Culture



Francis and the other characters in "Francis, the comic strip" will have a place among other beloved cartoon characters that live forever, writes cartoonist Pat Marrin. (Pat Marrin)



by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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Cartoonist Pat Marrin selected some "Francis, the comic strip" cartoons and panels to be included in this article. You can click on each of the full, three-panel comic



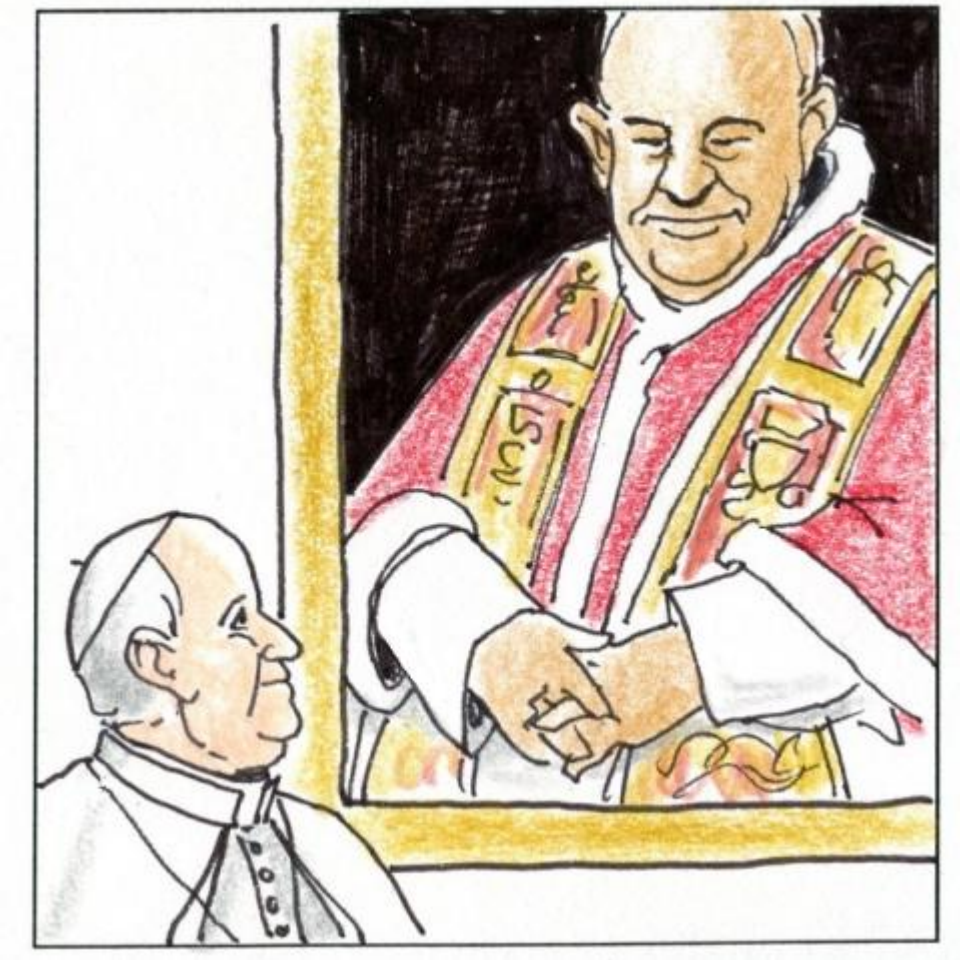
The Sunday morning comics pages taught me to read. The cartoon characters inhabited my imagination and formed my basic sense of truth and justice, right and wrong, heroism and cowardice.

It is no mystery why I jumped at the chance to do a comic strip on Pope Francis. He has been both source and foil within the cartoon Vatican waiting to be explored.



The real Pope Francis will be the focus of many official and scholarly examinations, but Francis and the other characters in the comic strip will also have a place among other beloved cartoon characters that live forever.

