

A1 and A2

Pope: Fake news satanic; Eve duped

VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis on Wednesday condemned fake news as satanic, saying journalists and social media users should shun and unmask manipulative "snake tactics" that fomented division to serve political and economic interests.

A2

POPE: FAKE NEWS SATANIC; EVE DUPED

FROM A1

"Fake news is a sign of intolerant and hypersensitive attitudes, and leads only to the spread of arrogance and hatred. That is the end result of untruth," Francis said in the first document by a Pope on the subject.

The document was issued after months of debate on how much fake news may have influenced the 2016 US presidential campaign and the election of President Donald Trump.

"Spreading fake news can serve to advance specific goals, influence political decisions, and serve economic interests," the Pope wrote, condemning the "manipulative use of social networks" and other forms of communication.

Journalism for peace

Called "The truth will set you free—fake news and journalism for peace," the document was issued in advance of the Catholic Church's World Day of Social Communications on May 13.

"This false but believable news is 'captious,' inasmuch as it grasps people's attention by appealing to stereotypes and com-

mon social prejudices and exploiting instantaneous emotions like anxiety, contempt, anger and frustration," Francis said.

'Satan's serpent'

False stories, the Pope said, spread so quickly that even authoritative denials often could not contain the damage done and many people run the risk of becoming "unwilling accomplices in spreading biased and baseless ideas."

He called for "education for truth" that would help people discern, evaluate and understand news in order to recognize the "sly and dangerous form of seduction that worms its way into the heart with false and alluring arguments."

Francis compared the use of fake news to the Bible story of the devil who, disguised as a serpent, persuaded Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree.

The Pope said Eve was fed wrong information by Satan, who told her the fruit would make her and Adam as all-knowing as God.

"We need to unmask what could be called the 'snake tactics' used by those [purveyors of fake news] who disguise them-

selves in order to strike at any time and place," he said.

'Journalism is a mission'

The Pope said the role of journalists was "not just a job, it is a mission" and they had particular responsibility to stem fake news.

"Amid feeding frenzies and the mad rush for a scoop, they must remember that the heart of information is not the speed with which it is reported or its audience impact, but persons," he said.

Breaking news

Francis said journalism should be "less concentrated on breaking news than on exploring the underlying causes of conflicts ... a journalism committed to pointing out alternatives to the escalation of shouting matches and verbal violence."

He described journalists as "protectors of news" who should promote a "journalism of peace."

"I mean a journalism that is truthful and opposed to falsehoods, rhetorical slogans and sensational headlines," the Pope added.

—REPORTS FROM REUTERS AND AFP

* POPE FRANCIS
* FAKE NEWS