To make sense of ... media... it is essential to get the relationship between the media and advertising the right way around: commercial mass media are not news and features backed up by advertising; on the contrary, the commercial mass media are advertisements which carry news, features and entertainment in order to capture audiences for the advertisers... *It is a complete mistake to analyze the relationship between media and advertising by supposing that the media's prime function is to sell advertised products to audiences. On the contrary,* the media's job is to sell audiences to advertisers.
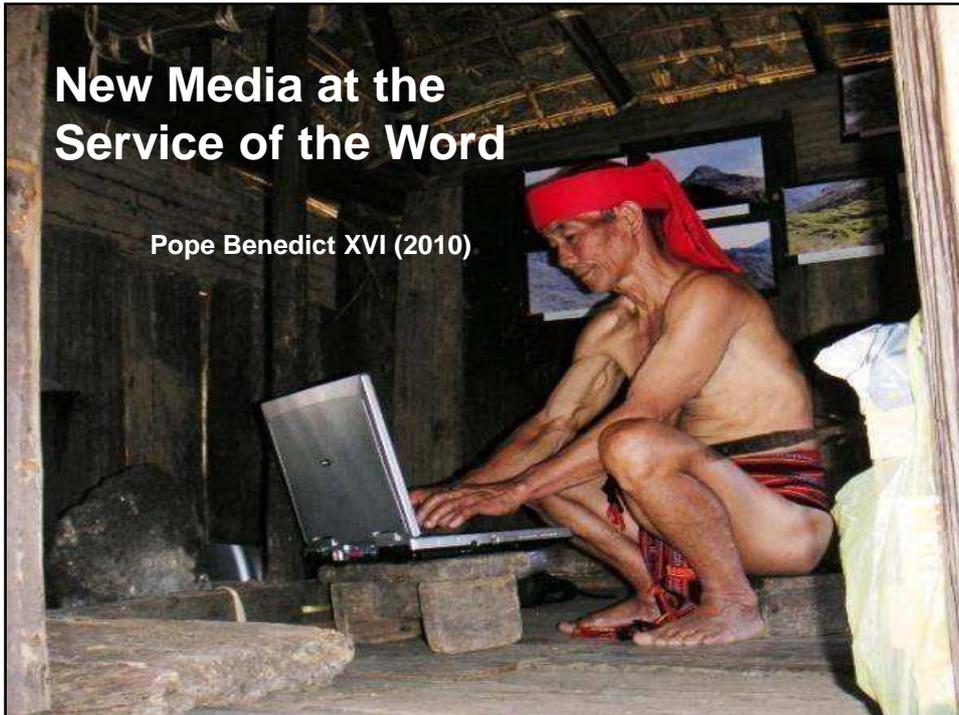
Humprey McQueen
an Australian author, historian, and cultural commentator

1

New Media at the Service of the Word

Pope Benedict XVI (2010)

"Printing, being a human activity, must always be done according to accepted ethical standards and moral norms. Mass media without ethics is a scourge not a blessing for the nation.

Ethical norms. In invoking freedom of the expression, media practitioners must also insure that they adhere to ethical norms. For every gift, there is responsibility. For every right, there is corresponding duty. Press freedom is not absolute."

The Most Rev. Socrates B. Villegas, D.D.
Archbishop of Lingayen- Dagupan (Pangasinan)

Source: **Pinpin: Christian Filipino, first Bataeno, Commentary. Philippine Daily Inquirer. Manila, March 17, 2010. pp. 1 & A19**

"An ethical newspaper 's role is to lead. The unethical newspaper's role is to mislead.   An unethical newspaper's loyalty is to the government or to a given group. An ethical newspaper's loyalty is to the people, the constitution, and the freedom under which principles of journalism manage to make newspaper great."

Joaquin "Chino" P. Roces
From Press Forum "The Press and the Charter"
November 1986 issue

4

Parents who use the TV set as a handy unpaid *"yaya"* for their little children, be forwarned. Violent TV shows and video games have been proven by experts to be volatile and psychologically risky viewing fare for unsupervised kids."

In other words, very young children should'nt be allowed to watch TV alone, so parents are strongly advised to instantly put a stop to the "convenient" practice.

Nestor U. Torre, Viewfinder,
PDI, May 16, 2010, p. H3

… alarmingly suggestive and even graphic sexual content has been rapped by child psychologists, who point out that minors are too physically unformed to securely and responsibly deal with all that mature content.

Since TV is able to "enter" all homes, it's supposed to be a "for general patronage" medium whose shows are OK for viewers of all ages to safely watch.

Nestor U. Torre, Viewfinder, PDI, May 16, 2010, H3

TV is a medium that shows skimpy clad, sexy dancers sensually cavorting and gyrating at high noon is damaged and damaging as far as "safe" viewing is concerned.

More psychological landmines are out there in TV la-la land for young viewers. All those loud and livid commercials practically forcing viewers to buy, buy, buy' TV personalities cracking salacious jokes with raucous, rowdy relish, color- coded politicians imploring viewers to vote, vote, vote; "funny" show hosts engaging in slapstick, colorful insults and painful "physical" comedy, etc.

Nestor U. Torre, Viewfinder,
PDI May 16, 2010, H3

Clearly, children should be protected from such graphic and even vile viewing fare.

So, unsupervised viewing for very young kid is a no-no. So much for TV as the family's unpaid electronic *yaya.*

This is not to summarily indict the TV medium, which is capable of doing good. It's a simple reminder that TV can also disturb, confuse and corrupt vulnerable young sensibilities, so protection and parental guidance are keys.

