



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 14, 2014

Pope Says Abortion “Horrific” Symptom of “Throwaway Culture”

During his yearly address to diplomats (known as the “State of the World” address), Pope Francis on January 13 described abortion as “horrific.”

“It is horrific even to think that there are children, victims of abortion, who will never see the light of day,” said the Pope.

The Pope’s remarks about abortion were made in the context of a statement that also lamented the plight of children around the world who suffer from hunger.



“We cannot be indifferent to those suffering from hunger, especially children, when we think of how much food is wasted every day in many parts of the world immersed in what I have often termed ‘the throwaway culture,’” said Francis.

“Unfortunately, what is thrown away is not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves, who are discarded as ‘unnecessary.’ For example, it is frightful even to think there are children, victims of abortion, who will never see the light of day.”

A LifeNews.com report on this topic noted:

This is just the latest example of Pope Francis taking a consistent and frequent public position against abortion and it comes less than 10 days away from the day Americans will mourn the loss of 56 million unborn children to abortion following *Roe v. Wade*.

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Many reports in the major media have characterized this latest papal statement as an indication that Pope Francis has resumed teaching the traditional Catholic position on abortion, suggesting that he has previously softened on the important moral issue.

Life News rejected the view of the mainstream media, however, referencing one of their articles from last September that explained exactly what the Pope had said. In essence, Francis stated that in addition to condemning abortion, the Church must emulate the mercy that Jesus showed toward sinners and be willing to forgive post-abortive women who had repented. He stated in an interview with *America* (Jesuit) magazine last September 30:

I also consider the situation of a woman with a failed marriage in her past and who also had an abortion. Then this woman remarries, and she is now happy and has five children. That abortion in her past weighs heavily on her conscience and she sincerely regrets it. She would like to move forward in her Christian life. What is the confessor to do?

The BBC’s Rome correspondent Alan Johnston reported that, several months ago, Pope Francis acknowledged that he had said little on issues such as abortion and contraception, but he explained that he felt it was not necessary to talk about these controversial questions “all the time.”



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A reporter in Britain's *Daily Mail* wrote, "Since his election in March, the pope, while *showing no signs of changing the Church's position against abortion*, has not spoken out against it as sternly or as repeatedly as his predecessors Pope Benedict XVI and the late John Paul II. Both of those popes often delivered sermons against abortion, which the Church considers murder." (Emphasis added.)

The above wording reflects a basic misunderstanding of Catholic teaching among the secular media, which often reports church news using political terminology such as "conservative" and "liberal." While it is true that the Catholic religion does include conservative and liberal factions, which either uphold or attempt to loosen traditional practices, respectively, the Catholic Church teaches that defined doctrine cannot be changed.

For example, the church's teachings related to abortion are explained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (paragraphs 2271-2272):

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.⁷⁵

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁷⁶

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*," ⁷⁷ "by the very commission of the offense," ⁷⁸ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. ⁷⁹ The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

Articles in the media that describe Catholics' positions on abortion as either "conservative" or "liberal" miss the point entirely. A person who advocates abortion is not a "liberal" Catholic, but one who has rejected Catholic teaching.

Photo of Pope Francis at the Vatican on January 13: AP Images



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