***Upon This Rock***

**by**

**Chris Knowles**

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ISBN: 1511699779

ISBN-13: 978-1511699778

All characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance to real persons,

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**Chapter One**

Billy Caldwell and Max Levinson were business partners, referred to as the “Odd Couple”, in the corporate world of the fastest growing industry in America; “Green Energy” technology. Max grew up on the Lower East Side and had earned a full scholarship to New York University's prestigious Stern School of Business named for Leonard N. Stern, an American businessman and real estate developer. At the last minute Max had changed his mind and, with only days left before the submission deadline, transmitted his application to the Marriott School of Management at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. He would major in Management with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship.

Billy Caldwell was born and raised in Orem, Utah, less than seven miles from the BYU campus. After an illustrious high school career, both in the classroom and on the football field, Billy applied to the “Y” to major in Applied Physics with a concentration in Microelectronics and Semiconductor Devices.

Caldwell and Levinson's paths did not cross until their Junior years in 2009. Billy had become fascinated with the entire concept of “Green Energy” and the production of electricity without the need to burn fossil fuels, a non-renewable resource. He had developed several ideas which he thought worthy of exploration, but he did not possess the expertise in the arena of marketing to get those ideas in front of investors. One evening he decided to go to the monthly meeting of what was called BYU's Entrepreneurs Club. After chowing down on the club's free refreshments and listening to the month's guest speaker, he ran into Max Levinson during the “networking” portion of the program.

Billy had envisioned ways in which he could improve upon the technologies currently used in the fabrication of photovoltaic cells, but did not have a way to get his message out. Max, on the other hand, was looking for a viable product to market. He had learned his “salesmanship” skills at the knee of his father, Saul, who was a successful hedge fund manager back in Manhattan. Though there was not a drop of Irish blood to be found in him, and he had most certainly never kissed the Blarney Stone, Max had been blessed with the “gift of gab” and could spin a story guaranteed to catch the fancy of any prospective investor.

After the Entrepreneurs Club meeting broke up, Billy and Max had made their way to the food court, called COUGAREAT, in the Wilkinson Student Center. They each grabbed a large cup of coffee and then retired to quiet corner.

Billy explained to Max, in more detail, his thoughts about Green Energy. At first Max was skeptical. He wondered to himself if Billy was a so-called “tree hugger” or, worse yet, an environmental activist. But as he listened it became apparent that Billy had thought this thing through. His studies in applied physics, along with the requisite courses in chemistry, had brought him to several fundamental conclusions. First, that photovoltaic cells, better known as solar panels, could be redesigned to increase efficiency. Second, that Provo was situated in one of the areas of the country with the highest insolation values for the years 1998 through 2009. Insolation values represent the solar resource available to a flat plate collector, such as a photovoltaic panel, oriented due south at an angle from horizontal to equal to the latitude of the collector location. And, finally, that Utah county, in which Provo was located, along with adjoining Juab County, were home to some of the richest mines in the nation for those minerals necessary to construct solar cells.

By far the single greatest component of a solar cell is silicon which is not naturally occurring. It is derived from quartz. The silicon semiconductor is then encased in a glass covering attached to metal frame of steel or aluminum. Finally, the electronic parts are relatively standardized and consist mostly of copper. Utah County was home to in excess of one-hundred mines; adjacent Juab County in excess of one-hundred and fifty. And nearly every one produced copper and/or quartz. They were going to school in solar panel heaven.

Max had sat in silence while his new-found geek friend had spoken. Only when Billy was done did Max speak up.

“Billy,” said Max, “we are sitting on a green energy goldmine, if you'll pardon the mixed metaphor. You know how to design the cells, machines already exist which know how to fabricate them, and we've got easy access to the metals necessary to construct them. Even if we can't reduce the actual cost of putting the pieces together, building a more efficient cell with readily available minerals should put us ahead of the competition in terms of our return on investment, or ROI. And we're in one of the sunniest spots in the country enjoying direct sunlight nearly year round.”

“Max,” said Billy, “you're probably familiar with something called *Moore's Law* with respect to computers. Gordon E. Moore, founder of both Intel Corporation and Fairchild Semiconductor, observed that, over the history of computing hardware, the number of transistors in a dense integrated circuit has doubled approximately every two years. This has meant that prices will continue to go down while productivity continues to increase.

