TRANSCRIPT

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | Ladies and Gentleman, there are occasions, Gwendoline remarked, in The Importance of Being Earnest, when it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one’s mind. It becomes a pleasure, and this is one such occasion, with my trusty Hitch by my side I am very proud to be here, but also very nervous, very worried I’ve been nervous all day and the reason I’ve been nervous is quite simple. And that is that this motion matters to me. It matters to me greatly. It’s not a joke, it’s not a game, it’s not just a debate. I genuinely believe that the Catholic Church is not, to put it at its mildest, a force for good in the world. And therefore, it is important for me to try and marshall my facts as well I can to explain why I think that. But I want first of all to say that I have no quarrel, no argument and I wish to express no contempt for individual devout and pious members of that church. They are welcome to their sacraments. They’re welcome to their reliquaries and to their Blessed Virgin Mary. They’re welcome to their, erm, to their faith, to the importance they place in it. To the comfort and the joy that they receive from it. All of that is absolutely fine by me. It would be impertinent and wrong of me to express any antagonism towards any individual who wishes to find salvation in whatever form they wish to express it. That, to me, is sacrosanct, as much as any article of faith is sacrosanct to anyone of any church or any faith, in the world. It’s very important. |
|  | 2 | It’s also very important to me, as it happens, that I have my own beliefs. They are a belief in the enlightenment. They are a belief in the eternal adventure of trying to discover moral truth in the world. Discover. It’s a terribly important word, to which we might return. It’s a fight, it’s an empirical fight. It’s one that was begun in the middle of the last millennium. It’s given the name The Enlightenment. And there is nothing, sadly, that the Catholic Church and its hierarchs likes to do more than to attack The Enlightenment. It did so at the time. Reference was made to Galileo and the fact that he was tortured for trying to explain the Copernican theory of the universe. |
|  | 3 | That’s history. History, as Miss Widdecombe has reminded us, is irrelevant. It’s not important. All that matters now is that billions of pounds go out of this extraordinary institution to relieve the poor around the world and make the world a better place. History is of no importance whatsoever. Well I beg to differ. History. History whinnies and quivers and vibrates in all of us in this hall. In this square mile. Let’s think about this square mile. I’ll come back to it in a moment. But first, Christopher made mention of limbo. |
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|  | 11 | (Applause) I have to…I have to say. This is not a problem that necessarily is permanent. I like to believe that in ten years time I could come back and argue the opposite. Even though I talked about the history and the structure problems on this benighted institution, the cruelty and unpleasantness it is caused around the world, I have yet to approach one of the subjects dearest to my heart. I’ve made three documentary films on the subject of AIDS in Africa. My particular love is the country of Uganda. It is one of the countries I love most in the world. I’ve been there many times and I’ve interviewed [Joseph Oloka-Onyango], [Yoweri Museveni], and and his wife Janet, ahh before, unfortunately she suddenly saw “God”. Ahmm…There was a period when Uganda had the worst incidence of HIV/AIDS in the world. I went to Raki, the village where it was first spotted. But through an amazing initiative called ABC—Abstinence, Be faithful, Correct use of condoms. Those three! I’m not denying that Abstinence is a very good way of not getting AIDS. It really is, it works, so does being faithful, but so do condoms, and do not deny it! And this Pope! THIS POPE, not satisfied, NOT SATISFIED with saying “condoms are against our religion, please consider first abstinence, second being faithful to your partner”, he spreads the LIE that condoms actually increase the incidence of AIDS. He actually makes sure that AIDS is conditional on saying no to condoms. I have been to the hospital in Bwindi in the west of Uganda, where I do quite a lot of work. It is unbelievable the pain and suffering you see. |
|  | 12 | Now yes, yes it is true abstinence will stop it. It’s…It’s the strange thing about this Church, it is obsessed with sex, absolutely obsessed. Now, they will say, they would say we with our permissive society and our rude jokes are obsessed. No, we have a healthy attitude, we like it, it’s fun, it’s jolly, because it’s a primary impulse it can be dangerous and dark and difficult, it’s a bit like food in that respect only even more exciting. The only people who are obsessed with food are anorexics and the morbidly obese, and that in erotic terms is the Catholic Church in a nutshell! (Applause) |
|  | 13 | So, all I want to say really, is that we are here in a Methodist Hall. I am not trying to argue against religion on this occasion. I’m not saying that. I understand the desire of anybody to seek spiritual rewards in a complex and difficult to understand world. We don’t know why we are here, where we’re going, we want answers, we love the idea of answers, how marvelous it would be! But there are other choices. There are Quakers- who could possibly quarrel with a Quaker – with their pacifism, with their openness, with their ease, with their simplicity, with their refusal to tell anybody what is a dogma and what isn’t, even with Methodists also. I’m not saying Protestantism is the answer against Catholicism. I’m merely saying there are all kinds of ways that we can search for the truth. You do not need this “Imperial” panoply of marble and gold. Do you know who would be the last person ever to be accepted as a Prince of the Church? The Galilean carpenter. That Jew. They would kick him out before he tried to cross the threshold. He would be so ill-at-ease in the Church. That simple and remarkable man, if he said the things that he was said to have said. What would he think..what would he think of St. Peter’s? What would he think of the wealth, and the power, and the self-justification, and the wheedling apologies? (Applause) What would he think of a man who calls himself “the Father”, a celibate, who dares to lecture people on what family values are? What would he think of any of that? He would be horrified. |
|  | 14 | But there is a solution, there is an answer, there is redemption available for all of us and any one of us, and to the Catholic Church, funny enough I think it is a novel by Morris West, The Pope could decide that all this power, all this wealth, this hierarchy of princess, bishops, archbishops, priests, monks, and nuns could be sent out in the world with money and art treasures, to put them back in the countries that they once raped and violated, whose original systems of animism and belief in simplicity they told them would (tell them) take them straight to hell.They could give that money away, and they could concentrate on the apparent essence of their belief. Then, I would stand here and say the Catholic Church may well be a force for good in the world. But until that day, it is NOT. Thank you.Source: LYBIO.net |

