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'Wall Street Journal' rushes to publish e-book on election of Pope Francis

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

The venerable *Wall Street Journal* has rushed to publication a new e-book on the recent papal election titled, "Pope Francis: From the End of the Earth to Rome." According to its description: It chronicles the unlikely ascension of Jorge Mario Bergoglio to the papacy. With original reporting by a team of journalists around the world, the Journal takes an in-depth look at the man charged with leading the Catholic Church in a time of challenges.

In an *WSJ* article with an excerpt from the book, it concludes that Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio's four minute speech at the General Congregation, written in Spanish, but delivered in Italian, caused Cardinal Bergoglio to jump to the top of papal contenders. Here is an excerpt: "And it happened 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 elephant in the room: 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 easily have delivered the remarks in Spanish?19 of the cardinals voting in the conclave came from Spanish-speaking countries and a team of Vatican translators was on hand to provide simultaneous translations in at least four other languages.

But he spoke in Italian, the language cardinals most commonly use inside Vatican City 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, our very selves, Cardinal Bergoglio warned, had become too focused on its inner life. The church was navel-gazing. The church was too self-referential.

"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, he said, needed to shift its focus outward, to the world beyond Vatican City walls, to the outside. 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.

Kasper, an old Vatican hand, perked up. So did Cardinals Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne of Lima and Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino of Havana, who promptly asked the pope for the notes of his address. 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, human dignity. And it was simple, clear, refreshing."

To book goes on sale on April 16, 2013.

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