

# WELCOME, HOLY FATHER HAPPY BIRTHDAY—HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



In your first trip to the U.S., we are pleased to welcome you and wish you Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary. Your tenure as pontiff is filled with important moments, events that make Catholics proud.

Your encyclicals on love and hope are inspiring precisely because they call us to God, without which true love is impossible and hope is without meaning. Your statements on theological and moral relativism have shaken some and inspired others—just what we would expect of a great leader.

Some have deliberately taken your comments on sensitive issues out of context, hoping to smear you. But in doing so, they have only discredited themselves: fair-minded men and women who have actually read what you have said give you the high marks you deserve.

When you beckon us to understand that faith must never be unhinged from reason, you call us to renounce religious fanaticism. When you beckon us to understand that reason must never be unhinged from faith, you call us to renounce radical secularism. Some hear only the first lesson, while others hear only the latter. All need to hear both.

In a day and age of militant atheism, Catholics, as well as those who belong to other religions, herald your determination. What makes you so special is that you are not afraid to challenge us, never looking at surveys for guidance. You do what comes natural to you—you lead.

So enjoy your stay in the U.S. We need someone to drop a moral anchor in our society, and no one can do it better than you.

Bill Donohue  
President



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