# Paoline online

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By faith, we are aware that we need... to rediscover the mandate to "dwell in" our history and proclaim the good news of the Kingdom with all the instruments of communication.

(DC 2013, 37)
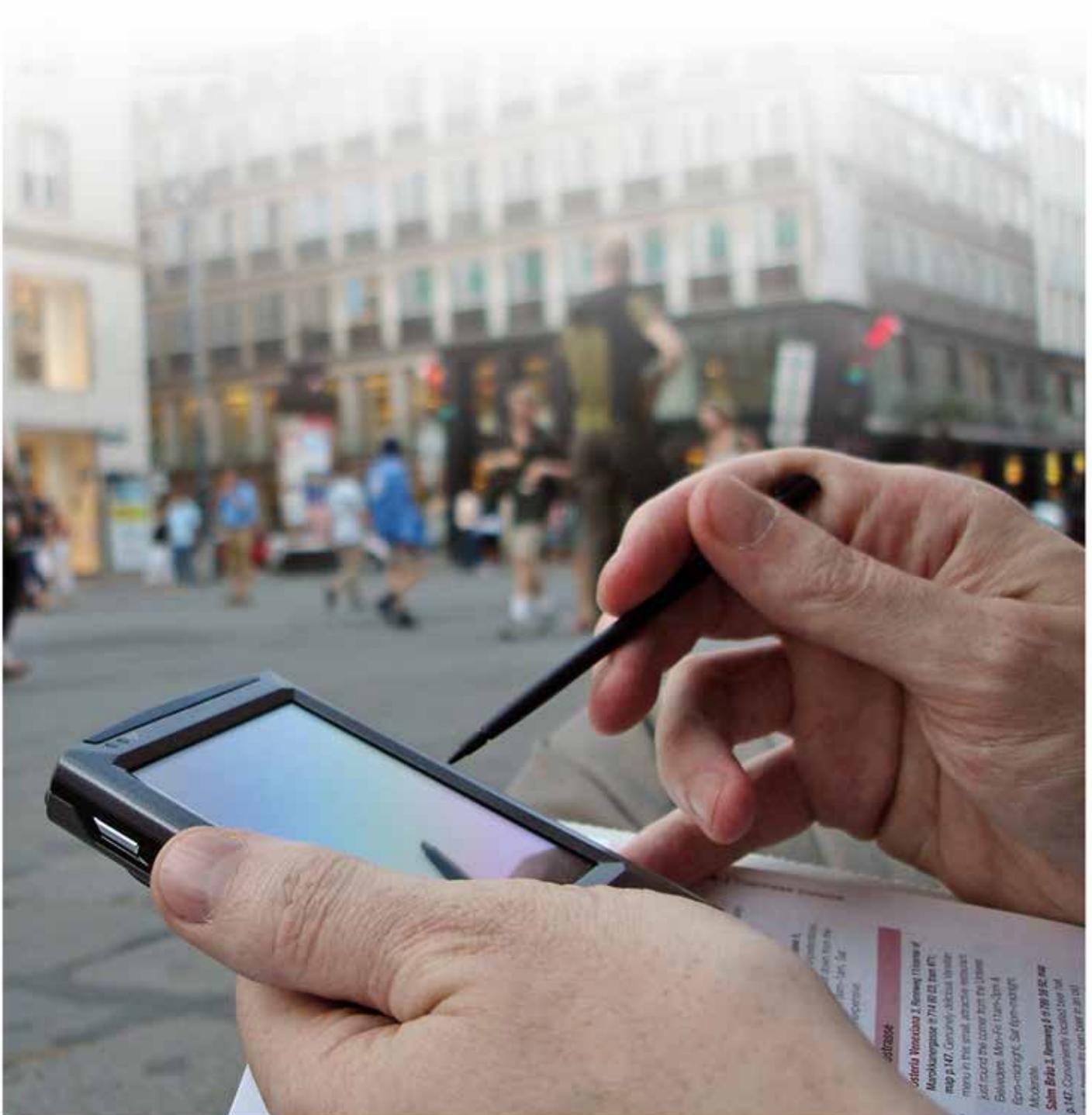
Dearest Sisters,

While we await the new style for the bulletin PaulinesOnline, we have decided to gather into this special issue the articles on communication that were published in that bulletin (nos. 27-39), under the rubric Windows on Communication.