“In the realm of solar panels there is a similar maxim called *Swanson's Law*. The Law is named after Richard Swanson, the founder of SunPower Corporation, a solar panel manufacturer. It is an observation that the price of solar photovoltaic cells tend to drop twenty percent for every doubling of cumulative shipped volume. At the time he made his observation, costs were halving about every ten years. But now, with power company incentives and government subsidies to consumers, crystalline silicon photovoltaic cell prices have fallen from $76.67 per watt in 1977 to $1.00 per watt in 2009.”

“Then time's a wastin'” said Max. “You and I have got to get out in front of this wave. Otherwise we'll just get left in its wake.”

The dynamic tension between Billy's Mormon conservatism and Max's Jewish *chutzpah* was like a tug-of-war between two platoons of Marines. All of Billy's upbringing and instincts were telling him to go slow while Max's Wall Street mentality was telling him to move fast or miss the boat.

“So what shall we call this endeavor, Billy?”

“Hold on,” said Billy. “Not so fast. A coupla hours ago we'd just met. Now we're going into business together?”

“Look,” said Max. “In 1939 all Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard had in common were Electrical Engineering degrees from Stanford and a garage. In 1975 all Bill Gates and Paul Allen had was a passion for programming while Gates was a student at Harvard in Cambridge and Allen wrote code at Honeywell in Boston.

“You know how to design and build a better mousetrap. I know how to find the people with mice. Between us we can corner the market. So now I ask, for the second time, what shall we call this thing?”

“I dunno,” said Caldwell. “You know, I kinda figured I'd get my degree next year, then go to work for some high tech company for five or ten years and then, if I came up with a good idea, I'd see if anyone wanted to invest in it.”

“Ten years?” asked Max. “In ten years we might all be dead. Now, give me a name.”

“I never really thought about it. I've always thought of the earth and the sun working together. You know, kind of 'synergistically'? The other part's easy. We're talking about generating electricity. So, how about something like 'Synergistic Generating, Inc.?”

“Synergistic Generating, Inc. It's accurate, but it's not sexy.”

“Sexy? What do you mean 'sexy'?”

“If I'm going to market this idea to investors, I'm going to need a name that fascinates and intrigues them. Let's take the first syllable of the first word and the first syllable of the second word. That gives us 'Syn' and 'gen'; Syngen. But then, when we incorporate, we'd be Syngen, Inc. That sounds too stuffy. How about 'Syngenix'?”

“That sounds a little too New Age to me,” said Billy.

“It is a new age, Billy,” said Max. “I like it. I'll tell you what. Tomorrow morning I'll register the name with the Copyright Office in Washington before someone else takes it and then go looking for a workspace. Meet me here at the same time tomorrow and I'll let you know how I made out.”

\* \* \*

Before his first class the next day, Max got online and went to copyright.gov. He filled out all of the appropriate forms and charged the filing fee to his MasterCard. Moments later he received an email confirming that the name 'Syngenix' had been registered. After his last class of the day he went to the Physical Plant Office of the university. He told them he was looking for a vacant workspace, preferably one without any rent. He was told there was a small warehouse on the edge of campus. It had been leased to be used as a tool & die space for a federal grant awarded to the College of Engineering and Technology, but that the grant had run out while the lease had not. He was told he could use it, free of cost, for the remainder of the semester and the Summer, but that they would have to negotiate terms before the Fall Semester began. He took them up on their offer. Billy and Max were in business; they had a name and an office. Now all they needed were investors.

That evening Max and Billy met in the student center at the appointed time. Max told Billy about his progress and Billy was overwhelmed.

“Max, I've got to buckle down and study for finals. Then I've got an internship with a local solar panel installation company for the Summer to make some money. I won't be on campus regularly again until the Fall Semester starts. What are we going to do about Syngenix?”

“I'll tell you what,” said Max. “When I'm not in class or studying I be at the warehouse cleaning up. When the Summer comes I'll stick around rather than returning to Manhattan. I'll beg, borrow or steal what I can to furnish the office. You can come in in the evenings and on weekends to help out. In the evenings I'll get online and solicit investors. By Fall we may have some investment capital to get Syngenix off the ground.”

