



AS IT IS

Pope Francis Calls for Religious Leaders to Change

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Pope Francis urged top Vatican officials Thursday to show **humility** this Christmas season.

The leader of the Roman Catholic **Church** made the comments during his yearly Christmas speech. He said **pride** and self-interest is harmful to their spiritual lives and corrupts the Church's purpose.

Francis used his yearly Christmas speech to criticize Vatican administrators, or Cardinals, for what he sees as their moral and personal failings. He spoke about pride-filled clergy who hide behind Catholic Church traditions instead of seeking to help the neediest people with humility.

"The humble are those who are concerned not simply with the past but also with the future," Francis said. They know how to look ahead, to widen their view and remember the past with feelings of thankfulness. The proud fear anything new, he added, "because they cannot control it."

The Pope said that proud people only care about themselves, so they do not learn from their wrong actions and are not willing to forgive others. "This is a **tremendous** corruption **disguised** as a good. We need to avoid it," he said.

Reform measures

Since becoming pope in 2013, Francis has used his Christmas speech to speak against those who want to limit his efforts to reform the Vatican and the Catholic Church.

Earlier this year, Francis cut pay to Cardinals by 10 percent. He also barred them from receiving gifts valued higher than \$45. And, the Pope passed a law that permits the Vatican's own court to try Cardinals on criminal charges.

Francis compared the leaders to the person in The Bible called Naaman, who was a rich and honored general. Naaman had to become humble to be healed from **leprosy**.

"The story of Naaman reminds us that Christmas is the time when each of us needs to find the **courage**" and become humble like Naaman, he said.

New rules

This year, Francis took his strongest step yet to control extremely conservative Catholic clergy. He placed restrictions on the use of the old style of Latin Mass ceremony.

He strengthened those restrictions last weekend with a new set of rules to prevent local church publications from advertising the times for Latin masses.

The Pope warned that the church might not survive without change. "All of us are called to humility, because all of us are called to remember and to give life. We are called to find a right relationship with our roots and our branches. Without those two things, we become sick, **destined** to disappear," he said.

I'm Jill Robbins.

Nicole Winfield reported on this story for the Associated Press. Jill Robbins adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. and Katy Weaver were the editors.

Words in This Story

humility – *n.* the quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people

church – *n.* a particular Christian group

pride – *n.* a feeling that you are more important or better than other people

tremendous -*adj.* very large or very great

disguise - *v.* to hide (something) so that it will not be seen or noticed

leprosy - *n.* a serious disease that causes painful rough areas on the skin and that badly damages nerves and flesh

courage -*n.* the ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous

destined - *adj.* certain to do or to be something

What do you think of the Pope's speech? We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section.
