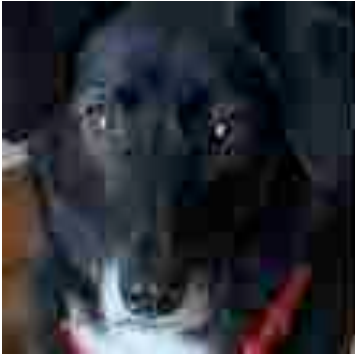


## Choosing pets over children is 'selfish,' says Pope

10th January, 2022



The Pope has suggested that people who choose to have pets instead of children were acting selfishly. Pope Francis was addressing worshippers in Rome. He told his audience that substituting children for pets was a "denial of fatherhood and

motherhood". He added: "Today, we see a form of selfishness. We see that some people do not want to have a child. Sometimes they have just one, and that's it, but they have dogs and cats that take the place of children." Pope Francis encouraged couples to adopt children. He said: "We must not be afraid to choose the path of adoption, to take the risk of welcoming children. Having a child is always a risk, but there is more risk in not having a child."

It is not the first time Pope Francis has spoken out on this topic. In 2014, he said choosing pets over children was detrimental to our future. He called it a "phenomenon of cultural degradation". He commented that the emotional relationship with pets was "easier" than the "complex" relationship with children. In continuing this theme, he called the downward trend in birth rates across many countries a "demographic winter". Not everyone agrees with the Pope's comments. The New York Post pointed out the contradiction of Francis taking his name from St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals. It added: "Dogs make us more human. They make us better. Dogs, I think, are superior to most people."

Sources: [bbc.com](http://bbc.com) / [nypost.com](http://nypost.com) / [christiantoday.com](http://christiantoday.com)

### Writing

Having children is better than having pets. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

The Pope / pets / children / worshippers / audience / motherhood / selfishness / risk / the first time / 2014 / our future / complex / birth rates / contradiction / name / dogs

### True / False

- 1) Pope Francis made his speech about parenthood on the Internet. T / F
- 2) Pope Francis called choosing pets over children a denial of parenthood. T / F
- 3) Pope Francis encouraged people to adopt children. T / F
- 4) Pope Francis said there is a risk in not having children. T / F
- 5) This is the first time Pope Francis has spoken about children and pets. T / F
- 6) There is a downward trend in birth rates in many countries. T / F
- 7) The Pope warned people of a "demographic summer". T / F
- 8) St. Francis was the patron saint of children. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>choose</b>        | a. occurrence     |
| 2. <b>instead of</b>    | b. type           |
| 3. <b>substituting</b>  | c. higher-ranking |
| 4. <b>form</b>          | d. rather than    |
| 5. <b>path</b>          | e. tendency       |
| 6. <b>topic</b>         | f. route          |
| 7. <b>phenomenon</b>    | g. decide on      |
| 8. <b>trend</b>         | h. conflict       |
| 9. <b>contradiction</b> | i. replacing      |
| 10. <b>superior</b>     | j. issue          |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Is not having children 'detrimental to our future'?
- c) What do you think 'cultural degradation' is?
- d) What are the pros and cons of having pets?
- e) How worrying is overpopulation?
- f) Do dogs 'make us better'?
- g) Would you rather have children or pets?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Pope Francis?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. people who choose to have pets      | a. to our future       |
| 2. Pope Francis was addressing         | b. instead of children |
| 3. we see a form                       | c. saint of animals    |
| 4. We must not be afraid to choose the | d. of selfishness      |
| 5. there is more risk in               | e. the contradiction   |
| 6. Pope Francis has spoken             | f. worshippers in Rome |
| 7. detrimental                         | g. in birth rates      |
| 8. the downward trend                  | h. not having a child  |
| 9. pointed out                         | i. out                 |
| 10. the patron                         | j. path of adoption    |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of pets?
- What's the best pet to have?
- What do you know about Pope Francis?
- What do you think of what Pope Francis said?
- Is not having children selfish?
- What are the pros and cons of having children?
- What do you think of adoption?
- What advice do you have for couples who do not want children?

## Spelling

- The Pope has sedggsute that
- He told his naceeuid that
- Francis was addressing persirphows in Rome
- a deilan of fatherhood
- Francis aonerudceg couples to
- choose the path of aoinntod
- drleaniettm to our future
- a phenomenon of cultural gatidrdeano
- a ighropadmec winter
- pointed out the noriatnoccdti
- the pnrtao saint of animals
- Dogs, I think, are seuoprri to most people

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Dogs

You think dogs are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rabbits, fish or tarantulas.

### Role B – Rabbits

You think rabbits are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): dogs, fish or tarantulas.

### Role C – Fish

You think fish are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rabbits, dogs or tarantulas.

### Role D – Tarantulas

You think tarantulas are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rabbits, fish or dogs.

## Speaking – Pets

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

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| • A dog      | • A parrot    |
| • A cat      | • A tarantula |
| • A rabbit   | • A hamster   |
| • A goldfish | • A lizard    |

### Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 T	7 F	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.