

# Pope Francis reportedly claims 'there is no Hell'

Vatican statement denies, says not a 'faithful transcription' of pontiff's words.



Pope Francis holds up the Gospel as he celebrates a Chrism Mass inside St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican, Thursday, March 29, 2018. Francis urged priests on Thursday to be spiritually close to their flocks and not insist on preaching

Pope Francis reportedly claimed Wednesday that there is "no Hell" and condemned souls simply "disappear," refuting thousands of years of church teaching.

The remarks came during an interview with the pontiff's longtime atheist friend, Eugenio Scalfari, founder of the liberal Italian newspaper La Repubblica. The interview was translated by the respected website Rorate Caeli.

Mr. Scalfari asked Francis where condemned souls go to suffer for eternity.

"They are not punished, those who repent obtain the forgiveness of God and enter the rank of souls who contemplate him," Francis said in response, "but those who do not repent and cannot therefore be forgiven disappear. There is no hell, there

is the disappearance of sinful souls.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms “the existence of hell and its eternity.”

“Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, ‘eternal fire,’” the Catechism states. “The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.”

After the pope’s remarks garnered worldwide attention, the Vatican released a statement refuting the reliability of the interview. “The Holy Father Francis recently received the founder of the newspaper La Repubblica in a private meeting on the occasion of Easter, without however giving him any interviews,” the Vatican said. “What is reported by the author in today’s article is the result of his reconstruction, in which the textual words pronounced by the Pope are not quoted. No quotation of the aforementioned article must therefore be considered as a faithful transcription of the words of the Holy Father.”

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