

Rev. Dana Eilers, lawyer

On Pope Francis

October 2015

First, should Pagans be concerned with the Pope religiously and/or spiritually? No. The Catholic Church and its doctrine are no friends of ours and never have been. Recent niceties are just that: nice. However, according to Church doctrine, we Pagans are not going to enjoy the benefits of a joyful and blissful life after death. So, other than enjoying the pageantry of the rituals over which the Pope presides, I don't see any reason to give a fig or two for the religion and spiritual ideas that the Pope, as the infallible Vicar of Christ and supreme head of the Catholic church, promotes and asserts.

Second, should Pagans be concerned with the Pope politically? This depends on one's politics and whether one believes that the Pope can move the political needle anywhere. This might be possible in countries that are predominantly Catholic and which lean toward keeping their civil law in line with Church canon, but that is certainly not the United States. So, does the Pope affect American politics? There is one issue where this could be possible, and that is climate change. As a scientist, with an actual degree and everything, the Pope's commentary on the earth's climate is a breath of fresh air. Will the American politicians breathe it? Highly doubtful. However, the current Pope is definitely a cause for consternation for certain politicians, lobbyists, political donors, and for the Republican party. Personally, I don't think that the current Pope is going to affect American politics to any great extent. However, the reaction which he engenders among the Republicans, in particular, is rather amusing. So, there is a certain amount of entertainment value here.

Third, should Pagans be concerned with this Pope from a historical viewpoint? Well, he did come and address the United States Congress. This was a first and therefore, it was pretty big news, but it has already occurred. It is over and done with besides, Netanyahu did do it first. Speaker of the House John Boehner was the driving force behind getting the Pope here to address Congress and then, the Pontiff gave out a lot of opinions which were not exactly in the Speaker's political platform. Shortly thereafter, Speaker Boehner announced his plans to surrender the Speakership and retire from Congress completely. Coincidence? So, this Pope does seem to be having an concrete impact on modern history. Therefore, yes, we should pay attention, if only for this.

Fourth and finally, should Pagans be concerned with this Pope from a cultural viewpoint? He commands more media attention than Hurricane Katrina and although I have no need to know whom he kisses while en route to mass, this is apparently a matter of great concern to our media. He is everywhere on television, in print, and on the internet. It would be wise to follow news of the Pope, if only marginally, because he is saying some things that sound really wonderful, even if he is not changing Church doctrine. He is thanking nuns, but women still are not admitted into the Priesthood and are not in line to become part of the Church power structure. Yet, thanking nuns and lay women for their work is, apparently, a big deal. Watching Church spectacle will continue to be a sausage festival. As a feminist and Goddess worshiper, I find this backward and ridiculous. In this aspect, the Church remains primitive. Furthermore, this Pope does not feel that he, personally, can judge homosexuals, but

homosexual marriage is still not sanctified by the Church. He is going to form a tribunal to investigate the pedophiles in the Priesthood, but so what? What do we think is going to happen? The worst that could happen here is that the Church might defrock the pedophiles, but will the Church turn over its information to the civil authorities and rat out the pedophiles in its midst so that they can be taken into custody and criminally prosecuted? This is highly doubtful because the God of the Catholic Church is still the Supreme Being. Finally, according to this Pope, dogs might actually have souls and thus, enjoy the after life with us poor, miserable humans. This seems to be big news to the Pope, but we Pagans have pretty much known this since Man domesticated the wolf. And we will not even discuss cats.