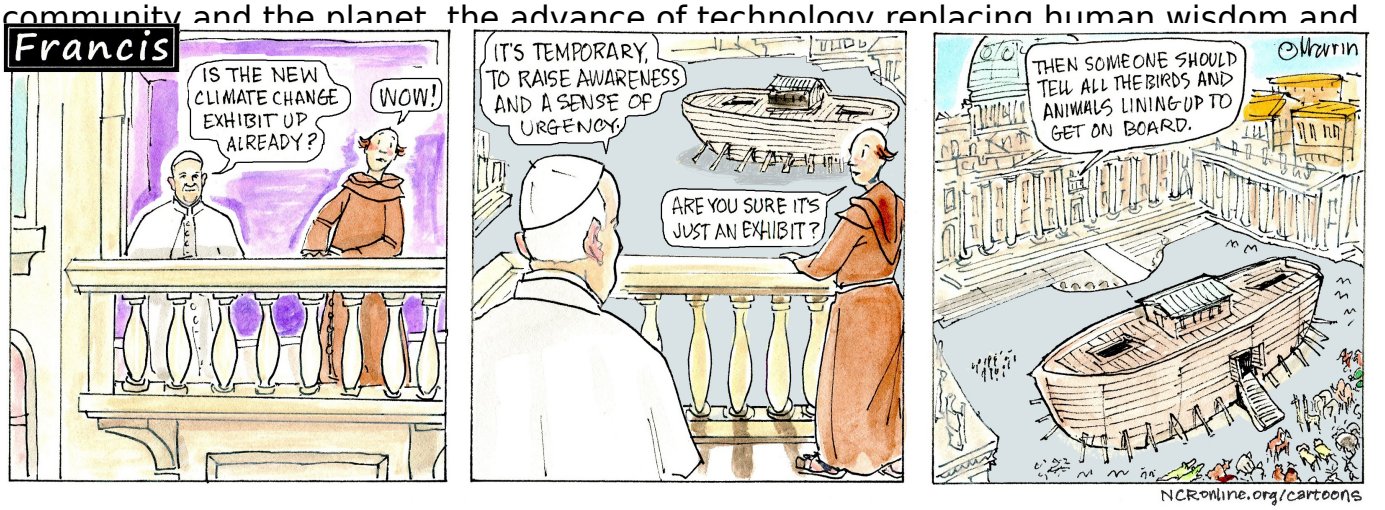
Related: 'Francis was my kind of pope.' Cartoonists memorialize Pope Francis.

