

Catalyst is published by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

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New York, NY 10022  
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1 copy ..... \$1.00  
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## Congratulations, Holy Father

Today marks the 16th anniversary of your election to the post as Vicar of Christ. Catholics, as well as non-Catholics, extend their deepest appreciation for all that you have done.

Why do millions love you and revere your office?

In an age when relativism is rampant,  
you teach that moral absolutes still exist.  
In an age when skepticism readily becomes cynicism,  
you offer redoubtable wisdom.  
In an age when respect for all human life is floundering,  
you embrace the dignity of everyone.  
In an age when rights have become unhinged from responsibilities,  
you call us to duty.  
In an age when liberty is seen as license,  
you counsel restraint.  
In an age when hate and greed are celebrated,  
you extol love and sharing.  
In an age when revenge is the norm,  
you advise forgiveness.  
In an age when the existence of sin is rarely acknowledged,  
you continue to speak the truth.  
In an age when many elites are deeply phobic about religion,  
you maintain the courage of your convictions.  
In an age when whining is commonplace,  
you rise above the chorus.  
In an age when bashing the Catholic Church is in vogue,  
you remain proudly countercultural.  
And in an age when bigots assault the Church for being "out of step,"  
you stand fast.

It is *your leadership* that helped end totalitarianism abroad.

And it is *your leadership* that helps stem the tide of decadence all over the world.  
That's why we love you and revere your office.



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