Nestor U. Torre, Viewfinder,
PDI May 16, 2010, p. H3

Media Dialogue points out
what local TV lacks
during the 2nd Dialogue
with Media Practitioners on May 2010
as written by Marinel R. Cruz
PDI, May 20, 2010, p. F4

"Not everything on TV is lousy. But that shows need to inject more educational values for young viewers"

Frank G. Rivera
Executive Director
National Council for Children's Television (NCCT)
PDI, May 20, 2010, p. F4

"There are other factors to consider– the environment, nurturing and even religion. Not all we see on TV is trash. Parents should choose what their kids should watch. They also have to be around to make sure they are able to answer questions that their children may ask."

> Tina Samson- Veloso
> Writer, GMA 7
> PDI, May 20, 2010, p. F4

"Education begins at home. Even if we keep showing good values on TV but these aren't clear to kids, nothing will change. This is why I think before we talk about educating the kids, we should first educate the parents."

> Gina Marissa Tagasa
> ABS- CBN
> PDI, May 20, 2010, p. F4

"The networks should not take the blame for not prioritizing shows for young audiences. TV is still a business venture. The main objective is to make money. If you inject lines that tend to be preachy, viewers get turned off."

Dennis Adobas
Entertainment Columnist
PDI, May 20, 2010, p. F4

"It is not TV that dictates what kind of shows viewers should watch. It's the viewers themselves who decide If it were all to me, I would make a show that would earn a lot but at the same time convey a message. But it doesn't always work that way."

Tina Samson- Veloso
Writer, GMA 7
PDI, May 20, 2010, p. F4

"If I see something on TV that would damage kids' inner core or values – like the behavior of the stars of a reality show – I as a parent don't allow my children to watch it. To be safe, I'll keep them from these shows until they reach a certain age when they can appreciate and understand the developments that take place on reality TV."

Tintin Bersola- Babao/TV Host
PDI, January 16, 2011, G6

"To me, these so- called reality TV shows (particularly "Survivor" and "Big Brother") are not good and pose a danger not just to children but to adults as well. Two things I'd like to point out:

1.) It can never be "reality" because at the back of the minds of every participant, they are still aware that there are cameras with directors, TV network executives and viewers watching. So there would always be variable degrees of consciousness and they will never ever act naturally as they would in the real world without cameras. People mingle or socialize in the outside world. With PBB for instance, reality is that people get locked up to perform duties for someone they don't see or know. That type of reality only happens in New Bilibid Prison.

2.) These shows are particularly harmful in terms of building relationships because they foster suspicion, deception and betrayal in the guise of working together and cooperation. They promote the idea of cosmetic camaraderie or *"kaplastikan"* which destroys the real essence of friendship and/or love, which is sacrifice. It fosters the "me- first" and "only- me- is important attitude."

Jojo Alejar/ Actor- TV Host
PDI, January 16, 2011, p. G6

"Our viewers these days are after what's real because they can relate to it. But there are risks to this TV genre. Reality shows sometimes show things that should not be imitated by kids. The media can contribute 50% to the proper guidance of these kids but the other 50% should really start at home --- from the parents' prior upbringing."

Mikee Cojuangco- Jaworski
Actress/ Anak TV Spokesperson
PDI, January 16, 2011, G6

"My children and I do not watch reality TV shows (like "Survivor" and "Pinoy Big Brother"). I don't like them and neither do my kids. I still find relevance in the competitions that involve developing talents such as dancing, singing, creating, modeling, etc. But the ones that just involve "living" in front of the cameras I find too crass.

For children, I think we are presenting poor role models and a distorted perception of what is right and wrong; what should or should not be revealed; what is acceptable or not. I do not encourage my kids to watch these shows at all."

Lisa Macuja/ *Ballerina.* PDI, January 16, 2011, G6

Children, especially during vacation, watch TV between 5pm and 11pm.

"We are not telling the networks that they are producing bad shows. The objective is to point out what these shows lack and find a way to provide it.

Let's make prime time work for these kids, let's inject helpful information in our scripts, without necessarily changing the story line" Garcia

TV commercials and the falsity of their claims

"Viewers hope that "truth in advertising" regulators will be more vigilant and proactive in rejecting these false claims and approve only those ads whose claims actually work."

Nestor Torre. Viewfinder. PDI, May 13, 2012, p. E3

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"**It is the responsibility of the networks and talents to educate themselves (about) gender sensitivity, children and women's rights issues, the rights of indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and other marginalized sectors.**"

MTRCB Resolution
"TV Talents should educate themselves"
By Bayani San Diego, r.
PDI, May 6, 2011, G1

It really takes a village to raise a child these days. In an era ruled by media both old and new, the task of parenting has become just a community's responsibility but a collective advocacy as well.

Bayani San Diego p. F1
PDI, August 15, 2013

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TV has become a virtual nanny, making it imperative for parents to be informed and vigilant.

Media should be more responsible, especially in producing shows for a young audience. "As consumers , we have the right to demand more nutritious media, with no harmful side effects."

Concerned parents should "withhold patronage of offensive TV programs." She encouraged viewers confronted with detrimental content: "Be insulted. Complain. We are not faceless voiceless, powerless."

Ms. Emily Abrera
MTRCB Family and Child Summit 2013
p. F1, PDI, August 15, 2013

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There are studies that showed the power of TV and its possible harmful effects on children. There are links between exposure to non-interactive media (like TV) and lack of social skills, concentration and critical thinking. The value of passing on to children the love of books and reading should be stressed.

Ms. Emily Abrera
(CCP Chair and former advertising executive)

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Values were subliminally formed in the home and that exposure to TV was a factor in this process. "Children are innate truth tellers, until adults and/ or society teach them to lie." She expressed concern over comedy shows that "use insults as basis for humor" or "depict children as little adults."

