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Pope says Italians should have babies, not pets – 15th May 2023

Level 4

Birth rates are falling to worrying levels. Japan and South Korea are worried about their future. A conference in Italy has addressed Italy's population crisis. Italy has one of the world's lowest birth rates. Pension and welfare systems may not cope. Pope Francis has warned that having children is unaffordable for many couples. He said starting a family is a "titanic effort" that only rich people can afford.

The Pope encouraged Italians to have more children and not make "selfish, egotistical" choices. He said fewer children is threatening Italy's economic future. He said Italy faces a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year and a higher number of deaths. The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. Italy is often called "the country of empty cribs". Elon Musk said: "Italy is disappearing."

Level 5

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."

Level 6

Birth rates in many countries are falling to alarmingly low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are pondering questions about the future economic viability of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's looming demographic crisis. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming more unaffordable for many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now a "titanic effort" that only the rich and wealthy can afford.

Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even amid rising prices. He cautioned young couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that are resulting in record low birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an elevated number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him to bless her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often dubbed "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."