

Pope attacks Europe's throwaway culture

27th November, 2014



Pope Francis delivered a damning message to European leaders on Tuesday when he addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg. He denounced what he saw as Europe's

'throwaway culture' where the elderly, terminally ill and unborn children are ignored. He said technology and economics were more important to politicians than those suffering. He told his audience: "Men and women risk being reduced to mere cogs in a machine that treats them as items of consumption to be exploited, with the result that whenever a human life no longer proves useful for that machine, it is discarded." He added: "It is the inevitable consequence of a throwaway culture, and an uncontrolled consumerism".

The Pope was very critical of Europe's politicians and systems. He warned that Europe's once dynamic, caring and artistic cultures were being eroded by red-tape, saying: "The great ideas which once inspired Europe seem to have lost their attraction, only to be replaced by the bureaucratic technicalities of its institutions." He said bureaucracy was "perceived as insensitive to individual peoples, if not downright harmful". The Pope said Europe risked losing its sense of community, saying: "One of the most common diseases in Europe today is the loneliness typical of those who have no connection with others. This is especially true of the elderly, who are often abandoned to their fate, and also in the young."

Sources: *Irish Examiner / Telegraph / Catholic Sun*

Writing

Europe is the greatest continent on Earth. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

delivered / message / leaders / terminally ill / suffering / cogs / consumption / culture / critical / dynamic / attraction / harmful / community / loneliness / connection / fate

True / False

- Pope Francis spoke to European leaders at the Vatican. T / F
- Pope Francis criticized leaders for ignoring the elderly and ill. T / F
- Francis said Europe was close to treating people as parts of a machine. T / F
- The Pope said everyone in Europe should throw away their culture. T / F
- The Pope warned that Europe's once-great culture was disappearing. T / F
- Francis said bureaucracy is replacing inspiration and great ideas. T / F
- Francis said Europe had lost its sense of community. T / F
- Francis said loneliness is a very common disease in Europe. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. damning | a. unrestrained |
| 2. denounced | b. energetic |
| 3. ignored | c. organizations |
| 4. items | d. disregarded |
| 5. uncontrolled | e. strong |
| 6. dynamic | f. damaging |
| 7. eroded | g. objects |
| 8. institutions | h. deserted |
| 9. harmful | i. attacked |
| 10. abandoned | j. worn away |

Discussion – Student A

- What are the good and bad things about Europe?
- What does the Pope mean by 'throwaway culture'?
- How much of a throwaway culture is there in your country?
- How can Europe change so the Pope will be happy?
- When do you feel like a cog in a machine?
- Are technology and economics more important than people?
- Do you ever feel exploited?
- What are the bad things about consumerism?

Breaking News English - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Francis delivered a damning | a. the European Parliament |
| 2. he addressed | b. of community |
| 3. cogs | c. of Europe's politicians |
| 4. a throwaway | d. consumerism |
| 5. uncontrolled | e. attraction |
| 6. The Pope was very critical | f. culture |
| 7. eroded by red | g. true of the elderly |
| 8. lost their | h. in a machine |
| 9. Europe risked losing its sense | i. message |
| 10. This is especially | j. tape |

Discussion – Student B

- Was Europe of old better than today's Europe?
- How important is Europe?
- Has bureaucracy in Europe reduced artistry and creativity?
- How can bureaucracy be harmful to people?
- How much community is there in your country?
- How does your country help people who are weak and lonely?
- Why do societies so often abandon the elderly?
- What questions would you like to ask Pope Francis?

Spelling

- Pope Francis delivered a inmdagn message
- he dadessedr the European Parliament
- aryIntemil ill
- items of consumption to be tleidoxep
- the bvlaineiet consequence
- uncontrolled sioenmucrms
- artlcici of Europe's politicians
- ideas which once ripeidns Europe
- lost their tnoitatcra
- ssniivetnei to individual peoples
- iyplact of those who have no connection
- naaeondbd to their fate

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. d	4. g	5. a
6. b	7. j	8. c	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – The police

You think the police are the most important institution in a country. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): mass media, the courts or political parties are.

Role B – Mass media

You think the mass media are the most important institution in a country. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): the police, the courts or political parties are.

Role C – Courts

You think the courts are the most important institution in a country. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): mass media, the police or political parties are.

Role D – Political parties

You think political parties are the most important institution in a country. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): mass media, the courts or the police.

Speaking – Institutions

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| • police | • places of worship |
| • mass media | • schools |
| • hospitals | • armed forces |
| • courts | • political parties |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.