In the hope that this pleases you, we send you cordial greetings.

Those of us in SICOM

Contents

Youth and Communications

Maria Antonia Chinello, fma

58% of the children between the ages of 2 and 5 play with videogames, know how to maneuver the iPad, but don't know how to ride a bike. 11% of them don't know how to tie their shoes or to answer correctly when asked their home address. This is the situation of the *screen generation,* who from the first months of life learn how to interact with computer monitors, videogames, cell phones, touch screens and Smartphones even before they learn the skills for everyday life. This is the latest data in a research project monitoring how the interaction between children and technology has changed.

The Y Generation

The digital age is characterized by a generation of young people who were born with the new technologies, are shaped by them and use them with great self-assurance and, unfortunately, also with great indifference and unawareness of the profound mechanisms that rule them, since they use this technology in a simply opportunistic and functional way. Ways of communicating, the perception of time and space, the concept of reality, even the way of having children, raising them, and teaching them are all changing.

It is hard to describe young people today because we must make the effort to understand the [technological] languages they use and their unique ways of expressing themselves. Young people today live in multiple, interconnected, decentralized and ambivalent spheres. All the "longitudes, latitudes" and environments that they frequent are becoming spaces in which time and the consumption of good–both real and virtual–fuse together more and more.

Young people's *cosmovision* (view of the cosmos) starts with a worldwide interexchange of communications. Youth feel like they are present everywhere, moving virtually through different cultures and geographical areas, entering into relation with people of other languages and cultures, becoming lead players in a hybrid learning experience. These young people *are* modern communications: they were born into the media, they love it, they use it and they produce it.

The *Y Generation* is becoming more and more sensitive to the cognitive processes, beginning with the imagination. This generation is accustomed to pooling experiences, to comparing ideas directly, to giving advice and dialoguing simultaneously. Young people spend their days moving from one keyboard to another: from cells phones to computers to iPods, experiencing many things by multitasking. They are able to simultaneously study, chat, listen to music, answer their cells phones and watch TV (on the Web, naturally).

Society has by now been split into two large cultural groups: the *digital natives,* that is to say, those who were born in the digital age, and the *digital immigrants,* that is, everyone

else, who leaped (or were thrust) into this arena as adults. The split is caused by an alteration in neural connections in the brains of the younger generations, which is changing and transforming the generation gap into something new: what scientists call a *brain gap.* Cerebral connections develop differently in children who learn to use television and computers at a very young age than they do in persons who read and write and carry out physical activities. Particularly in schools today (but not only in this sphere), teachers are interacting with students who, as a result of their different cognitive experiences, have a different brain structure and thus teacher-student dialogue is difficult. In young people, this anthropological mutation is translated into a need for lateralization–the need to be continually connected to the fluid information context.

Centrality of the Social Networks

Web 2.0 marks the transition from the first form of the Internet (Web 1.0 with its static web pages, research engines, etc.) to today's social networks (SN) (Wikipedia, Google, You-Tube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), characterized by socializing, interactivity, multimedia, hypertexts, the sharing of knowledge, easy use and user-generated content. The platforms for socializing online take up a great deal of time in the young person's daily life. Their services are becoming more and more "indispensable" inasmuch as they are tied to an always more

Young people use these platforms to monitor the movements of their friends and acquaintances, creating a friendship circle...

accelerated and complex "contemporaneity" that requires instruments that simplify and stabilize time and relationships, while increasing the multiplication of the real and opportunities for interaction.