“Max, I don't know how you did it, and I don't know how you do it, but in less than 48 hours you've got us in business. Now all *I've* got to do is get us a product to market.”

“I've got faith in you, Billy. I've got faith.

**Chapter Two**

On the murky morning of Wednesday, February 27th, 2013, a wizened, gray-haired, 76-year old man rose from his coach seat, exited Alitalia Flight 681 from Buenos Aires, and entered Terminal 3 at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport. Clad in a black raincoat, wearing black orthopedic shoes and sporting brown, horn-rimmed glasses, he could have easily been mistaken for just another Argentinian businessman on an international business trip or pensioner making a long-awaited trip to Rome to visit the Vatican and tour the Coliseum and other local tourist attractions.

But this was Jorge Mario Bergoglio, one of the 115 cardinals from around the world who were converging upon the Vatican from six continents. In an unexpected announcement just over two weeks earlier, Pope Benedict XVI had announced his resignation as a result of “a lack of strength of mind and body” due to his advanced age. He would be the first Pope to resign in nearly 600 years. Benedict had succeeded John Paul II at the age of 78 to become the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

While originally a liberal theologian, Benedict XVI, formerly Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, had become more conservative after 1968. His writings defended traditional Catholic doctrine and values. As Pope, he advocated for a return to fundamental Christian values as a way to counter the move toward secularism in the West. He viewed relativism, the denial of objective truth, and the denial of fundamental moral truths as the greatest threat from within the Church itself. He also resurrected a number of long-forgotten, or abandoned, Catholic traditions. He was described by some as “the main intellectual force in the Church” since the mid-1980s. By others, for the 24 years he served as the Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he was called “the Pope's Rottweiler”. Upon his election as Pope he was greeted by some within the Church with elation and by others with resignation.

Cardinal Bergoglio was well known back in Argentina as a champion of the downtrodden and for his work in the teaming slums of Buenos Aires. Upon his appointment as the Archbishop of Buenos Aires he turned down moving to the elegant residence in Olivos, close to the presidential estate, and instead stayed on in his austere room in the city. He declined the car and driver which came with the position and continued to take the bus and subway. And he maintained his personal telephone line by which any priest in the archdiocese could reach him at any hour of the day or night to discuss a problem.

The Argentinian archbishop had made reservations at a hotel in the city center kept solely for priests. Housed in a 17th- and 18th-century stone *palazzo* that once served as a Jesuit college, the hotel was not extravagant. The floors were made of marble, but the rooms were spartanly furnished. Meals were served in self-serve fashion in a hall adorned with Biblically-themed paintings on the walls.

What had drawn the archbishop to the hotel was its location. There were nearby thoroughfares and cafes and it was across the Tiber River from Vatican City. That provided for long walks over cobblestone piazzas and bridges, past peddlers, street performers and throngs of tourists, on his way to and from the General Congregation, the secret deliberations being held inside the Vatican in the days leading up to the March 12th conclave. With his dark overcoat covering his pectoral cross, he was just another pedestrian in the crowd. Without his red cardinal's hat, his wispy white hair blew in the wind and rain.

Though Cardinal Bergoglio's name was not high profile, it had made the rounds. Even though he had drawn some support in 2005, in 2013 he was definitely a dark-horse candidate. There were a dozen or so more high profile cardinals regarded as papabili, or “popeables”, whose names were being circulated. They included Cardinals Timothy Dolan of New York and Angelo Scola of Milan.

The Italian cardinals were chauffeured to and from the Vatican in black Mercedes with Holy See license plates. They were greeted as "Your Eminence" whenever they set foot inside the city's best *trattorias*. The Americans rode around the city in white minivans and were all staying at the Pontifical North American College, a seminary on a hill above the Vatican.

Eight years earlier, when they gathered in the same room after the death of John Paul II, the cardinals were seeking a candidate who could guarantee doctrinal continuity with the late Polish pope. But Pope Benedict's resignation had left open the opportunity for discussion regarding the future of the Church. No subject was off the table, and the sense was that the cardinals were looking for a man who would not only put his personal stamp on the papacy but also bring the Church into the 21st century.

The deliberations turned to the biggest challenges facing the church - the rise of secular trends in Europe and the United States, the need to address the Church's shift in demographics toward the Southern hemisphere and the dysfunctional Vatican bureaucracy.