Ms. Honey Carandang, *child psychologist*
MTRCB Family and Children Summit 2013
p. 1, PDI, August 15, 2013

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"**How can TV become the ally, and not the enemy of parents in impairing positive values to children?" Parents should be proactive, "to heed the call of MTRCB rating system; regard TV as a teaching tool; mediate and regulate kids' viewing fare; protect children from traumatic and overwhelming stimuli." Children must be spared from footage of murder victims, tsunami and other disasters on news shows, until they reach the proper age to process these disturbing images."**

Ms. Honey Carandang, child psychologist, p. F1 PDI August 15, 2013 26

"We tend to think of media only as a means to pass on and receive information or be entertained. But there are many other possibilities we can explore. The potential for media to educate and provide spiritual enrichment for every person is vast. We as media users can contribute to the education and spiritual welfare of others by being attentive in every message we formulate and send."

Sr. Consolata Manding, FSP, Ph.D.
Use Media for Mission
The Missions Newsletter, 2010 Volume 49, p. 12

"God communicated with men through his Son. In our service to the Lord we are called to spread his message of the love of God to the Lord. Our Carmelite way of life in allegiance to Jesus Christ in contemplation, in brotherhood, and in service is part of this evangelization. Therefore we **"Carmelites are to be aware of the growing importance of world-wide communication in the present-day society and of the major technological innovations in this field. There is no doubt that the mass media can play an important role in evangelization; the abuse and manipulative use of media, however, can endanger human dignity and freedom. Our communities shall therefore evaluate the best ways to make use of the mass media, with the view both to safeguarding the contemplative and fraternal dimensions of our lives, and to increasing the effectiveness of our apostolate."**

(Carmelite Constitutions 34, 2)

"**The social communication media, in particular, because of their educational potential, have a special responsibility for promoting respect for the family, making clear its expectations and rights, and presenting all its beauty"(no.5);** *"for this reason it is essential that social communication should assiduously defend this person and fully respect human dignity."*

The Message of Pope Benedict XVI,
For the 42nd World Communication Day
The Media : At the Crossroads between Self- Promotion and Service Searching for the Truth in order to Share it with Others **(4 May 2008) repeats its message on World Day of Peace. (January 1, 2008) .**

"The new media – telecommunications and internet in particular—are changing the very face of communication, perhaps this is a valuable opportunity to reshape it, to make more visible the essential and indispensable elements of the truth about the human person."
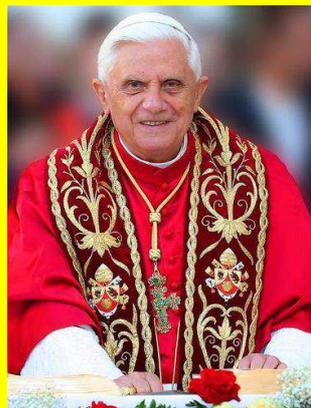
(cf. Apostolic Letter The Rapid Development, 10). Thus, the need of critical, responsible and truthful Media Educators today.

"Those who are active in the production and dissemination of new media content, therefore, **should strive to *respect* the dignity and worth of the human person.** If the new technologies are to serve the good of individuals and of society, **all users will avoid the sharing of words and images that are degrading of human beings, that promote hatred and intolerance, that debase the goodness and intimacy of human sexuality or that exploit the weak and vulnerable.**"

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE 43rd WORLD DAY OF COMMUNICATIONS "New Technologies, New Relationships. Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship."
May 24, 2009

New Media at the Service of the Word
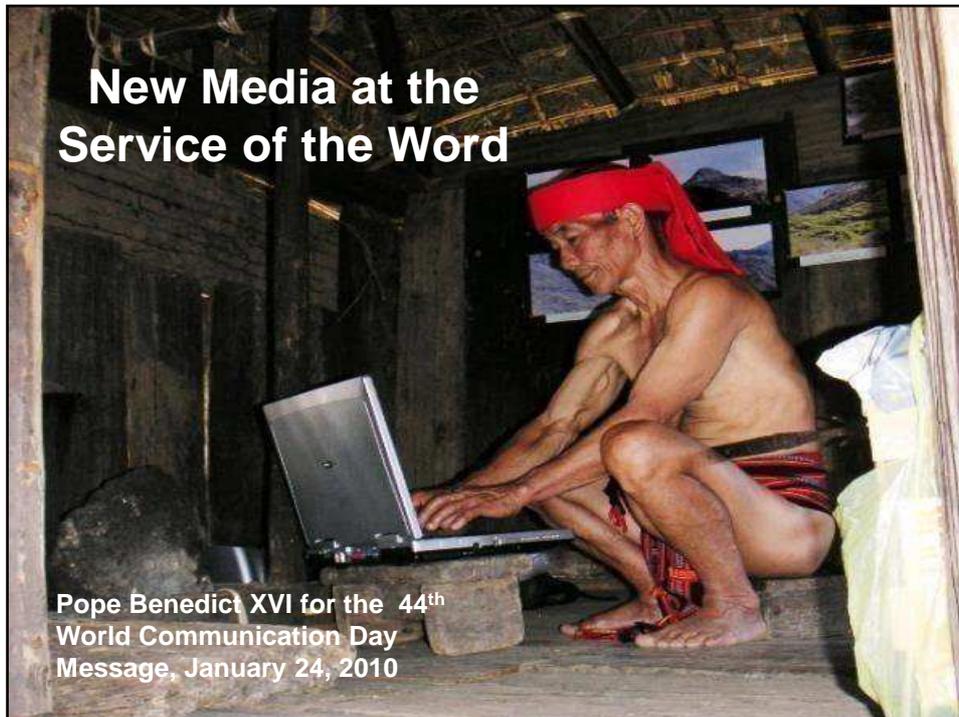
Pope Benedict XVI for the 44th World Communication Day Message, January 24, 2010

