

2025 CATHOLIC CITIZENSHIP ESSAY CONTEST

Popes by Emma

Many popes have impacted our lives as Catholics, but most people don't even realize how important their job really is. A pope guides Catholics through God's teachings, and he helps people to become strong and faithful. A pope's job is to unify the people as one and help them to love one another as themselves. Popes discuss daily problems through the eyes of religious people. The Pope is located in Rome, Italy, and he is a worldwide spiritual leader. The current Pope is Pope Leo XIV. There are many other important popes that have helped Catholics strengthen their faith, but three of the more important and impactful popes to me were Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Leo XIII.

Pope Francis became Pope on March 13, 2013. He died on April 21, 2025, from a stroke. Pope Francis was a humble and honest pope. He wasn't afraid to admit if he had made a mistake, and he was always willing to apologize and correct the situation. Pope Francis always asked people to pray for him. He never bragged about his job. Some other popes would get fancy or expensive cars when they were Pope, but Pope Francis had a simple car. He enjoyed making others happy and was always available to take a photo with those who wanted one. Pope Francis did many things to help the church appreciate God's creation. Pope Francis wanted people to see the importance of what God has given us. He even met with a few bishops from the Amazon. He also supported women having a bigger role in the church. For these reasons and many more, Pope Francis was a great pope in helping the Vatican stay strong.

Pope John Paul II became Pope on October 16, 1978. He died on April 2, 2005, from Parkinson's disease. He had many accomplishments as a pope. He was the first pope to visit the White House, and he was the most traveled Pope in history. John Paul II visited about 129 countries when he was Pope. He spoke eight different languages fluently. His goal was to unite the world as one. Pope John Paul II canonized more saints than any other pope, and he created 232 cardinals. He helped the church in many ways. For example, building and strengthening the Catholic Church in Africa. John Paul II also loved the outdoors, cared deeply for God's creation, and wanted to preserve it. Overall, Pope John Paul II did many amazing things for the church, and he did his best to make us one.

Pope Leo XIII became Pope on February 20, 1878. He died on July 20, 1903, from pneumonia and old age. Pope Leo XIII wrote the prayer to St. Michael, and he wrote 11 encyclopedias on the rosary. He loved Mary and prayed the rosary very often. For this reason, he is sometimes called "the Rosary Pope." Pope Leo XIII supported workers' rights, and he worked to give workers more freedom. He wanted them to receive equal pay based on their jobs. He thought that it was only fair that people should earn enough money to provide for their families and not struggle with having food or shelter. Pope Leo XIII also said that there should be no work on Sundays or other holy days. He wanted to make sure that everyone received what they needed and was not struggling through life. The current Pope, Pope Leo XIV, named himself after Pope Leo XIII because he was inspired by everything he taught and did to help others. Ultimately, Pope Leo XIII was a good pope and inspired others to follow in his footsteps.

In conclusion, the church has had many amazing popes, and they have helped us grow in our faith. They have done great things like help the environment, unite the world, and make working conditions better for people. Everyone can learn from what these popes have done to impact, not just

the Catholic Church, but the world. They lived out God's teachings and helped others to live a life like Jesus. Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II and Pope Leo XIII are inspirational and special popes that God has gifted to His people.