Veteran cardinals who had cast ballots for Cardinal Bergoglio in 2005 saw a chance to entertain his candidacy again. His earliest supporters - a coalition of cardinals from Latin America, Africa and Europe - viewed him as the consummate outsider. The challenge was getting Cardinal Bergoglio the 77 votes he needed, representing two-thirds of the conclave, to become pope. He would need votes from varied constituencies, including the so-called Ratzingerian bloc - cardinals who had already indicated their support for one of the two candidates closely associated with the German pope emeritus.

As a potential voting bloc inside the conclave, the Americans were powerful, outnumbered only by the Italians. They were initially divided over papal contenders.

All cardinals entering the General Congregation are required to swear an oath never to reveal its proceedings. However, while the atmosphere inside the Synod assembly hall was fine for broad debate over the future of the church, it was too formal - and porous - for the delicate matter of discussing actual candidates. When cardinals vote on a potential pope, they are not only voting for a man they think is best-suited to serve as the spiritual pastor to 1.2 billion Catholics but also for their next boss. That is partly why cardinals vote anonymously in the Sistine Chapel, masking their handwriting and burning the ballots. Cardinals do not want to be on record voting against a future pope.

The private dinners, therefore, are regarded as a conclave within a conclave, an ostensibly casual setting that serves in fact as a high-stakes testing ground for candidacies. Going into the 2013 conclave, Chicago Cardinal Francis George's second, he was widely regarded by his colleagues as one of a handful of cardinals who would play the role of kingmaker. As such, he remained tight-lipped about his dinnertime whereabouts. In the case of one meal in particular, he claimed to have no memory of the evening at all.

On March 5, after a long day of speeches at the Congregation, a group of cardinals arrived at the Pontifical North American College under the cover of night and were directed through long quiet corridors to a pair of double doors, upholstered in crimson leather. On the other side was the Red Room.

Named after a Vatican drawing room where prelates of past centuries once waited for news of whether they had been named a cardinal, the Red Room of the college offered a magnificent showcase of American Catholicism to the dinner guests. A shimmering chandelier lighted a salon trimmed with red marble pilasters and oil paintings depicting late eminences such as Richard J. Cushing of Boston and John F. O'Hara of Philadelphia - cardinals who dominated the church in post-World War II America.

American cardinals are an important group in papal elections. They run archdioceses that are among the biggest donors to the Catholic Church and to the papacy. And as a potential bloc of votes inside the conclave, the Americans are very powerful because they're outnumbered only by the cardinals from Italy. Often they're even more influential because the Italians are characteristically divided over whom to support.

Sitting down at a long banquet table, the cardinals began to discuss a half-dozen papal candidates. Bowls of soup were served. Then someone dropped Cardinal Bergoglio's name into the conversation. His name didn't generate much buzz among the Americans and their guests. As the evening wore on, and glasses of red and white wine began to flow, it became clear that, this time around, the Americans were not united in their thinking about papal contenders.

Some princes of the church believed Cardinal Bergoglio, at 76, was probably too old to become pope, especially after Benedict XVI had specifically cited his age and frailty as reasons for his resignation. Two days later, however, that all changed. And all in the span of four minutes - the length of Cardinal Bergoglio's speech when it was his turn to address the General Congregation. On March 7, the Argentine took out a sheet of white paper bearing notes written in tiny tight script. They were bullet-pointed.

Many cardinals had focused their speeches on specific issues, whether it was strategies for evangelization or progress reports on Vatican finances. Cardinal Bergoglio, however, wanted to talk about the long-term future of the church and its recent history of failure. From its start, Pope Benedict's papacy had been focused on reinforcing Catholicism's identity, particularly in Europe, its historic home. Amid a collapse of the church's influence and following in Europe, the German pontiff had called on Catholics to hunker down and cultivate a “creative minority” whose embrace of doctrine was sound enough to resist the pull of secular trends across the continent. That message, however, had been overshadowed by the explosion of sexual-abuse allegations across Europe and rampant infighting in the Vatican ranks.

The notes on Cardinal Bergoglio's sheet were written in his native Spanish, and he could have easily delivered the remarks in Spanish, but he spoke in Italian, the language cardinals most commonly use inside the Vatican and the native tongue of Italy's 28 voting-age cardinals, the most of any single nation. He wanted to be understood, loud and clear. The leaders of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Bergoglio warned, had become too focused on its inner life.