"The spread of multimedia communications and its rich "menu of options" might make us think it sufficient simply to be present on the Web, or to see it only as a space to be filled. Yet priests can rightly be expected to be present in the world of digital communications as faithful witnesses to the Gospel, exercising their proper role as leaders of communities which increasingly express themselves with the different "voices" provided by the digital marketplace. **Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources (images, videos, animated features, blogs, websites) which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization and catechesis."**

• P*MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS*
POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE 44th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY
"The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World:
**New Media at the Service of the Word"**
[Sunday, 16 May 2010]

 "The task of witnessing to the Gospel in the digital era calls for everyone to be particularly attentive to the aspects of that message which can challenge some of the ways of thinking typical of the web. First of all, we must be aware that the truth which we long to share does not derive its worth from its "popularity" or from the amount of attention it receives. We must make it known in its integrity, instead of seeking to make it acceptable or diluting it. It must become daily nourishment and not a fleeting attraction. The truth of the Gospel is not something to be consumed or used superficially; rather it is a gift that calls for a free response. Even when it is proclaimed in the virtual space of the web, the Gospel demands to be incarnated in the real world and linked to the real faces of our brothers and sisters, those with whom we share our daily lives. Direct human relations always remain fundamental for the transmission of the faith!"

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE 45th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY
Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age,
June 5, 2011

"I would like then to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible. This is not simply to satisfy the desire to be present, but because this network is an integral part of human life. The web is contributing to the development of new and more complex intellectual and spiritual horizons, new forms of shared awareness. In this field too we are called to proclaim our faith that Christ is God, the Saviour of humanity and of history, the one in whom all things find their fulfilment (cf. *Eph* 1:10). The proclamation of the Gospel requires a communication which is at once respectful and sensitive, which stimulates the heart and moves the conscience; one which reflects the example of the risen Jesus when he joined the disciples on the way to Emmaus (cf. *Lk* 24:13-35). By his approach to them, his dialogue with them, his way of gently drawing forth what was in their heart, they were led gradually to an understanding of the mystery."

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE 45th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY
Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age,
June 5, 2011
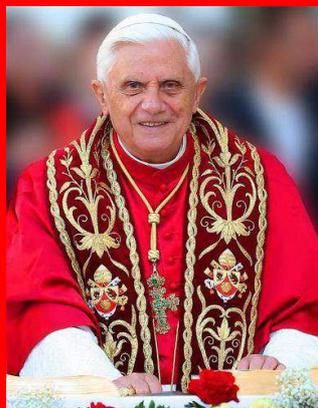
MESSAGE OF
HIS HOLINESS
POPE BENEDICT XVI
FOR THE 47th WORLD
COMMUNICATIONS DAY

"Social Networks: portals of truth and faith; new spaces for evangelization."

[Sunday, 12 May 2013]

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As the 2013 World Communications Day draws near, I would like to offer you some reflections on an increasingly important reality regarding the way in which people today communicate among themselves. **I wish to consider the development of digital social networks which are helping to create a new *"agora"*, an open public square in which people share ideas, information and opinions, and in which new relationships and forms of community can come into being.**

- These spaces, when engaged in a wise and balanced way, help to foster forms of dialogue and debate which, if conducted respectfully and with concern for privacy, responsibility and truthfulness, can reinforce the bonds of unity between individuals and effectively promote the harmony of the human family. The exchange of information can become true communication, links ripen into friendships, and connections facilitate communion. **If the networks are called to realize this great potential, the people involved in them must make an effort to be authentic since, in these spaces, it is not only ideas and information that are shared, but ultimately our very selves.**

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The development of social networks calls for commitment: people are engaged in building relationships and making friends, in looking for answers to their questions and being entertained, but also in finding intellectual stimulation and sharing knowledge and know-how. The networks are increasingly becoming part of the very fabric of society, inasmuch as they bring people together on the basis of these fundamental needs. Social networks are thus nourished by aspirations rooted in the human heart.

The culture of social networks and the changes in the means and styles of communication pose demanding challenges to those who want to speak about truth and values. Often, as is also the case with other means of social communication, the significance and effectiveness of the various forms of expression appear to be determined more by their popularity than by their intrinsic importance and value. Popularity, for its part, is often linked to celebrity or to strategies of persuasion rather than to the logic of argumentation. At times the gentle voice of reason can be overwhelmed by the din of excessive information and it fails to attract attention which is given instead to those who express themselves in a more persuasive manner. **The social media thus need the commitment of all who are conscious of the value of dialogue, reasoned debate and logical argumentation; of people who strive to cultivate forms of discourse and expression which appeal to the noblest aspirations of those engaged in the communication process.** Dialogue and debate can also flourish and grow when we converse with and take seriously people whose ideas are different from our own. "Given the reality of cultural diversity, people need not only to accept the existence of the culture of others, but also to aspire to be enriched by it and to offer to it whatever they possess that is good, true and beautiful" (*Address at the Meeting with the World of Culture*, Bélem, Lisbon, 12 May 2010).

