

<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/11/20/pope-francis-calls-german-bishops-account-eroded-faith/>

by [Thomas D. Williams, Ph.D.](#) 20 Nov 2015

## **Pulling no punches, Pope Francis laid out statistic after statistic before a group of German bishops and wondered aloud why the Church in Germany is in freefall.**

In his [address](#) Friday, Francis acknowledged that the Catholic Church in Germany is very “professional,” as well as being active in social work and education. At the same time, he urged them to make sure that these activities are genuinely “Catholic” in their character in order that they continue helping to build a more livable society.

Francis noted there has been “a drastic drop in Sunday Mass attendance” and in the whole of Catholic sacramental life in Germany, especially in traditionally Catholic areas.

“Whereas in the 1960s wherever you went almost every Catholic participated in Sunday Mass,” he said, “nowadays it’s often less than ten percent. Fewer and fewer receive the sacraments and the Sacrament of Penance [confession] has all but disappeared.”

“Fewer and fewer Catholics receive the Sacrament of Confirmation or get married in church,” he added, “and the number of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life is severely diminished.”

In 2014, the Catholic Church in [Germany](#) lost a greater number of faithful than in any previous year in its history for which there are records: 218,000 people, or 39,000 more than the previous year.

“When we take all these facts into account,” Francis said, “we can speak of a true erosion of the Catholic faith in Germany.”

Francis recognized that the conditions in modern society are not favorable to the faith, and a certain worldliness prevails. “This worldliness deforms souls and suffocates consciousness of reality,” he said. “A worldly person lives in an artificial world that he builds for himself. He surrounds himself with tinted glass so as not to see outside.”

At the same time, he insisted, “It is necessary to overcome a paralyzing resignation” that would keep us from doing what is necessary, or just dreaming of “the good old days.”

It is time, he said, “for bishops to diligently carry out their mission as teachers of the faith – the faith that is preached and lived in communion with the universal Church – in the manifold areas of their pastoral ministry.”

The Pope’s words came barely a month after the Vatican synod of bishops on marriage and the family. As a group, the German clerics have been the [most aggressive](#) and most united group in the Church in pushing for a relaxation of sacramental discipline. Despite opposition from Rome, the German bishops seem determined to go it alone.

According to Bishop Gebhard Fürst of Stuttgart, the [German bishops](#) decided to allow divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion, despite clear instructions to the contrary from the Vatican’s doctrinal chief. Francis’ words emphasizing the importance of “communion with the universal Church” cannot have been lost on his hearers.

The Catholic Church in Germany is quite wealthy, in no small part due to the notorious “church tax.” In 2011, the German Church received somewhere in the neighborhood of \$6.3 billion from contributions.

Moreover, the Church in Germany is the second largest employer in the country, with only the German state employing more people. Many of those employed are non-believers, and the Church’s considerable institutional presence influences people’s rapport with it, tending to create a more formal, and sometimes utilitarian, relationship.

Whether the bishops have the faith and the mettle to stem the exodus of the faithful remains to be seen.

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