“When the church is self-referential,” he said, “inadvertently, she believes she has her own light; she ceases to be the mysterium lunae and gives way to that very serious evil, spiritual worldliness.”

Roman Catholicism needed to shift its focus outward to the world beyond the Vatican. The new pope “must be a man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the church to go out to the existential peripheries, that helps her to be the fruitful mother, who gains life from the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.”

The word he used, periferia in Italian, literally translates into “the periphery” or “the edge”. But, to Italian ears, periferia is also a term loaded with heavy socioeconomic connotations. It is on the periphery of Italian cities, and most European ones, that the working-class poor live, many of them immigrants. The core mission of the church wasn't self-examination, the cardinal said. It was getting in touch with the everyday problems of a global flock, most of whom were battling poverty and the indignities of socioeconomic injustice.

For days they had heard speeches about “new evangelization”, a term from past popes that many cardinals used to honor their memory while disagreeing over what it meant. Suddenly, they were hearing someone speak about justice and human dignity. And it was simple, clear and refreshing. And so perhaps - more than the content - it was simply a reminder that here is someone who has authenticity in such a way that he's a wonderful witness to the discipleship.

Many cardinals were stern opponents of any rhetoric that appeared to invite class warfare. Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI had reined in liberation theology, the teachings of Latin American priests who embraced Marxism. But Cardinal Bergoglio's message to the cardinals deftly sidestepped those ideological pitfalls by grounding his message in a call to model the modern church on the humility of its origins.

What many thought Cardinal Bergoglio was offering the church - after a decade of struggling to overcome the sexual-abuse crisis and years of internal bickering over issues like the liturgy - was a new narrative. He was telling a story of modern Catholicism that focused less on its complex inner workings and more on its outreach to those most in need.

By Sunday, March 10, two days before the start of the conclave, a new narrative was taking hold among the cardinals. Cardinal Bergoglio was now a contender, and even the Argentine was starting to feel the pressure of being papabile.

Late that night, the Reverend Thomas Rosica, a Canadian priest, was walking along the edge of Rome's Piazza Navona when he ran into Cardinal Bergoglio making his way back to his hotel. Streetlamps illuminated the stone figures of Bernini's 17th-century Fountain of Four Rivers.

The sound of trickling water accompanied the clerics. “Pray for me,” Cardinal Bergoglio said, grasping the priest's hands.

“Are you nervous?” asked Father Rosica.

“A little bit,” said the cardinal.

The College of Cardinals convened in Papal enclave on March 12th. On the evening of March 13th white smoke was seen emanating from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel and the bells of St. Peter's, followed by those of every Catholic church in Rome, began pealing, signifying the election of a new pope.

**Chapter Three**

Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, was the first Jesuit elected to lead the Roman Catholic Church and its 1.2 billion communicants. The Jesuits, formally known as the Society of Jesus, were founded by Ignatius of Loyola after being wounded in battle and experiencing a religious conversion. He composed the [*Spiritual Exercises*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_Exercises_of_Ignatius_of_Loyola) to help others follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. In 1534 Ignatius and six other young men gathered and professed vows of poverty, chastity, and, later, obedience, including a special vow of obedience to the Pope in matters of mission direction and assignment. The order's plan of organization was approved by Pope Paul III by papal bull in 1540.

Ignatius was a nobleman who had a military background, and the members of the society were supposed to accept orders anywhere in the world where they might be required to live in extreme conditions. Accordingly, the opening lines of the founding document declared that the Society was founded for "whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God to strive, especially, for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine." Consequently, Jesuits are frequently referred to as "God's Soldiers". The Jesuits are governed by a Superior General.

The society is engaged in evangelization and apostolic ministry in 112 nations on six continents. Jesuits' work in education is legendary, founding schools, colleges, universities and seminaries (think Georgetown, Boston College, Marquette and Fairfield). Jesuits also give retreats, minister in hospitals and parishes, and promote social justice. While the concept of social justice can be traced through Ancient and Renaissance philosophy, the term “social justice” had only begun to be used explicitly in the 1840s. A Jesuit priest named Luigi Taparelli is typically credited with coining the term.