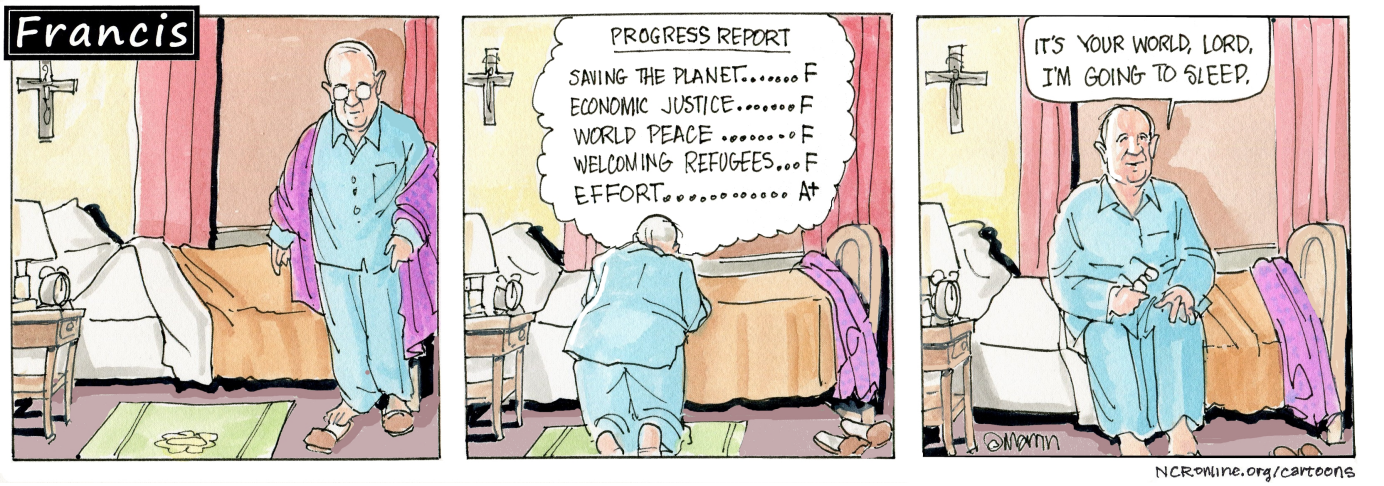


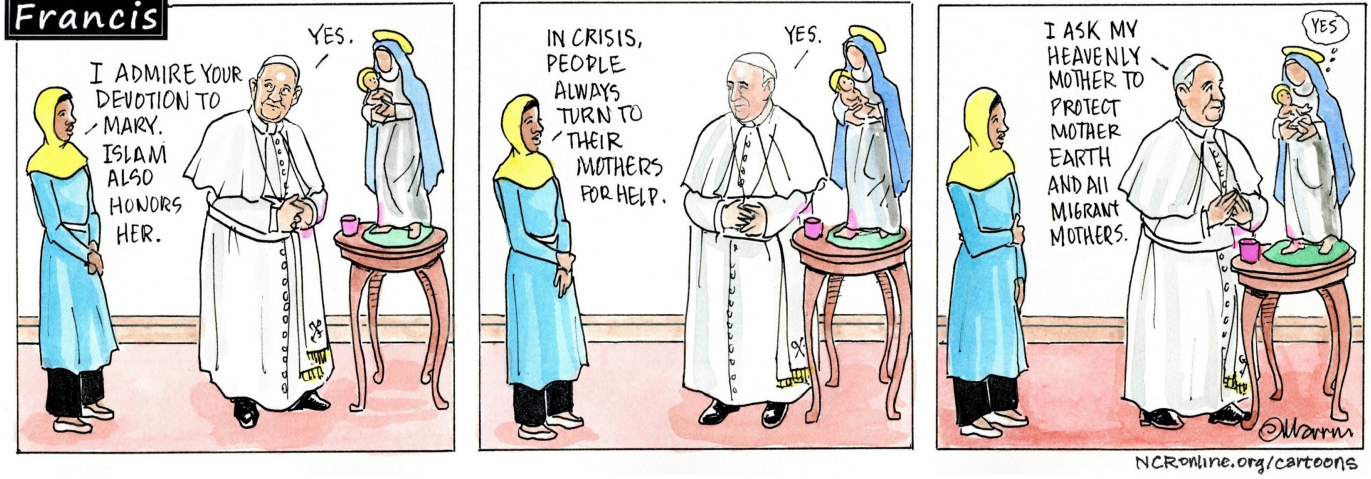
(Pat Marrin)

The almost 1,400 images produced for NCR and Universal Press' GoComics explored the ironies and incongruities that Francis himself exposed within the Catholic Church. Two papal "assistants," a young Franciscan brother named Leo, living the radical virtues of the pope's saintly namesake, and a trafficked Somali Muslim woman named Gabby, rescued in Rome, were added to the strip to witness the pope's words and actions.

A comic strip pope needed Francis, the real pope, human, humble, open to real people, wearing the face of a merciful God who loved the poor, elderly, children, migrants, refugees and outsiders — victims of a global society neglecting them all. The strip explored the issue of war as the failure of dialogue, the abuse of women and children as the sin of power, the toxic worship of money as destroying community and the planet, the advance of technology replacing human wisdom and







Storytelling needs less explanation, and pictures are still little parables that teach.



(Pat Marrin)

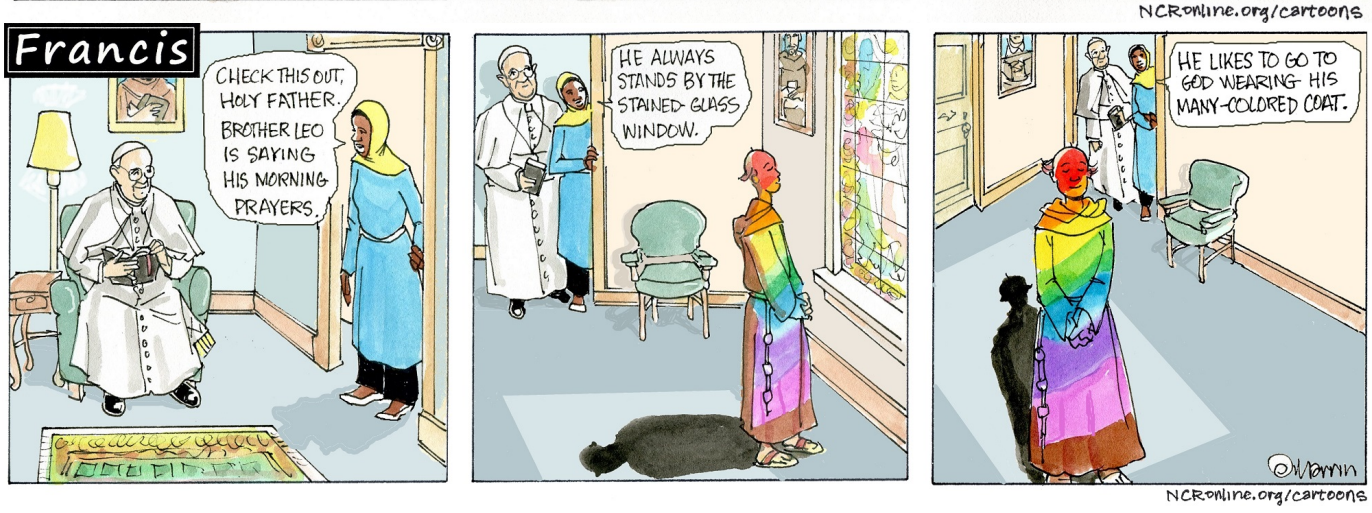
The few cartoons offered here represent the themes of the pope's intent to preach the Gospel of mercy, highlighting God's unconditional love for creation, human

relationships, justice and compassion for everything and everyone in an integral ecology of love.

