

## Workaholic fathers 'leave orphans'

30th January, 2015



The head of the Roman Catholic Church Pope Francis has issued a stern warning to fathers who work long hours. He criticised workaholic dads

for being 'symbolically absent' from their families, and of effectively making their children 'orphans'. The Pope was speaking to a congregation at the Vatican on Wednesday when he made his plea for fathers to spend more time with their children and get more involved in family life. He told worshippers that the absence of fathers in the family is one of the reasons that children experience problems growing up. He said fathers who focused too much on their jobs was one of the causes of "deviances of children and adolescents".

Pope Francis said this problem of fathers being obsessed with their jobs and not spending quality time with their family was particularly prevalent in Europe and North America. He said: "Fathers are so focused on themselves, on their work, and at times their personal fulfillment, that they even forget their families, leaving children and the young to their own devices." He added: "The feeling of orphanhood experienced by many young people is more profound than we might think. They are orphans in their families because their fathers are often absent from the home, but also, and above all, because when they are present, they do not act like fathers." He warned that fatherless families are being accepted as the norm.

Sources: [lifesitenes.com](http://lifesitenes.com) / [sconews.com](http://sconews.com)

## Writing

No one should work for more than seven hours a day. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*head / church / workaholic / orphans / plea / absence / experience / problems / causes / obsessed / prevalent / focused / personal / profound / fathers / accepted / the norm*

## True / False

- The head of the Christian Church has warned fathers who overwork. T / F
- The Pope was speaking to people on Wednesday at the Vatican. T / F
- The Pope said absentee fathers cause children to have problems. T / F
- The Pope said workaholic fathers means children get into trouble. T / F
- The article said most workaholic fathers are in Japan and China. T / F
- The Pope said children have too many children devices. T / F
- The Pope said children's suffering is worse than we think it is. T / F
- The Pope said workaholic fathers act like fathers at home. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. head         | a. preoccupied  |
| 2. stern        | b. reasons      |
| 3. congregation | c. far-reaching |
| 4. plea         | d. serious      |
| 5. causes       | e. common       |
| 6. obsessed     | f. gathering    |
| 7. prevalent    | g. average      |
| 8. fulfillment  | h. top          |
| 9. profound     | i. satisfaction |
| 10. the norm    | j. appeal       |

## Discussion – Student A

- Why didn't the Pope talk about workaholic mothers too?
- Who has the biggest responsibility as a parent – the father or mother?
- Is it wrong for parents to be so focused on themselves?
- How true is it that kids of workaholics are like orphans?
- Is it bad for a father (or mother) to work so hard?
- What does a working father do to be perfect?
- What advice do you have for workaholic fathers?
- What questions would you like to ask Pope Francis?

# BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

## Phrase Match

- Francis has issued a stern
- He criticised workaholic dads for being
- The Pope was speaking
- get more involved
- one of
- fathers being obsessed
- particularly prevalent
- leaving children and the young
- more profound than
- fatherless families are being
- the causes
- to their own devices
- 'symbolically absent'
- in Europe
- in family life
- warning to fathers
- we might think
- to a congregation
- accepted as the norm
- with their jobs

## Discussion – Student B

- How difficult is it for fathers to get the work/family balance right?
- What do you think about what the Pope said?
- What problems are there with being a workaholic?
- How much of workaholic are you?
- To what degree are we slaves to our jobs?
- What is the perfect job for you?
- Do you think the kids of workaholic fathers become deviant?
- How would a workaholic explain his absences to his/her kids?

## Spelling

- suedsi a stern warning
- being msocibylally absent
- eivetcefyfl making their children 'orphans'
- He told wresispproh
- oufdec too much on their jobs
- children and sosednltcea
- fathers being eeosbdss with their jobs
- particularly nrpetlvae in Europe
- to their own icedsv
- more norfodpu than we might think
- fathers are often btsaen
- accepted as the rnom

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Money earner

You think the role of money earner is the most important one for a father. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their roles aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): joke teller, bedtime-book reader or disciplinarian.

### Role B – Joke teller

You think the role of joke teller is the most important one for a father. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their roles aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): money earner, bedtime-book reader or disciplinarian.

### Role C – Bedtime-book reader

You think the role of bedtime-book reader is the most important one for a father. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their roles aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): joke teller, money earner or disciplinarian.

### Role D – Disciplinarian

You think the role of disciplinarian is the most important one for a father. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their roles aren't so important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): joke teller, bedtime-book reader or money earner.

## Speaking – Dad

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

- friend
- careers advisor
- playmate
- joke teller
- money earner
- disciplinarian
- breakfast maker
- bedtime-book reader

### Answers – True False

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