Social Justice is “justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.” Classically, “justice” ensured that individuals both fulfilled their societal roles and received what was due from society. Social justice assigns rights and duties to the institutions of society, which enables people to receive the basic benefits and burdens of cooperation. The relevant institutions can include education, health care, social security and labor rights, as well as a broader system of societal programs to ensure fair distribution of wealth, equal opportunity, equality of outcome, and no gross social injustice.

Pope Francis actions during the first two years of his papacy exemplified his adherence to Jesuit principles, goals and objectives. While Francis marked his second anniversary as Pope on Friday, March 13, 2015, he entered his third year facing challenges in areas as diverse as from family values to foreign policy and from Vatican reforms to the environment. Nonetheless, 90% of U.S. Catholics hold a favorable view of Pope Francis, with six out of ten holding a “very favorable” view.

“Two years after his election,” Italian Vatican analyst Marco Politi has written, “Francis has made the face of the papacy irreversible. Returning to a doctrinaire, absolute monarch, icon-pope will never be possible, without a dramatic loss in contact with contemporary society, believers and nonbelievers alike.”

However, Francis has his critics, not only among commentators but among cardinals and bishops as well. Traditional Catholics and mainstream conservatives are put off by his acceptance-over-enforcement mentality and a willingness to entertain positions which do not hew to widely-accepted Catholic doctrine and dogma. He's still a social justice-minded Jesuit who upholds church doctrine on abortion, but continues to counsel transgender couples. He considers himself a faithful Catholic but casts theologians as obstacles to evangelization.

In the third year of his papacy he will travel to Ecuador, Paraguay and Bolivia, as well as the Central African Republic and Uganda. In September he will visit the United States where he will address a joint session of Congress.

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In the realm of social mores, Pope Francis began slowly but, in June, created a Vatican tribunal to judge bishops accused of covering up cases of child sexual abuse by priests, a step long demanded by victims in the three decades the Church has been dealing with the abuse scandal.

Until then bishops, the “princes of the church” and the final authority in their jurisdictions, could only be disciplined by the pope. Until Francis, no pope had publicly confronted or demoted even those bishops accused of gross negligence. Priests had been “laicized”, but there was no comparable mechanism of sanction for bishops.

Francis’ action may dismay bishops in Latin America, Asia and Africa, where the problem is neither spoken of nor addressed. And it will precipitate new scrutiny of a number of bishops currently under investigation over accusations that they covered up abuse by priests. A mechanism for holding bishops accountable has been a high priority of the 17-member papal commission on sexual abuse that was created by Francis. That commission includes abuse survivors and laypeople, and it is headed by Cardinal Sean O’Malley, the archbishop of Boston, who was sent to Boston at the height of the abuse scandal there to clean up scandals left behind by the previous bishop. There remain many unanswered questions as to how the tribunal will conduct its inquiries and proceedings, including what punishments it would impose on bishops found guilty.

The tribunal will be housed in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican office that polices adherence to church doctrine and that already handles cases of priestly abuse. Francis will choose a secretary and additional permanent staff members will be hired. The tribunal’s responsibility for judging bishops will include questions of omission: “what one should have done and didn’t do.” Although a different kind of responsibility, it will be judged based upon rules that have yet to be promulgated.

“This is the missing link in the church’s response to the abuse crisis,” said the Reverend. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and editor at large of the Jesuit weekly magazine *America*. “It is a long overdue and delayed response to this problem, but it’s an absolutely indispensable step. This is what everyone was waiting for and all were calling for in all quarters of the church.”

Father Martin suggested that action had been slow to come because there was a “lingering reluctance to hold bishops accountable if they themselves had not committed the abuse” and because, after the Second Vatican Council shifted greater power from Rome to the bishops, of “the traditional authority of bishops over their dioceses.”

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Pope Francis had observed, and made clear in his comments to the Congregation during his four-minute speech in the Papal enclave, that the Church had a vital role to play in world affairs. Again, his Jesuit training was showing. His role in encouraging renewed diplomatic, financial and cultural ties between the United States and Cuba has been the clearest sign yet that that the Holy See aims to be a much bigger international player than under Benedict.

