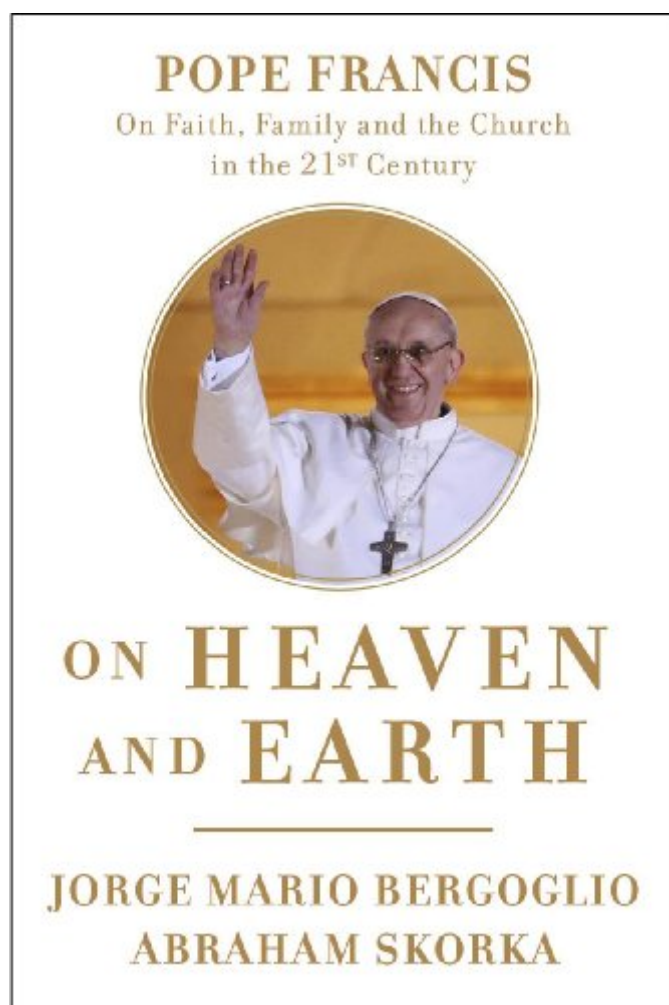


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# On Heaven And Earth: Pope Francis On Faith, Family, And The Church In The Twenty-First Century



## Synopsis

From the man who became Pope Francis, Jorge Mario Bergoglio shares his thoughts on religion, reason, and the challenges the world faces in the 21st century with Abraham Skorka, a rabbi and biophysicist. For years Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, archbishop of Argentina, and Rabbi Abraham Skorka were tenacious promoters of interreligious dialogues on faith and reason. They both sought to build bridges among Catholicism, Judaism, and the world at large. *On Heaven and Earth*, originally published in Argentina in 2010, brings together a series of these conversations where both men talked about various theological and worldly issues, including God, fundamentalism, atheism, abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, and globalization. From these personal and accessible talks comes a first-hand view of the man who would become pope to 1.2 billion Catholics around the world in March 2013.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I received this book in the mail yesterday and I am almost finished with it. It is a series of

conversations between then-Cardinal Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, and a Rabbi of the area named Abraham Skorka. They discuss frankly and respectfully many different topics including Interreligious Dialogue, the Holocaust, Abortion, Same-Sex Marriage, Nationalism, and many more. However, the theme that seems to be a constant in the book is an honest evaluation of religious leaders and institutions in general, with each author often times pointing out how those who speak in the name of God can be more of a hindrance than a help to true religion. It is certainly a call for purification of religious sensibilities among all believers, but especially among the pastors of the flock. I am a Catholic, and I must admit that the only reason I purchased this book was to learn more about the personality and opinions of our new Pope. I even started the book by skipping over all of Skorka's comments, just to focus on Pope Francis' words. But occasionally I would glance at Skorka's comments and I began to realize that they were fascinating and profound in their own right. His knowledge of Talmudic lore or Jewish folk stories (such as the story of the Golem of Prague) was extremely interesting. For someone not well versed in Jewish theology, it was a delight to learn more about this religion. It is evident from these conversations that Judaism can enrich Christian thought and vice-versa. I recommend this book as a good introduction to the personality of Pope Francis, but also as a fascinating encounter between two of the great world religions. It failed to achieve the full five-star rating because although it is a good book, it is not a great book. It is casual in tone, with each author sometimes getting slightly off topic, and does not always delve as deep as one would like into the issues. However, these flaws are not unusual among this genre of writing.

There is so much misinformation circulating about what Pope Francis believes on various hot-button issues, and this book lets you find the truth easily, since each chapter covers a different topic. The book is a dialogue between him and a Rabbi, so it is fascinating to see all the points of agreement between the two men, and, of course, the areas where their beliefs diverge. They discuss the devil, the reality of sin and other theological topics, along with social issues such as feminism, homosexuality, the importance of the traditional family, and many others. A good read!

This book chronicles conversations between Rabbi Abraham Skorka and Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, both leading religious figures in Buenos Aires and partners in fostering religious dialogue in Argentina. In 2010 their conversations were recorded and published by Random House Mondadori. After the 2013 election of Jorge Bergoglio as Bishop of Rome (with the name Pope Francis), the book was translated into English. The friendship between Skorka and Bergoglio becomes obvious from the first pages. In an easy, confidential manner, the two discuss a wide

range of topics - many of them hot-button issues - with discernment and great openness. As the English-language subtitle indicates, their conversations revolve around themes of Faith and Family. For anyone wishing to understand the Church as seen by Pope Francis, this volume offers an opportunity to get a close look at Church and Synagogue, faith and culture, in the contemporary world. Not surprisingly, many of the teachings of Pope Francis from 2013 until today are already expressed in this 2010 inter-religious conversation. The style is direct and conversational, and the give-and-take between the rabbi and the archbishop invites religious and non-religious people alike to continue the dialogue with respect, depth and even affection for fellow seekers of wisdom in today's environment.

First, it is well written/the dialogue is intelligent and thoughtful. It touches on many of the problems in our society/culture in a mature way. It clearly shows the approach of Catholic and Jewish thought and shows how close we are to one another.

If anyone wants to know better Pope Francis, this is a wonderful book to do it. Since John Paul II, I realized that, for a Catholic, when someone is chosen to be Pope, his thoughts and way of living is probably what God wants for the Catholic Church at that moment in time. This is why it was important for me to read this book. It is a dialogue between Jorge Bergoglio (Pope Francis) and Rabbi Abraham Skorka expressing a true inter-religious friendship that is an inspiring testimony for the world. Considering that it is written in a conversational tone, it brings a more personal touch to the significant amount of themes that make this dialogue a very interesting one. Their insights are intrinsically linked with their life experience, and can be understood by anyone regardless of one's beliefs. What does Pope Francis think about atheists? What about fundamentalists? How does he view the role of women in the church and society? And what about celibacy? What is the right relation with the people? What is the origin of his actions as a Pope? How does he see someone with the Pope's responsibilities before having been chosen to be the Pope!? Where does the power of the Church reside? How do they view the religion of the future? Will there be room for one? The topics are vast and the scope is universal. It almost seems that no difficult theme is left unspoken. Definitely worth reading.

This is beyond great. I bought it, bought it for a friend who bought it in Spanish for someone, and then I recommended it to a prayer group many of whose members bought it for Christmas gifts. The authors stress they wrote it for content but also importantly to show people how to have interfaith

dialogue without contradicting, arguing. Skorka and Bergoglio are two smart, charming, men with facility for their subjects, The book gives us a window onto those educated and holy minds as they approach a couple dozen interesting and sometimes challenging topics. Should be a primer.

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