Young people use these platforms to monitor the movements of their friends and acquaintances, creating a friendship circle that is in continual flux between online and offline. Through SN, young people "take care" of their friends, setting up groups according to common interests and goals as a way of feeling close to one another. SN activates and cultivates the desire to keep communication perpetually open with one's friends by remaining always connected and reachable to them for large parts of the day. It is a way of "never feeling alone," of being continually in the thoughts of one's friends. And last but not least, through the social networking, young people become the "authors" of communication, producers of audio, video, text, images that are then circulated among those who have similar interests as a way of reinforcing relationships. A striking example of this is the distribution of music foles through portable digital supports like the iPod and then distributing and listening to this music as a group.

Young people today communicate via the Internet in a continuous way: online and offline are not "parallel states of being" but a single space of experience, subdivided in different ways and united by use and relationships. The centrality of relationships comes into play in the dynamics of mutual recognition and trust–the key that opens the door to social circles, which build stable relationships, safeguard memories and unveil future potentials.

This helps to create a genuine condition of *being with,* of sharing and of mutual accompaniment not only at important times in a young person's life but also in his/her daily activities. Here, written and spoken words are valued and help to shape a common space and create the conditions for freely giving, receiving and revealing oneself with trust, building, from the ground up, an environment in which the personal dimension is placed in common.

Risks and Uncertainties

But in spite of these positive points, it is important not to underestimate the risks and uncertainties of the social networks, which

derive above all from the speed of interaction, from the rapidity with which information is circulated, and from the construction of online communications that suppress the temporal dimension, nullify the past and potentially flatten the present. The multiplication of online friendships can be at the expense of their depth because those relationships are based on weak ties. Measuring oneself against one or more digital identities, which on the one hand reveals the extreme versatility of youth in establishing contacts, on the other hand runs the risk that the young person's identity, above all in the pre-adolescent and adolescent stages, might become pluralized in a myriad of virtual communities, which in their turn are pluralized. The purpose of these virtual communities is collaboration and social interaction, but one consequence of this is confusion between one's private and pubic life.

Other negative points: in these communities, banalization abounds as a way of avoiding conflict or of blending more fully into the group. One dares not express a position different from the common one. Expressions of intimacy are in keeping with the models drawn up by the group or else are expressed in an indirect or mediated way (at least most of the time).

The purely-stated word prevails, which impoverishes the exchange of ideas, making any contact beyond the simple "being with" impossible. Friendships are constructed on the basis of similarity and affinity, ignoring the "otherness" of each individual with regard to age, different personal histories, points of view, etc. But it is hard to genuinely communicate with another person without being open to the ways in which he/she is different from oneself. The disinclination to reveal oneself as a distinct individual tends to inhibit the person's sense of responsibility and witness. The inability to connect one's private and public life poses an obstacle to living in a digital civil society.

A Time for Teachers and for Communicator-Witnesses

The human being is and remains a creature of communication which, as Mounier said,

Today we need teachers and communicators who witness to the thrill and interior resolve to take on the turbulent seas of change.

is "less frequent than happiness and more fragile than beauty: the least thing can block or sever communication between people." Communication is therefore a complex blend of natural and conventional, syntactic and semantic, pragmatic and emotional elements.

Its processes and activities are interwoven with metaphors, meanings, codes, interactions, projects, goals, hopes and the desire of the participants to collaborate and become involved with one another. All this makes communication one of the most beautiful and at the same time one of the most tiring dimensions of human life.

Communication leads the participants to continually monitor and adjust the way they interact and share themselves with others. Consequently, if our ability to communicate does not evolve, then sooner or later we will find ourselves "out of the game" or "sitting on the bench" in the digital age. We will no longer have anything to say because we will not know how to say it!

Today we need teachers and communicators who witness to the thrill and interior resolve to take on the turbulent seas of change. They must be, in the first place, adventurous people, humble and determined explorers who are focused on the terrain ahead of them; persons who do not have all the answers but who know some practical and concrete secrets for living with less fear and for allowing themselves to be guided through the night not by a safe and secure compass but by the North Star alone.

Social Networks

Fr Alessandro Paone

Social networks: you either love it or you hate it; it's difficult to take a middle stance. But if you ask what they are, it's hard to get to the core. The most frequent answer is: *Facebook*. Yes, but what is Facebook? "It's a website that you sign up in so as to exchange words, photos, links and thoughts with your friends." Effectively, a social network is just that: a virtual place where you can manifest, create and/or maintain relations with a specific group of persons.

