

“Contradictions in Spirit”

What happens when human
weakness meets divine authority?

Overview

To build anticipation for “Young Pope,” WP BrandStudio will create a custom content program that captures the provocative contradictions at the heart of the show. We’ll leverage *The Washington Post’s* journalistic expertise to engage our intellectually curious readers in an exploration of the internal and external conflicts that arise when a human being is given the power and authority of God on Earth.

Show Integration

- “Young Pope” trailer, CTA to watch the series will be prominently featured
- Enticing references to the show will be organically interwoven into the content

Execution

- A deeply researched **rich-media article** acts as the program’s narrative backbone
- **Instant poll questions** are presented as call-outs within the narrative
- An **interactive quiz** appears as a horizontal slideshow
- Each piece of content is **individually promoted** but linked to the others so readers can navigate among them, creating a seamlessly immersive experience

Content Details

Rich-Media Article: “Of Church and Men”

The role of the first popes was clear: to establish the Church. But of those who followed, some sought to enrich the institution while others enriched themselves. Some worked to create reform from within while others strove to crush dissent. And more than a few were dedicated to improving the lives of their flock.

Bringing a contemporary perspective to insights from historians and church experts, we’ll explore the complex evolution of the pope’s role over history—setting the stage for the sleek, vain, quintessentially American Lenny Belardo.

- Dynamic visual elements are integrated into the narrative; could include graphics, historic artifacts, art-quality original illustrations
- Snackable copy call-outs include how popes choose their names; a chronology of smoking vs. nonsmoking popes

Instant Poll: “Being God on Earth”

At points within the narrative, we’ll invite readers to put themselves in the shoes of the all-too-human Lenny Belardo.

- Readers are given a series of poll questions with multiple-choice responses
- After they answer, an animated graphic shows the real-time results of others who took the poll
- Sample question: “Would you give up your bad habits if you were God’s representative on earth?”

Social Components

- Polls could live for a limited time on social media; voters are alerted when the poll ends and prompted to view the results
- “Snackable copy” could be turned into social-only cards and promoted across BrandStudio channels

Content Details: Interactive Quiz

Interactive Quiz: “Contradictions in Spirit”

Throughout history, popes have been capable of the worst sins (from nepotism to murder) and the greatest humility (Francis’s washing of a Muslim woman’s feet). We’ll ask readers to rank historic popes on a series of spectrums that ladder up to the show’s themes: the use of power, the bounds of holiness, a commercial and political enterprise that preaches humility.

- In a slide-show format, readers are presented with a series of spectrums
- Readers are asked to choose the number that they feel represents where they identify themselves on the spectrum
- Each slide will include a teaser that connects the spectrum to a tidbit from the show

- At the end of the quiz, readers receive a numeric score that corresponds to a profile of the type of pope they are most like and a historic example of a pope that matches that same profile
- Types include:
 - Popes who **revel** in human imperfection
 - Popes who **dabble** in human imperfection
 - Popes who **embrace** human imperfection
 - Popes who **reject** human imperfection

Social Component

- Quiz will include a button to share your results on social media

“Earthly Pleasures—Eschew or Enjoy?”

Eschew



Urban VIII decreed that anyone who chewed, smoked or sniffed tobacco would be excommunicated.

Some Catholics urged **Clement VII** to ban coffee, calling it the “devil’s beverage.” After tasting the beverage, Clement said it was “... so delicious that it would be a sin to let only misbelievers drink it.”

Gregory the Great was a strict enforcer of church doctrine, particularly the celibacy provision.

Pius IV’s favorite dish was fried frogs. His chef, Bartolomeo Scappi wrote a 900-page cookbook that included accounts of themed dinners like an 24-course veal meal.

Enjoy

Related show teaser: Pius XIII insists on being served Cherry Coke Zero at breakfast. He reverses a Vatican smoking ban—so that he himself can indulge.

“Use of Power—Objective or Subjective?”

Objective



John Paul II acted as a global ambassador on behalf of the church, mediating conflicts and pressuring non-democratic governments to reform. He is even credited with helping end the Cold War.

Nicholas III distributed principalities in the Papal States among members of his family; his nepotism earned him a spot in Dante’s eighth circle of Hell.

Gregory IX considered cats to be the ‘incarnation of Satan.’ Leading to a mass killing of cats, causing the rat population to swell, thus quickening the spread of the Black Death.

Subjective

Related show teaser:
Pius XIII orders a confessor priest to break the secrecy rule; he gives an intimate secretarial post to the ageing nun who took him in as a child.