Write 1 or 2 letters next to the fragment in which each main point is mentioned.

1. There could be a way in which the Catholic Church was a force of good.
2. The Church’s point of view on homosexuality is questioned.
3. The church’s answer to child abuse is to ban homosexuals.
4. Rich and poor people are treated differently by the church.
5. The Catholic Church has not been strict enough about child abuse.
6. The church had financial benefits from the fear it created.
7. The Catholic Church uses its power to control the world, especially uneducated people.
8. The Catholic Church insists on putting the past behind but some of it.
9. Science vs religion.
10. People are entitled to their beliefs.
11. Religion and sexuality are discussed.
12. The topic of this debate is truly relevant.
13. Is the Catholic Church the best spiritual option?
14. History matters, not just money.
15. Heaven is reached through church, never without it.
16. Child abuse and celibacy are connected.
17. Catholicism is responsible for making people sick.

**KEY**

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| --- | --- |
|  | **J , K** |
|  | **I** |
|  | **N** |
|  | **F** |
|  | **O** |
|  | **D** |
|  | **G, H** |
|  | **C, E** |
|  | **B** |
|  | **P** |
|  | **Q** |
|  | **K** |
|  | **M** |
|  | **A** |

**TRANSCRIPT**

[Zeinab Badawi (24 November 1959, Sudan)] Source: LYBIO.net

Well thank you very much indeed, Ann Widdecombe. And our final speaker is against the motion: Stephen Fry, a bit of an all-rounder really, Stephen can turn his hand to many things. Stephen, let’s hear your views.

[Stephen John Fry (24 August 1957)]

Ladies and Gentleman, there are occasions, Gwendoline remarked, in The Importance of Being Earnest, when it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one’s mind. It becomes a pleasure, and this is one such occasion, with my trusty Hitch by my side I am very proud to be here, but also very nervous, very worried I’ve been nervous all day and the reason I’ve been nervous is quite simple. And that is that this motion matters to me. It matters to me greatly. It’s not a joke, it’s not a game, it’s not just a debate. I genuinely believe that the Catholic Church is not, to put it at its mildest, a force for good in the world. And therefore, it is important for me to try and marshall my facts as well I can to explain why I think that. But I want first of all to say that I have no quarrel, no argument and I wish to express no contempt for individual devout and pious members of that church. They are welcome to their sacraments. They’re welcome to their reliquaries and to their Blessed Virgin Mary. They’re welcome to their, erm, to their faith, to the importance they place in it. To the comfort and the joy that they receive from it. All of that is absolutely fine by me. It would be impertinent and wrong of me to express any antagonism towards any individual who wishes to find salvation in whatever form they wish to express it. That, to me, is sacrosanct, as much as any article of faith is sacrosanct to anyone of any church or any faith, in the world. It’s very important.

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It seems so tedious and so silly. One of those little casuistic games that tomists and others play. Aquinas and Augustus of Hippo, both proposed this extraordinary idea that babies who were unbaptised would not know heaven. They also proposed the idea of purgatory which doesn’t exist in The Bible. There’s absolutely no evidence for it. However, what an extraordinary brilliant coup to imagine such a thing as purgatory. That a soul needs to be prayed for, in order to go to heaven. In order to turn left when he enters the aeroplane of heaven and get a first class seat. That, he needs to be prayed for. And many hundreds, indeed over a thousand years, you’ll be amazed what generous terms those prayers came at. Sometimes as little as two thirds of a year’s salary. Could ensure that a dead loved one would go to heaven. And money could ensure that your baby. Your dead child, your dead uncle, your dead mother, could go to heaven.

And if you were rich enough, you could have a charm tree built and monks would permanently sing prayers so that that existence in heaven for the child would go up and up and up until they were at the table of the Lord themselves.

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Just imagine in this square mile how many people were burned for reading The Bible in English. And one of the principle burners and torturers of those who tried to read The Bible in English here in London, was Thomas More. You may know if you’ve read the novel, *Wolf Hall*, which one the Man Booker Prize just the other day. Now, that’s a long time ago, it’s not relevant, except that it was only last century that Thomas More was made a saint, and it was only in the year 2000 that the last pope, the Pole, he made Thomas More the patron saint of politicians. This is a man who put people on the rack for daring to own a Bible in English. He tortured them for owning a Bible in their own language. The idea that the Catholic Church exists to disseminate the word of the Lord is nonsense. It is the only owner of the truth for the billions that it likes to boast about ’cause those billions are uneducated and poor as again, it likes to boast about. But they are the ones it can tell and bully and domineer.

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