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The challenge facing social networks is how to be truly inclusive: thus they will benefit from the full participation of believers who desire to share the message of Jesus and the values of human dignity which his teaching promotes. Believers are increasingly aware that, unless the Good News is made known also in the digital world, it may be absent in the experience of many people for whom this existential space is important. **The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young. Social networks are the result of human interaction, but for their part they also reshape the dynamics of communication which builds relationships: a considered understanding of this environment is therefore the prerequisite for a significant presence there.**

The **ability to employ the new languages is required,** not just to keep up with the times, but precisely in order to enable the infinite richness of the Gospel to find forms of expression capable of reaching the minds and hearts of all. **In the digital environment the written word is often accompanied by images and sounds. Effective communication, as in the parables of Jesus, must involve the imagination and the affectivity of those we wish to invite to an encounter with the mystery of God's love.** Besides, we know that Christian tradition has always been rich in signs and symbols: I think for example of the Cross, icons, images of the Virgin Mary, Christmas cribs, stained-glass windows and pictures in our churches. A significant part of mankind's artistic heritage has been created by artists and musicians who sought to express the truths of the faith.

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In social networks, believers show their authenticity by sharing the profound source of their hope and joy: faith in the merciful and loving God revealed in Christ Jesus. This sharing consists not only in the explicit expression of their faith, but also in their witness, in the way in which they communicate "choices, preferences and judgements that are fully consistent with the Gospel, even when it is not spoken of specifically" (*Message for the 2011 World Communications Day*). A particularly significant way of offering such witness will be through a willingness to give oneself to others by patiently and respectfully engaging their questions and their doubts as they advance in their search for the truth and the meaning of human existence. The growing dialogue in social networks about faith and belief confirms the importance and relevance of religion in public debate and in the life of society.

For those who have accepted the gift of faith with an open heart, the most radical response to mankind's questions about love, truth and the meaning of life – questions certainly not absent from social networks – are found in the person of Jesus Christ. It is natural for those who have faith to desire to share it, respectfully and tactfully, with those they meet in the digital forum. Ultimately, however, if our efforts to share the Gospel bring forth good fruit, it is always because of the power of the word of God itself to touch hearts, prior to any of our own efforts. Trust in the power of God's work must always be greater than any confidence we place in human means. In the digital environment, too, where it is easy for heated and divisive voices to be raised and where sensationalism can at times prevail, we are called to attentive discernment. Let us recall in this regard that Elijah recognized the voice of God not in the great and strong wind, not in the earthquake or the fire, but in "a still, small voice" (*1 Kg* 19:11-12). We need to trust in the fact that the basic human desire to love and to be loved, and to find meaning and truth – a desire which God himself has placed in the heart of every man and woman – keeps our contemporaries ever open to what Blessed Cardinal Newman called the "kindly light" of faith.

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Social networks, as well as being a means of evangelization, can also be a factor in human development. As an example, in some geographical and cultural contexts where Christians feel isolated, social networks can reinforce their sense of real unity with the worldwide community of believers. The networks facilitate the sharing of spiritual and liturgical resources, helping people to pray with a greater sense of closeness to those who share the same faith. An authentic and interactive engagement with the questions and the doubts of those who are distant from the faith should make us feel the need to nourish, by prayer and reflection, our faith in the presence of God as well as our practical charity: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (*1 Cor* 13:1).

In the digital world there are social networks which offer our contemporaries opportunities for prayer, meditation and sharing the word of God. But these networks can also open the door to other dimensions of faith. Many people are actually discovering, precisely thanks to a contact initially made online, the importance of direct encounters, experiences of community and even pilgrimage, elements which are always important in the journey of faith. In our effort to make the Gospel present in the digital world, we can invite people to come together for prayer or liturgical celebrations in specific places such as churches and chapels. There should be no lack of coherence or unity in the expression of our faith and witness to the Gospel in whatever reality we are called to live, whether physical or digital. When we are present to others, in any way at all, we are called to make known the love of God to the furthest ends of the earth.

- I pray that God's Spirit will accompany you and enlighten you always, and I cordially impart my blessing to all of you, that you may be true heralds and witnesses of the Gospel. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (*Mk* 16:15).

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MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE 48TH WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY
Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter
[Sunday, 1 June 2014]

Today we are living in a world which is growing ever "smaller" and where, as a result, it would seem to be easier for all of us to be neighbours. Developments in travel and communications technology are bringing us closer together and making us more connected, even as globalization makes us increasingly interdependent. Nonetheless, divisions, which are sometimes quite deep, continue to exist within our human family. On the global level we see a scandalous gap between the opulence of the wealthy and the utter destitution of the poor. Often we need only walk the streets of a city to see the contrast between people living on the street and the brilliant lights of the store windows. We have become so accustomed to these things that they no longer unsettle us. Our world suffers from many forms of exclusion, marginalization and poverty, to say nothing of conflicts born of a combination of economic, political, ideological, and, sadly, even religious motives.

In a world like this, media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family which can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all. <u>Good communication helps us to grow closer, to know one another better, and ultimately, to grow in unity. The walls which divide us can be broken down only if we are prepared to listen and learn from one another.</u> We need to resolve our differences through forms of dialogue which help us grow in understanding and mutual respect. A culture of encounter demands that we be ready not only to give, but also to receive. <u>Media can help us greatly in this, especially nowadays, when the networks of human communication have made unprecedented advances. The internet, in particular, offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity. This is something truly good, a gift from God.</u>

This is not to say that certain problems do not exist. *The speed with which information is communicated exceeds our capacity for reflection and judgment, and this does not make for more balanced and proper forms of self-expression.* The variety of opinions being aired can be seen as helpful, but it also enables people to barricade themselves behind sources of information which only confirm their own wishes and ideas, or political and economic interests. *The world of communications can help us either to expand our knowledge or to lose our bearings.* The desire for digital connectivity can have the effect of isolating us from our neighbours, from those closest to us. We should not overlook the fact that those who for whatever reason lack access to social media run the risk of being left behind.

