the chase through Argentina and Brazil with someone trying to recapture that tape, that's fiction. I was down in those countries but not for any purpose other than helping out at CRS."

Apart from the fictionalized elements of "Behind Closed Doors," "there are homilies in there that I wanted to intersperse in the story, hoping that people who read it as a novel would get some infor-

mation about the church," Bishop Quinn said. "It probably slows up the narrative, but they (readers) can skip over that and follow the novel part."

Bishop Quinn said he wrote the book over a six-year period after he retired as Sacramento's bishop in 1993 and did mission work among American Indians in Arizona. "I had a lot of time on my hands," he said.

He spent more than a dozen years traveling from reservation to reservation in a recreational vehicle given to him by priests of the Sacramento diocese. In 2007, he returned to his native California.

As bishop, he was known for his one-on-one ministry with the poor in Sacramento, sharing words and perhaps some money with the homeless, serving free meals or washing dishes at a soup kitchen, and visiting migrant labor camps in the summer.

The concept for the book, as well as its title, came from Bishop Quinn's idea that "I thought it would be good to aim it at Catholics to learn what priests do besides Sunday Mass." He said he thinks "an ordinary Catholic doesn't realize what a priest does most of the week. I thought that would be good for them to know. And then for people of all faiths, to know what Catholics believe and what the church is all about."

Any royalties from "Behind Closed Doors" will be directed to the Quinn Cottages, a facility named after the bishop that shelters homeless people, newly released prisoners and those just out of drug rehabilitation for up to two years while they look for work.

Don't expect any author tour. At his age, Bishop Quinn said, he is "limited to a wheelchair and walker" to get around the assisted living facility, which is run by the Sisters of Mercy.

In fact, the head of a Guardians of Doctrine-like group is a fellow resident. "We're real buddies now," Bishop Quinn said.