By definition, social networks refers to a group united by social or territorial affinity, by interests, hobbies, etc. Facebook, (literally, *a book of faces*), was created by Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard University (4 February 2004) to put students in contact with one another, but very soon other universities began asking to sign up and so the site was opened up to the whole world on 11 November 2006.

The phenomenon of social networking, developed thanks to the advanced process of computerization and a decrease in the *digital divide*. It has enjoyed exponential development due especially to two elements very important to the human being:

1. *The need for human interaction*. Globalization and life in big cities are depersonalizing. The social networks are a fast and inexpensive way of allowing an individual to remain in contact with his/her own social group, with the possibility of amplifying it based on one's interests, desires and inclinations.

2. *The need for self-revelation*. Due to globalization, an individual runs the risk of losing a sense of "self"–of identifying less with themselves and more with the masses. Besides favoring the creation of special interest groups, the social networks are also a type of showcase where a person can "display" his/her identity (either real or reconstructed), thus making it possible for that individual to exist within a group but at the same time to also "stand out" from it. It is here that the power of images overrules content, drawing the "visitor," like the mermaids of Ulysses, through the power of symbols.

Marck Zuckerberg, basing himself on Frigyes Karinthy's idea (1929) of the existence of "six degrees of separation" between one subject and another, came up with an ambitious plan to create a service capable of mapping all the existing relationships between persons.

New Courtyard of the gentiles

Recalling how much St. Paul accomplished through the promptings of the Spirit, we can't let this great possibility escape us. The Apostle of the Gentiles, that tireless evangelizer, visited foreign lands, wove relationships and strengthened his connections with people by correspondence and by sending persons dear to him to the communities he founded. If we think of the actual communities in the web and the possibilities of keeping in touch with others through e-mail, chat and video chat sites, telephones and e-conferencing, we realize very quickly that we have at our disposal extremely swift and efficacious instruments that can make us new evangelizers in today's new *courtyard of the gentiles*. In speaking about the means of social communication in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (n. 45), Pope Paul VI reminds us that the Church "would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means." That significant statement was made in 1975 and it is even more true today, thirty-six

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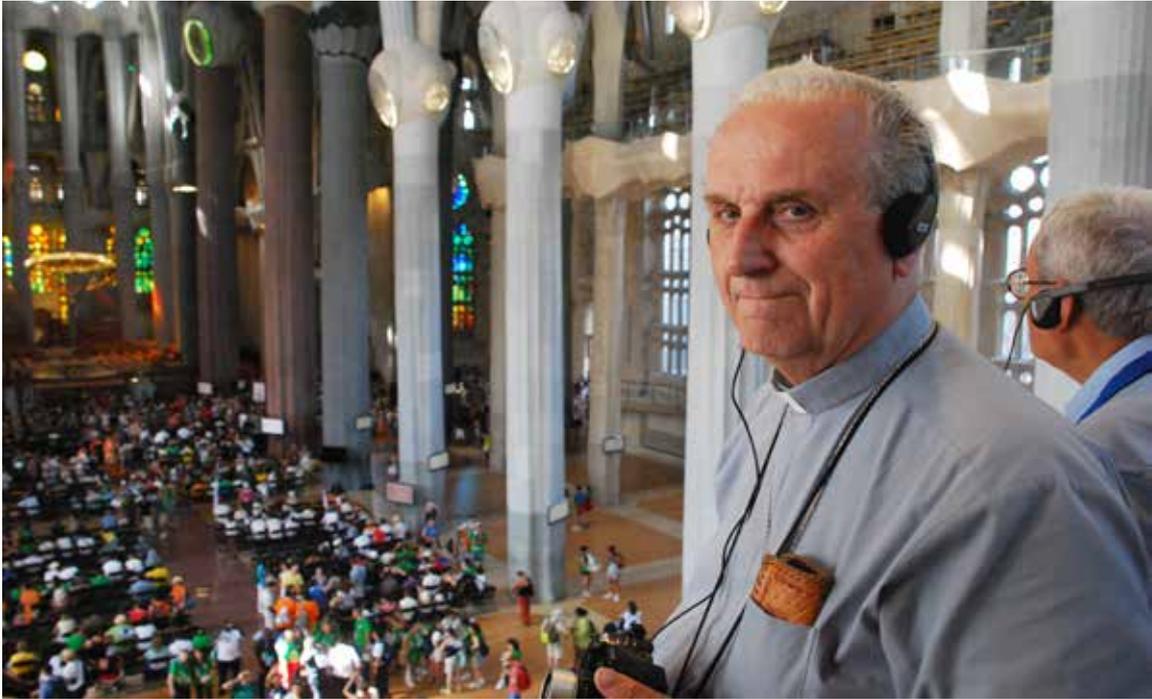
years later. In fact, we are constantly urged on by the current Pontiff to embrace the media as a "place" of evangelization.

