

Obama Welcomes Pope Francis' Remarks on Gays, Abortion

President Barack Obama on Wednesday welcomed Pope Francis' recent remarks that the Catholic Church must shake off an obsession with teachings on abortion, contraception and homosexuals, saying the pontiff was showing incredible humility.

"I tell you, I have been hugely impressed with the pope's pronouncements," Obama said in a CNBC interview.

Obama has worked to expand gay rights as president and last year backed same-sex marriage. He also supports the use of contraception and a woman's right to an abortion.

Pope Francis told the *Italian Jesuit Journal* last month that the church had "locked itself up in small things" by its obsession with abortion, contraception and homosexuality.

Obama said the pope seemed to be someone who "lives out the teachings of Christ" and shows "incredible humility" toward the poor.

"That's a quality I admire," said Obama, who has yet to meet the new pope.

(Editing by Peter Cooney)

© 2013 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.