**Huma 1100—“Sacredness” News Article Assignment Name: Paul English**

**Due Tuesday 26-Feb**

Find a current news or magazine article that relates in some way to the readings that we have done in the “Sacredness, Spirituality, and Morality” section. Type straight into this form (single space), print it off, and bring it to class. Your answers should be thorough and meet the minimum word requirements. This assignment is worth 6 points.

1. **What is the title of the article and where can I find it?**

“Analysis: What is the role of a modern pope?” - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/21424966>

1. **Which reading in the textbook does it relate to?**

Christianity

1. **Give a summary of the article. (100-150 words)**

Following Pope Benedict XVI’s recent resignation as Pope, this article examines the uniquely spiritual and yet still political role as the leader of the Roman Catholic religion, a large church spanning many nations with a great following. The Pope must be both a spiritual leader for the sake of religion and a political leader, able to nurture amongst the culture the correct sense of love and community which the church represents.

As the Pope is aging, and becoming less capable to handle this role, both mentally and physically, he has chosen to resign, allowing new leadership to arise that can adequately handle the unique modern & technological demands that this office will require.

1. **Pick one of the readings from this section and describe how this article helps you understand the textbook reading better, or how the textbook reading helps you understand the article better. (200-250 words)**

Most of the articles relating to the topic of Christianity in our readings, are either new testament accounts centered around Jesus Christ, or related gospel accounts. A bit of reference is added relating to the succession of the “Christian” religion with note of the historical timeline, where the Roman Catholic church lasted as the majority sect of Christianity.

The Roman Catholic religion is arguably much different than what it was in its earlier years, but still shares much of the representative hierarchy that was established in the years after the accounts of the New Testament. Understanding how this hierarchy and organization has changed and grown, as well as remained the same in some ways helps us to recognize what values are held highest, as well as what thoughts and ideas have won out over some of the others. It is still the predominant sect of Christianity. They still value love, kindness, and other related virtues. They still treat the Old & New Testament as works of God, and they also treat their own clergy as being representatives of God’s word.

Does the prompt resignation break the traditions which this religion has come accustomed too? Is this why the Pope offers explanation of his actions? I think that the change of culture our world is facing now, is an unprecedented paradigm shift in communication, and a religion that has lasted this long has seen a few of these already.

1. **What are your thoughts on this article and the ideas and/or issues it raises? (100 words)**

I like the sentiment of the article, it attempts to avoid biases, or negative opinion and instead simply highlights some of the logical reasoning that a resignation like this was arrived at. It also details a bit of the background of the role a leader like this must face in a modern world. I find it interesting that the Pope feels that the leadership of the Church will require a unique style of papal authority that embraces the technological trend, instead of dismissal. I’m definitely impressed that emphasis was noted around how the current focus of Christian life should be around love and spirituality, as sometimes we see different views of many Christian religions that aren’t necessarily favorable, or wholesome.

1. **Come up with two questions on the news article and the textbook reading that you think are important to ask. (Come up with one question for each, but don’t answer them.)**
   1. Is the Pope abandoning the sacred plan that God, the unique God that they believe in, has laid out for him and their church?
   2. Is accommodating modern technologies, knowledge, and improved communication a departure from the traditions that many Roman Catholics know & believe in, or is it simply another facet of exploring or practicing those traditions?