



## “Francisco de Buenos Aires” comes to the big screen

Miguel Rodríguez Arias' film will be one of the first documentaries on the figure of Pope Francis



AP/LAPRESSE

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The director Miguel Rodríguez Arias grabbed the camera and started filming just days after his fellow-countryman appeared on the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica dressed in white. He had one goal: to mark the first anniversary of Francis' pontificate by being the first to tell the story of the “revolution of equality” which the Pope has started in the Church. The Argentinean film-maker who won the “Rey de España” award in 1997, has the advantage of knowing Bergoglio and the places he lived as well as being really eager to understand why the Church changed course so radically, electing a Jesuit like him as its leader at this particular moment in the history of humanity.

“The research process was long, it took eight or nine months. During this time we gradually got to know who Bergoglio really is,” he said. To make the documentary, Arias selected content from an archive that contained 50 thousand hours of audiovisual material, including some rare archive images.

Arias documentary-making technique is masterful and imaginative as is evident

in his previous works “Las patas de la mentira” and “El nürnberg argentino” for example. “Francisco de Buenos Aires” looks at the political and religious dimension of Bergoglio-Francis’ personality. He “preaches by example” and this is his strength.

A number interviews were held to gather material for the film: María Elena Bergoglio, the Pope’s only living sister was interviewed, along with elementary school friends, the Argentinean sculptor Fernando Pugliese who designed the Tierra Santa theme park in Buenos Aires, the Argentinean cardinal Jorge Mejia, as well as rabbis and other friends of Bergoglio’s.

Arias swears the Pope is being kept up to date on the work he is doing and that he will soon watch the documentary with him and the team. Then it will be time for the Argentinean public to judge it for themselves when it arrives in cinemas on 19 March. But Arias is confident about the reaction it will get from the public: “When people leave the cinema they’ll know exactly who Bergoglio is and why the College of Cardinals elected such a unique man as head of the Church.”

The documentary soundtrack is by Argentinean group Vox Dei. They have been on the Argentinean rock scene for 46 years, from the Perón days to Bergoglio.