Humor invites a humble eye and an open heart. We are all in the picture, its problems and the solutions that must include everyone, and forgive and encourage everyone to see the work of history as shared survival, joyful surprise and continuous welcome.

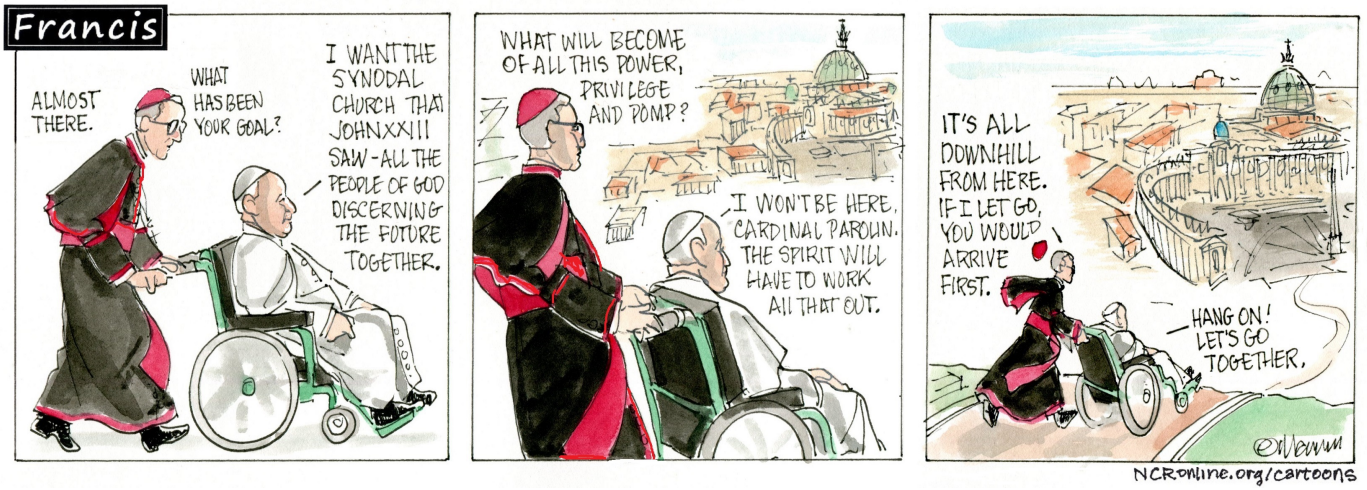
Beauty, that tender invitation to find hope in history, can save the world if we trust the promise that God's love overcomes all fear and doubt. This faith, in the end






Francis
I ADMIRE ST. MARY MAGDALENE.
WHICH ONE?
THE ONE WHO HAD SEVEN DEMONS?
THE ONE WHO ANOINTED JESUS' FEET?
THE ONE WHO STOOD BY THE CROSS AND WAS AT THE TOMB?
I LIKE THE ONE WHO WAS JESUS' BEST FRIEND.
OH THAT MARY MAGDALENE! THE CHURCH IS STILL WORKING ON THAT ONE.
NCRonline.org/cartoons


Francis
HE LOOKS SO TIRED.
HE'S BEEN DOING SOME HEAVY LIFTING.
WAS I HEAVY?
AT THE END, WHEN YOU WERE CARRYING THE SINS OF THE WORLD.
WHAT IS HE CARRYING?
THE SINS OF THE CHURCH.
NCRonline.org/cartoons


Francis
ALMOST THERE.
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GOAL?
I WANT THE SYNODAL CHURCH THAT JOHN XXIII SAW - ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD DISCERNING THE FUTURE TOGETHER.
WHAT WILL BECOME OF ALL THIS POWER, PRIVILEGE AND POMP?
I WON'T BE HERE, CARDINAL PAROLIN. THE SPIRIT WILL HAVE TO WORK ALL THAT OUT.
IT'S ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE. IF I LET GO, YOU WOULD ARRIVE FIRST.
HANG ON! LET'S GO TOGETHER.
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This story appears in the **The Legacy of Pope Francis** feature series. View the full series.