In his message for the 45th World Day of Social Communications, Benedict XVI says that "this means of spreading information and knowledge is giving birth to a new way of learning and thinking, with unprecedented opportunities for establishing relationships and building fellowship." In other words, we must use the media for evangelization and the social network is certainly a great help in this.

If St. Paul were living today, he would not let the opportunities offered by the *new media* to escape him. He would take advantage not only of traditional correspondence but also e-mail, Youtube and social networking. We are sure he would not view these as the *only* way to communicate, but would instead integrate them with all the other forms of human contact, seeing them as a continuation of these.

This is what most of the people who use Facebook do. They live in continual flux between face-to-face interactions (characterized by the warmth of another person's concrete presence, gaze, slap on the shoulder, etc.) and online interactions (limited by absence–but only of the physical presence of the speaker) experienced as the extension of relationships already begun. The real and the virtual are not in conflict–one helps the other. This last consideration nullifies the myth of "armchair evangelization."

How we handle relationships

A final basic element consists in how we handle relationships. On Facebook, it is easy to add "friends" to your profile; the system lets you have as many as 5000. But the issue is completely different. Evangelization involves interaction with other people and we usually can't handle more than twenty relationships in an in-depth and fruitful way. This means that while it is true we can contact a multitude of "friends" more quickly, it is equally true that we can't possibly nurture all these contacts, at least not in the same way and to the same degree.

These considerations are not meant to demonize the new media but to put them in their rightful place and pacify alarmists who think that virtual relationships "replace" the person.

The Lord of life chose to become a person: he was a man who walked the earth, established many different kinds and degrees of relationships with the people of his time, and sent some of these people out to evangelize. Thus it is the *person* who proclaims the great love of the risen Lord, primarily through the indispensable testimony of his/her life, aided by the powerful means of communication. ●

If St. Paul were living today, he would not let the opportunities offered by the new media to escape him.

The "New Television"

Fr. Juan Andrés Caniato

The United States and many Western European countries have by now switched from analog television to digital television–a transition still underway in Latin America, northern Asia and the Pacific and not yet begun in Africa, the Middle East and southern Asia. However, the changeover is inevitable because this new technology offers a huge increase in channels (and consequently a wider advertising market), as well as better transmission and audio/visual reception.

These technological advances, however, are secondary with respect to the great change that is taking place with regard to the use of television on the part of both broadcasters and receivers.

The first innovation, as mentioned above, is the huge increase in TV channels: every national and local broadcaster now has at its disposition a collection of frequencies that contain many more channels than were available through the analog system. Zapping is becoming more and more common as viewers "shop around" for interesting programs.

Formerly, people turned on the TV with a more or less specific idea of what they wanted to watch. Today, the choice of programs is rapidly passing into the power of the remote control: a person turns on the TV without knowing what he/she will find and moves from channel to channel until something interesting catches his/her attention.

The viewer is becoming the protagonist

In short, the viewer is becoming (or at least perceives him/herself to be) the protagonist in constructing a personalized viewing program.

