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**Level 5 – 15th May 2023**

## **Pope says Italians should have babies, not pets**

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets-5.html>

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**Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.**

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets-5.html>

Birth rates are falling to alarmingly low levels. Japan and South Korea are worrying about their future economic viability. A conference in Italy has addressed Italy's upcoming demographic crisis. Italy has one of the world's lowest birth rates. There will be considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as the population ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming unaffordable for many couples. He said starting a family is a "titanic effort" that only the rich can afford.

The Pope encouraged Italians to have more children. He cautioned couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that result in lower birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He said there was a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year (392,000) and an elevated number of deaths (713,000). The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. The BBC said Italy is often dubbed as "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65572153>  
<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/pope-joins-meloni-urging-italians-kids-pets-99277457>  
<https://www.foxnews.com/world/pope-joins-conservative-pm-calling-italians-more-babies-less-pets>

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets-5.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Birth rates are falling to         | a. crisis                |
| 2. their future economic              | b. ages                  |
| 3. demographic                        | c. on pensions           |
| 4. one of the world's lowest          | d. "titanic effort"      |
| 5. There will be considerable strains | e. alarmingly low levels |
| 6. as the population                  | f. unaffordable          |
| 7. having children is becoming        | g. viability             |
| 8. starting a family is a             | h. birth rates           |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                                    |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Pope encouraged Italians to | a. of deaths          |
| 2. making selfish, egotistical     | b. birth rates        |
| 3. result in lower                 | c. winter             |
| 4. this is threatening Italy's     | d. cribs              |
| 5. He said there was a demographic | e. have more children |
| 6. an elevated number              | f. of pets            |
| 7. have babies instead             | g. choices            |
| 8. dubbed as the country of empty  | h. economic future    |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets-5.html>

Birth rates are (1) \_\_\_\_\_ low levels. Japan and South Korea are worrying about their (2) \_\_\_\_\_. A conference in Italy has addressed Italy's (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Italy has one of the world's lowest birth rates. There will be considerable (4) \_\_\_\_\_ and the welfare system as the population ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children (5) \_\_\_\_\_ for many couples. He said starting a family is (6) \_\_\_\_\_ that only the rich can afford.

The Pope encouraged Italians to have more children. He (7) \_\_\_\_\_ making "selfish, egotistical" choices that result in lower birth rates. He said (8) \_\_\_\_\_ Italy's economic future. He said there was a "demographic winter". Italy saw (9) \_\_\_\_\_ number of births last year (392,000) and (10) \_\_\_\_\_ of deaths (713,000). The Pope urged couples to have babies (11) \_\_\_\_\_. The BBC said Italy is often dubbed as "the country (12) \_\_\_\_\_". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets-5.html>

Birth rates are falling to alarmingly low levels. Japan and South Korea are worrying about their future economic viability. A conference in Italy has addressed Italy's upcoming demographic crisis. Italy has one of the world's slowest birth rates. There will be considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as the population ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming unaffordable for many couples. He said starting a family is a "titanic effort" that only the rich can afford. The Pope encouraged Italians to have more children. He cautioned couples from making "selfish, egotistical" choices that result in lower birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He said there was a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year (392,000) and a elevated number of deaths (713,000). The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. The BBC said Italy is often dubbed as "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk's tweet in which he said: "Italy is disappearing."

# CHILDREN SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about children in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

|      | STUDENT 1<br>_____ | STUDENT 2<br>_____ | STUDENT 3<br>_____ |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Q.1. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.2. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.3. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.4. |                    |                    |                    |
| Q.5. |                    |                    |                    |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

*Pope says Italians should have babies, not pets – 15th May 2023*  
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## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