But Francis has also made some missteps in his fervor to shape the world in a Christian, and Jesuit, image. He upset the Ukraine by calling the current conflict a “fratricide”, without mentioning Russia's role in it. Again, he brought about a minor diplomatic incident with Mexico by warning about the “Mexicanization” of Argentina's drug problem. In both cases, the Secretariat of State intervened.

The greatest challenge before the Vatican is China, where half of the estimated eight to twelve million Catholics worship in underground congregations, and where worship is officially allowed only in state-authorized churches outside the pope's authority.

The Vatican's top diplomat recently sounded an optimistic note, saying that things were “in a positive phase” with both sides willing to talk and that prospects were “promising”.

In the Mideast, Francis has sent envoys, money and prayers to Christians besieged by the Islamic State - and demanded that Muslim leaders take the point in condemning violence committed in God's name. “His real task, for which he is ideally situated,” said Gary Wills in *The Washington Post*, “is to prevent the world's descent into religious war.”

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Pope Francis was elected with a mandate to bring order to the Vatican bureaucracy and financial transparency to the Vatican Bank after years of mismanagement and scandal. On the surface, Francis has made measurable strides. He gave Australian Cardinal George Pell, head of the new Secretariat for the Economy, broad powers to exercise “economic control and vigilance” over all Vatican departments, which have long operated as individual fiefdoms in both operations and budget.

That dismayed the Vatican old guard and legal office, which expressed concern about checks and balances. By way of clarification, in the statutes of the Secretariat which Francis approved in February of 2015, it was made clear that it oversees, but does not manage, Vatican assets.

As with any reform plan, there was opposition - from prelates resisting full disclosure and fearful of losing power. Additionally, Francis didn't engender much good will with his Christmas dressing down of the Vatican Curia when he enumerated fifteen shortcomings of which they were guilty, including what he referred to as “spiritual Alzheimer's”.

While no one was expected to be removed from their position, it was expected that there would be some changes made once Francis' first administrative reforms took shape, with the creation of two new congregations - one for laity, another for justice and charity - that would absorb a half-dozen smaller pontifical councils.

As far as the Vatican Bank was concerned, it is unclear just what direction was provided by the new pope, or if the bank had continued to conduct business as usual. Whatever the case, it could be reasonably concluded that the financial policies which Pope Francis had communicated to the bank officials would be reflective of his social and Jesuitical policies. Thus, the monetary decisions made by the bank officials were expected to be focused upon relieving the suffering of the poor and disenfranchised.

On Monday, May 25th, the Vatican Bank, whose actual name is the Institute for the Works of Religion, said that its profits had soared by more than twenty times in 2014 as it recovered from a trading loss and continued its reform process away from its scandal-marred past. The bank said it earned $77.37 million in 2014, up from $3.26 million the previous year. Its net trading result jumped to $41.4 million from a loss of $18.6 million in 2013, when it lost money on investments and saw the value of its gold holdings drop.

Profits were also boosted by a drop in operating costs. It has been speculated that the drastic increase in the bank's profitability has been a direct result of the policies and directives which Pope Francis had issued to the bank once he became acclimated to the position of pope and learned the parameters within which the bank did, and could, operate.

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On Thursday, June 18th, Pope Francis issued his long-awaited encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si*, or “praised be you”. The title comes from a hymn by Saint Francis of Assissi, from whom the Pope took his name, that deals with being in harmony with God, other human beings and other creatures.

**Chapter Four**

Perhaps no unpublished papal document in recent history has generated more controversy, anticipation and anxiety than Francis' upcoming encyclical on the environment. The first Latin American pope has said global warming is "mostly" man-made, and that he hopes his document will encourage climate change negotiators meeting in Paris later this year to take "courageous" decisions.

T h at has thrilled environmentalists but alarmed religious conservatives, some of whom are global warming deniers and are cringing at the idea that the pope is taking a theological approach to climate change.

The Vatican official who helped draft the encyclical, Cardinal Peter Turkson, recently offered what was widely seen as a preview of the encyclical in a speech in Ireland. Turkson acknowledged disagreement over the causes of global warming but said "what is not contested is that our planet is getting warmer" and that Christians have a duty rooted in "ancient biblical teaching" to address the problem.

The document is expected in June or July.

**Epilogue**

The fight would go on tomorrow. There were thousands of good men and women who would see to it. The measure of each would not be in their winning, but in their determination to persevere.

**The End**