Economy of attention: this new field of study is the result of the dissemination of the new instruments of communication, in which TV still plays a fundamental role. The time viewers have at their disposition to watch television is vastly inferior to the avalanche of information and messages being offered. The quantity of content easily available today through TV (and the Internet) is far greater than any human possibility to utilize it. As a result, strategies to "capture" viewers are becoming more and more refined: How can we catch the attention of TV audiences? How can we exploit this attention for our commercial purposes?

A first line of strategic action being pursued by the major TV networks is to offer viewers repeated cycles of programs in categories of major interest such as sports, music, movies, variety shows, entertainment, religion, etc.

In many parts of the world, it is already possible for the viewer to select programs from an archive, without having to wait for a particular program to be aired on a specific day, at a specific time.

All in all, TV today is something entirely different than what it formerly was, and it requires a new and more profound awareness of the medium. The mechanisms used to capture audiences are becoming always more subtle, frequently playing on sentimentality and the sensational. But although content is abundant, it is often more superficial. It is becoming almost impossible today for parents to control what TV programs their children watch.

But before passing judgment on the new TV phenomenon, we should remember that,

as Christians, we cannot disregard the command of the Lord: "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News." Like the other technologies of communication, digital TV is also an extension of that "world" to which we are sent and in which we must be present as "Church-sacrament of salvation."

Several points concerning Catholic broadcasting

Taking as a point of departure my modest experience in a diocese in northern Italy, I would like to offer here several points concerning Catholic broadcasting that merit special attention:

– *To speak on the level of the people:* the language we use should be simple and direct, not the pompous language often associated with the ecclesiastical world.

– *To situate the content of the program in our local situation:* in my experience, this is very important. The Church exists in a specific place, which has its own particular history, culture and values, but unfortunately these are rarely presented on television. Telling real stories about real people in concrete daily-life situations is perhaps the best "remedy" we can offer to the repetitive format of TV programs, which are often set in mythical times and places or else in no particular time and place.

– *To avoid "segregating" ourselves:* the trend of TV to slot programs into special channels should not restrict us to proclaiming our message via channels that deal solely with religion, where what we have to say is perceived by viewers as almost "inevitable." We should not be afraid to engage the general public in debate, to "dirty our hands," to recount the life of faith as something relevant to our city and to the world.

– *The Liturgy:* many people are asking that the Mass be broadcast on TV–something that is already being done by many Catholic channels. Our first concern should be to evaluate what is already available so as to ensure that viewers are being offered good-quality liturgical broadcasts.

– *Education:* this is the most urgent and also the most difficult area on which Catholic broadcasting should focus. Today, the new technologies of communication are a true cultural environment: they not only powerfully influence the flow of ideas but also the way in which people form convictions. In this regard, the Bishops of Italy have not hesitated to use the term "pastoral conversion" to indicate the need to realize that we are in the midst of a revolutionary change affecting every level of society: from the family, to the parish, to the diocese, to movements, to religious communities. We must all become more aware of the fact that "communication" is no longer a sphere of pastoral work–it is the very environment in which we live.

The Challenge of the Cinema

Communicating Christian Values in our Culture

Teresa Braccio, fsp

of conjuror's tricks, then special effects and now virtual reality.

Today the cinema shares the limelight with television and the Internet. Thanks to a fusion of instruments, films shown in a theater can also be watched on TV, on DVDs, on one's computer and even on cell phones by downloading them from the Internet. It is clear that we live in a time in which the cinema is striving to carve out a larger and larger place for itself in the "technological jungle." It is a time of change and also of crisis, the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. Who knows where it will all end? But against this background, the content of audiovisuals (cinema, TV, YouTube, etc.) continues to be the primary vehicle for ideas and the molders of consciences and behavior.

