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What to do with this popular pope

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NCR Today

I'm a little late pointing this out, but Commonweal editor Paul Bauman has an essay on Slate that is well worth reading: *The Public Pope: Why the intense fascination paid to Pope Francis?or any pope?isn't good for the Catholic Church. Here's a taste:*

Whatever people think Pope Francis is offering, he is no magician; he can't alter the course of secular history or bridge the church's deepening ideological divisions simply by asserting what in truth are the papacy's rather anemic powers. In this light, the inordinate attention paid to the papacy, while perhaps good for business, is *not* good for the church. Why not? Because it encourages the illusion that what ails the church can be cured by one man, especially by a new man. In truth no pope possesses that kind of power, thank God.

... As his admirers will discover, even the most winsome papal leadership?and winsomeness is very much in the eye of the beholder?cannot mend Catholicism's divisions.

The persistent nature of such divisions reminds us that Catholics must find a way to live with and through their ongoing disputes and, most important, to live with one another.

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