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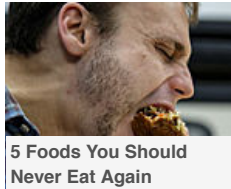


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# The Francis factor: Pope's economic ideas rattle GC



By **KATIE GLUECK** | 12/25/13 6:10 AM EST Updated: 12/25/13 2:10

He draws crowds like a rock star, was named “Year” by Time as well as a gay rights magazine ire of Rush Limbaugh for his criticism of “trickle economics. Pope Francis has dramatically shifted message and tone of the Vatican in the last nine months he’s forcing Republicans in Washington to reassess their relationship with the Catholic church.

For years, Catholic leaders’ staunch and very public opposition to abortion, gay marriage and the contraceptive provisions of Obamacare made them anathema to the GOP. But Francis has scrambled the equation by emphasizing hot-button social issues, warning

unchecked capitalism and pushing a populist message at odds with the core of the anti-spending, anti-big government Republican Party.

It’s unclear whether Francis’s proclamations will fray the ties between the right and the Vatican, but already some conservatives have sharply criticized his economic ideas. At the same time, some on the right have expressed admiration for the 77-year-old pope’s more inclusive approach, including on subjects such as homosexuality. Their praise comes as the GOP itself grapples with disenchantment among young people and other demographics for its strident tone on social issues.

“His economic perspective I’m not particularly enamored with, but his advocacy for the poor, his lifestyle example, his outlook on social issues — I’ve been very impressed,” said Sen. John McCain, the Arizona Republican.

(Also on POLITICO: Pope Francis is Time's "Person of the Year" (<http://www.politico.com/story/2013/12/time-man-pope-francis-101003.html>) )

Last month, Francis blasted “trickle-down” economics as an “opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power.” He also criticized the “idolatry of money

capitalism as “a new tyranny.”

Conservative radio host Limbaugh **slammed**

([http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2013/11/27/it\\_s\\_sad\\_how\\_wrong\\_pope\\_francis\\_is\\_unless\\_it\\_s\\_a\\_deliberate\\_mistrans](http://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2013/11/27/it_s_sad_how_wrong_pope_francis_is_unless_it_s_a_deliberate_mistrans)) the comments as “pure Marxism” and other commentators on the right also vehemently disagreed with the pope’s **derided** (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/12/04/pope-francis-is-catholic-churchs-obama-god-help-us/>) Francis as Church’s Obama.” Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, a tea party darling, said Francis had made “some statements the kind of liberal,” though she later walked back that assessment.

(Also on POLITICO: **Pope's Christmas wish: hope for a better world** (<http://www.politico.com/story/2013/12/christfrancis-101528.html>) )

In an interview with an Italian outlet, Francis replied to his critics: “The Marxist ideology is wrong,” he said. “But I have Marxists in my life who are good people, so I don’t feel offended.”

Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.), who grew up attending Catholic school and graduated from the University of Notre Dame’s POLITICO that he disagreed with the pope’s economic message. He considers the phrase “trickle-down” to be a “pe  
“like some liberal speechwriter stuck it in.” But he also argued that the pope’s message should be considered in a br

(PHOTOS: **Jorge Bergoglio elected Pope Francis** (<http://href.li/?http://www.politico.com/gallery/2013/03/cardinals-gassistine-chapel-to-elect-a-new-pope/000869-012323.html>) )

“I genuinely believe...supply-side economics does more to help people come out of poverty, move up in the world .. other hand, we shouldn’t be dwelling on wealth,” King said. “The guidance I’d take from this is, when I support conservative economics, I should do it in a way that helps the most people.”

King also praised Francis for signaling a more accepting outlook on gay people.

(From POLITICO Magazine: **The biggest overlooked trends of 2013** (<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/trends-of-2013-101491.html>) )

When asked about gay priests last summer, the pope **responded** (<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/30/world/europe/priests.html?pagewanted=all>) , “If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?” was **highlighted** (<http://www.advocate.com/year-review/2013/12/16/advocates-person-year-pope-francis>) in the influential magazine The Advocate. It named Francis its “Person of the Year,” noting that as the leader of 1.2 billion Roman Catholics the world, “what he says makes a difference.”

Observers said Francis’s understated approach to polarizing social issues represents a sharp break with his predecessors Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II, though the newest pontiff hasn’t altered church doctrine on those issues.

(Also on POLITICO: **Joel Osteen: Pope Francis more 'inclusive'** (<http://www.politico.com/blogs/politico-live/2013/12/francis-more-inclusive-180104.html>) )

His inclusive outlook may have played a role in his decision to remove Cardinal Raymond Burke from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, an influential Vatican organization. Burke, an outspoken conservative, in 2004 signaled he would deny communion to Catholic running for president at the time, because of his support for abortion rights.

Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), who is Catholic, downplayed the furor in some conservative circles over Francis, who was elected in March.

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