While these drawbacks are real, they do not justify rejecting social media; rather, *they remind us that communication is ultimately a human rather than technological achievement.* What is it, then, that helps us, in the digital environment, to grow in humanity and mutual understanding? We need, for example, to recover a certain sense of deliberateness and calm. *This calls for time and the ability to be silent and to listen. We need also to be patient if we want to understand those who are different from us.* People only express themselves fully when they are not merely tolerated, but know that they are truly accepted. If we are genuinely attentive in listening to others, we will learn to look at the world with different eyes and come to appreciate the richness of human experience as manifested in different cultures and traditions. We will also learn to appreciate more fully the important values inspired by Christianity, such as the vision of the human person, the nature of marriage and the family, the proper distinction between the religious and political spheres, the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, and many others.

How, then, can communication be at the service of an authentic culture of encounter? What does it mean for us, as disciples of the Lord, to encounter others in the light of the Gospel? In spite of our own limitations and sinfulness, how do we draw truly close to one another? These questions are summed up in what a scribe – a communicator – once asked Jesus: "And who is my neighbour?" (Lk 10:29). This question can help us to see communication in terms of "neighbourliness". *We might paraphrase the question in this way: How can we be "neighbourly" in our use of the communications media and in the new environment created by digital technology?* I find an answer in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is also a parable about communication. *Those who communicate, in effect, become neighbours.* The Good Samaritan not only draws nearer to the man he finds half dead on the side of the road; he takes responsibility for him. Jesus shifts our understanding: it is not just about seeing the other as someone like myself, but of the ability to make myself like the other. *Communication is really about realizing that we are all human beings, children of God. I like seeing this power of communication as "neighbourliness".*

Whenever communication is primarily aimed at promoting consumption or manipulating others, we are dealing with a form of violent aggression like that suffered by the man in the parable, who was beaten by robbers and left abandoned on the road. The Levite and the priest do not regard him as a neighbour, but as a stranger to be kept at a distance. In those days, it was rules of ritual purity which conditioned their response. *Nowadays there is a danger that certain media so condition our responses that we fail to see our real neighbour.*

It is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways, simply "connected"; connections need to grow into true encounters. We cannot live apart, closed in on ourselves. We need to love and to be loved. We need tenderness. *Media strategies do not ensure beauty, goodness and truth in communication. The world of media also has to be concerned with humanity, it too is called to show tenderness. The digital world can be an environment rich in humanity; a network not of wires but of people.* The impartiality of media is merely an appearance; only those who go out of themselves in their communication can become a true point of reference for others. Personal engagement is the basis of the trustworthiness of a communicator. *Christian witness, thanks to the internet, can thereby reach the peripheries of human existence.*

As I have frequently observed, if a choice has to be made between a bruised Church which goes out to the streets and a Church suffering from self-absorption, I certainly prefer the first. Those "streets" are the world where people live and where they can be reached, both effectively and affectively. The digital highway is one of them, a street teeming with people who are often hurting, men and women looking for salvation or hope. By means of the internet, the Christian message can reach "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Keeping the doors of our churches open also means keeping them open in the digital environment so that people, whatever their situation in life, can enter, and so that the Gospel can go out to reach everyone. We are called to show that the Church is the home of all. Are we capable of communicating the image of such a Church? *Communication is a means of expressing the missionary vocation of the entire Church; today the social networks are one way to experience this call to discover the beauty of faith, the beauty of encountering Christ. In the area of communications too, we need a Church capable of bringing warmth and of stirring hearts.*

Effective Christian witness is not about bombarding people with religious messages, but about our willingness to be available to others "by patiently and respectfully engaging their questions and their doubts as they advance in their search for the truth and the meaning of human existence" (BENEDICT XVI, Message for the 47th World Communications Day, 2013). We need but recall the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. *We have to be able to dialogue with the men and women of today, to understand their expectations, doubts and hopes, and to bring them the Gospel, Jesus Christ himself, God incarnate, who died and rose to free us from sin and death. We are challenged to be people of depth, attentive to what is happening around us and spiritually alert. To dialogue means to believe that the "other" has something worthwhile to say, and to entertain his or her point of view and perspective. Engaging in dialogue does not mean renouncing our own ideas and traditions, but the claim that they alone are valid or absolute.*

May the image of the Good Samaritan who tended to the wounds of the injured man by pouring oil and wine over them be our inspiration. *Let our communication be a balm which relieves pain and a fine wine which gladdens hearts.* May the light we bring to others not be the result of cosmetics or special effects, but rather of our being loving and merciful "neighbours" to those wounded and left on the side of the road. Let us boldly become citizens of the digital world. *The Church needs to be concerned for, and present in, the world of communication, in order to dialogue with people today and to help them encounter Christ.* She needs to be a Church at the side of others, capable of accompanying everyone along the way. *The revolution taking place in communications media and in information technologies represents a great and thrilling challenge; may we respond to that challenge with fresh energy and imagination as we seek to share with others the beauty of God.*

From the Vatican, 24 January 2014, the Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales.

**Message of POPE FRANCIS
for the 48TH World Communication Day**
"*Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter"*

Digital life disappoints
Study reveals dissatisfaction with new lifestyle

The World has changed astoundingly in the past two decades. The infusion of digital communication, faster pace of living, and the radical transformation of social mores have left many of us feeling unbalanced. For all the good it has brought, this maelstrom of change has pushed aside a number of things we value, including a meaningful connection to the natural world and a deep- seated sense of community.

Charlie A. Agatep. Digital life disappoints. PDI, May 21, 2012, p. B3.4

"While consumers are embracing all the new technologies and conveniences that are so much a part of the modern lifestyle, they are also wistful about those aspects of life – including simplicity, intellectuality, and strong ties to nature's rhythms– that are simply slipping away.

There is a growing sense that we need to take some time, individually and as a society, to think about the direction in which we're moving and whether we're going to be happy with where we end up. It's too late to change course entirely, but we may be able to tinker with those aspects of the future that are most unsettling to us."

Charlie A. Agatep. Digital life disappoints. PDI, May 21, 2012, p. B3.3

*"*Inspired by Christian faith, members and partners of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) promote communication for social change, believing communication to be a basic human right. Where this is denied, human society as a whole is impoverished. At global, regional, and local levels, WACC supports media diversity and equal and affordable access to communication and information resources. We do so by means of advocacy, education, training, and the creation and sharing of knowledge. We know that we are not alone in this quest. Therefore, we work with faith-based and secular partners, giving preference to the needs of the poor, marginalized and dispossessed."

Communication for peace: a task for faith communities
A presentation by Rev. Karin Achtelstetter, the General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) during the 5th Commission meeting of the Interfaith Action for Peace (IFAPA) held in Mombasa, Kenya, 11th-14th March 2011

"The fabric of civil society is woven from continual communication and exchange between people – through interpersonal, informal and cultural processes as well as through formal institutions and official channels. A healthy civil society is characterised, among other things, by the vibrancy and quality of its communication networks and the "social capital" (the trust and respect) they create. Information and communication are fundamental to this process.

Economic development also depends on communication at every level. When governments create an environment marked by open and transparent information and communication flows, they help to establish the conditions for economic growth and fairer markets. The revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs, such as telephones and the Internet) also offers exciting new opportunities for small- as well as large-scale economic activity.

In all these spheres, the media play a central role. **They provide a forum for political debate and accountability."**

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"Communication for peace is an ongoing process of creating understanding and consensus that help build and strengthen sustainable human relationships – partnerships and collaborative ventures that bridge differences of race, religion, ethnicity, and privilege. One way of contributing to this process, is "peace journalism". Beyond basic ethical principles of objectivity, fairness, and balance, peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict:

•   Peace journalism throws light on structural and cultural violence as they bear upon the lives of people in a conflict situation.
•   Peace journalism frames conflicts as consisting of many parties, pursuing many goals.
•   Peace journalism makes peace initiatives and potential solutions more visible, whoever suggests them.
•   Peace journalism equips people to distinguish between stated positions and real goals when judging whether particular forms of intervention are necessary or desirable."

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At its Fourth Assembly in Uppsala in 1968, the World Council of Churches stressed the importance of communication as the fabric of life. It is by communication that we become what we are, both in our corporal and our spiritual life. Communication is also the way in which God makes himself known to humankind and humankind responds to God. ...We believe that the power to communicate is given with creation and therefore to be accepted as a gift and tool for humankind to use in relation to their neighbour. Even though communication can be used to dehumanize, dominate, and deprive, this is a debasing of a God-given means to create community by overcoming loneliness, isolation and ignorance. The Assembly therefore recommended that media should be evaluated primarily in terms of their social function (cf. The Uppsala Report 1968, Appendix XI).

According to "Communio et Progressio," the Catholic pastoral letter on media, the very nature of social communication is the aim to give human beings a deeper sense of community. According to Christian faith the highest aim of any form of communication is to achieve solidarity and communion. Thus a Christian ethical approach to the information society needs to examine critically the effects of new information technologies on the quality of relationships and in particular: their potential for the bodily and spiritual development of human beings; their implications for relationships between human beings, as well as the relationship between humankind and nature, humankind and society, humankind and the world; and their potential to build solidarity and community.

Lost on the information highway? By Karin Achtelstetter

"The present information revolution has not yet come to an end, it is an open process which can still be shaped by alternative forms of communication. As Christians we should not be satisfied with seeing our moral duty simply fulfilled by contributing to the flow of information. Whereas the information society is mainly identified with the globalization of the economy, Christians should work for the globalization of solidarity. Where is the prophetic voice of the churches?"

Lost on the information highway? By Karin Achtelstetter

"This situation poses an extraordinary challenge to mainstream religion. It leads to a "displacement of attention," away from religious symbols and values. It functions as a major factor in what some have called "the loss of Catholic memory" in children and adults. Their imaginations and feelings are elsewhere. They see and hear something else. The Churches face the task of clearing a space within the new world of preaching of the Gospel. The Church must communicate the Gospel in symbols, models, images, and words which are accessible to this culture and understood by it. Otherwise, the Gospel does not get communicated at all. This must be a critical communication, opening up the culture to the truth of the Gospel and learning to reread the Gospel though the new awareness given in our culture."

Peter Mann (2003). Religious Symbolism and Mass Communication. From Media, Culture and Catholicism, edited by Paul A. Soukup. Makati: St. Pauls. P. 112.

Islam and Media

The Islam and Media Working Group looks at the communication phenomenon such as human interaction with a view to contributing toward mutual understanding and peace with justice. It seeks to engage in research and organizational development efforts geared toward strengthening the global societal structures based on personal responsibility and mutual cooperation in social, political, and economic relations.

The goal of this Working Group is to contribute to the advancement of research and evaluation in the media and communication related fields from an Islamic point of view (the Tawhidi perspective).
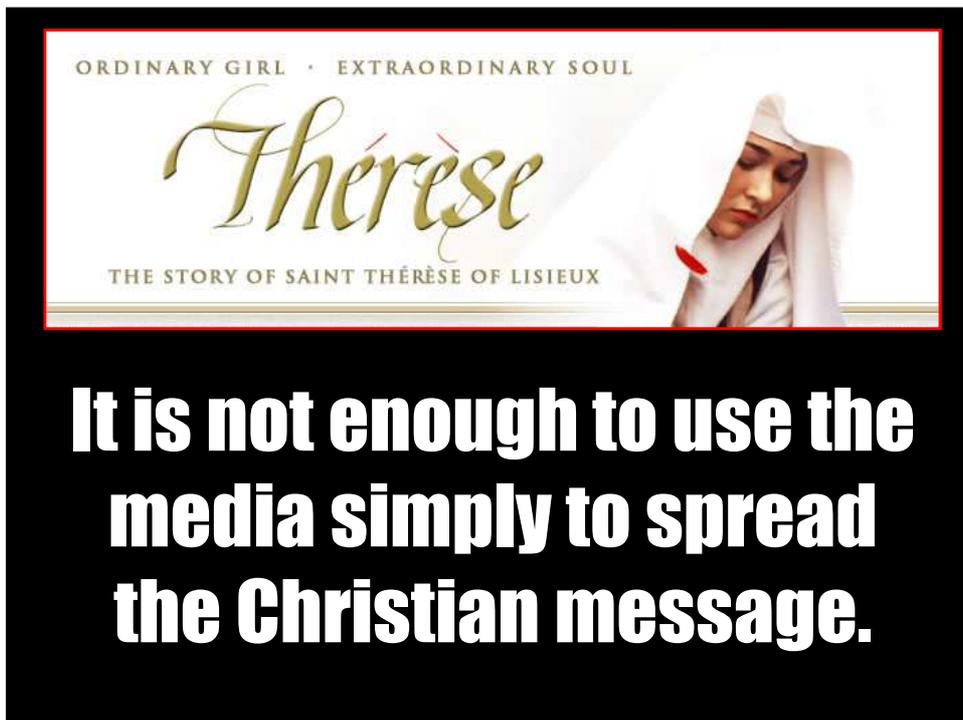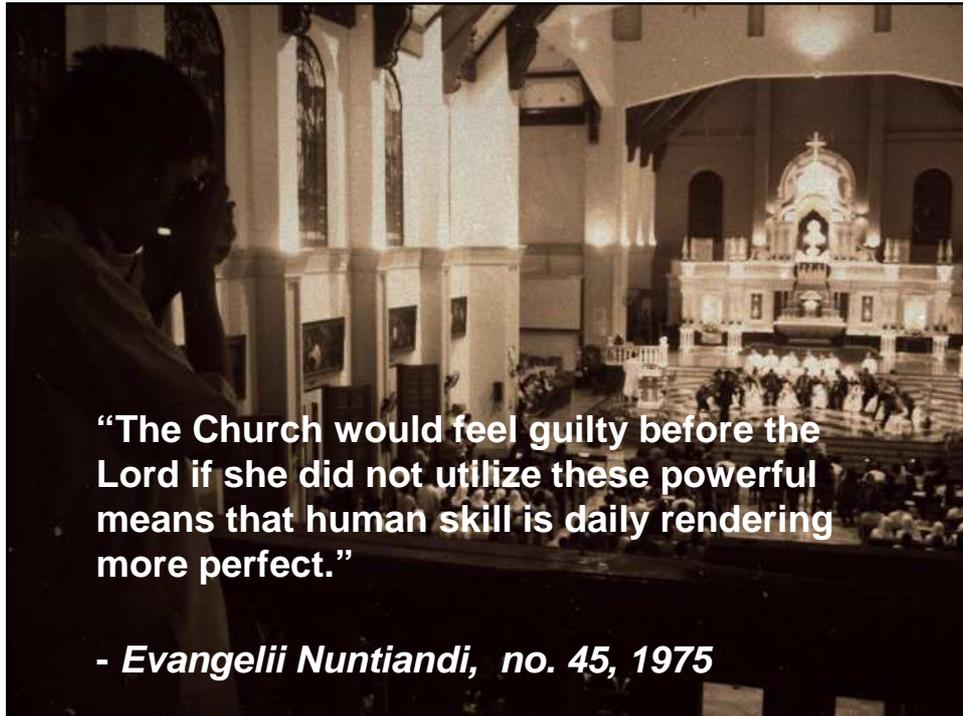

ISLAM, COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT : THEORY VS. PRACTICE by Siddiqui MA

A distinct feature of Islam is its emphasis on being a comprehensive way of life. Religion has an integral, organic relationship to every aspect of human endeavor. The Islamic ideal is reflected in the development of Islamic law that encompasses both the relationship between human beings and God as well as the relationship among human beings. Islam provides a normative system in which religion is viewed as a major stimulus to every aspect of development.

Quran's first revelation begins with an emphatic assertion, "Read." Communication in Islam is seen as a gift of God, and as an essential skill for the development and growth of the individual-self and the society as well as its various institutions.

Many scholars, including Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington among others, have argued that Islam is opposed to modernization and hence an obstacle to growth and development. With the event of September 11th, 2001 in the United States and with its anniversary this year, it is clear that the negative stereotyping of Islam has increased manifold. In such an environment it seems necessary to revisit the Islamic paradigm of "development" and analyze its impact on the Muslim societies since the later half of the 20th Century.

"The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect."

- Evangelii Nuntiandi, no. 45, 1975

ORDINARY GIRL · EXTRAORDINARY SOUL

Thérèse

THE STORY OF SAINT THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX

It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message.

It is necessary to integrate that message into the new culture created by modern communication. *(Redemptoris Missio)*

TRUE LOVE WAITS

LET US THEN DECONSTRUCT THE MEDIA CONSTRUCTS

Until all are free

we are all imprisoned