The cinema was born in France in 1895 thanks to the creativity of Auguste and Louis Lumière, who, using a cinematograph (a film camera that also served as a projector), produced the world's first film, *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station.* Among the first ten "movies" they filmed were also *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* and a child at play. Hand-cranked through a projector, these 50-second films represented not only the beginning of the cinema but the realization of the human being's long-held dream to create a "parallel reality"–a journey realized over the years first with the help

A powerful instrument for reflection and communication

Our era is privileged because capillary diffusion of the media unites the world in global communication, dissolving the distances created by time and space. The cinema in particular is a creative instrument that is able to blend poetry, art and music to portray the world in which we live. It is not only "escapist entertainment" but also a powerful instrument for reflection and communication. From its very origins it has sought to recount the human story and the

person's search for the Absolute. It is one of the "places" in which the most important phenomena characteristic of society, culture and customs all converge. If we are what we are above and beyond the normal formation we received from school and life, it is in part due to films that have portrayed every facet of human life: feelings, intelligence and commitment.

The cinema offers us the opportunity to grow in our daily lives. At the center of the person are gathered all the dimensions of human existence: religious experiences and the affective life, sufferings and joys, birth and death.

The cine-camera is an extraordinary instrument for penetrating and capturing the most mysterious facets of life in their many different expressions. A film can present us with the most noble and uplifting qualities of the human heart, but it can also exalt the most vile and distorted facets of human nature.

Thus the cinema is a form of communication that cannot do without religion, preserving and often transfiguring its vital moral truths through its own unique "language."

So then, what should be the characteristics of a film that truly communicates Christian values?

Fr. Alberione said that "the cinema should offer people only what is useful for them–the things that will teach them to be better human beings, citizens, religious…. It should offer them what is truly *good*." This was our Founder's dream.

I would like to quote here a beautiful excerpt from an address of Pope Paul VI on 6 May 1967 to writers and artists, which was then quoted word for word by Pope John Paul II in his speech to mass media workers during his apostolic visit to the United States and Canada in September 1987–the first time a Pope spoke to members of the communications industry. He said:

"Twenty years ago, my predecessor Pope Paul VI, speaking to a gathering much like this one, told that creative community in Rome: 'It is a fact that when, as writers and artists [and here we can add directors, actors and cinema producers], you are able to reveal in the human condition, however lowly or sad it may be, a spark of goodness, at that very instant a glow of beauty pervades your whole work. We are not asking that you should play the part of moralist, but we are expressing confidence in your mysterious power to open up the glorious regions of light that lie behind the mystery of human life.'"

A field of light

Inspired by these words, I like to think of the cinema as a field of light–a way of seeing things that goes beyond the physical to penetrate the mystery of the invisible. As someone writing about the cinema in the 1930's once said: "Films make visible the invisible."

The problem of how to present the world of the spirit–the invisible world–in images has dogged the cinema from the very beginning of its story. In some films, religious feelings, spirituality and the sacred nature of things are a clear manifestation of choices made by human beings.

On 18 March 1938, Blessed James Alberione gave two priests of the Society of St. Paul the order to launch the cinema apostolate, saying: "It is necessary to lay down the scissors of censureship and take up the movie camera" because "the power of films surpasses that of the school, of the pulpit and of the press and is making an ever-greater impact."

Thanks to the extraordinary power of images, the cinema–an instrument that communicates both culture and knowledge–is a universal language that is able to reach hearts and, because of its powerful visual impact, cannot leave a person indifferent. When used with responsibility and respect, the cinema can become a loudspeaker for disseminating the voice of man and of God throughout the world. ●

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Radio Evangelization and the New Media

Alessandro De Carolis

In 1990, the Vietnamese bishops who came to Rome to participate in the Synod being held that year offered an incredible testimony. They said that there were people scattered in isolated villages in the impenetrable forests of their country who know the Gospel without ever having met a priest. They call themselves "radio Christians," the bishops explained, because it was through Vatican Radio and Radio Manila broadcasts that they heard the Good News, given the fact that the small Church of Vietnam has been under severe persecution by the government for decades.

This story, symbolic of the power of the radio, is also symbolic in a broader sense because it concerns an era that most of the planet has by now left behind, namely: analog technology. To put it simply, we can say that from the dawn of radio as a mass medium (1920's-1930's) up until the 1990's, this instrument functioned substantially the way it was invented by Guglielmo Marconi, that is to say, through the use of electromagnetic waves and antennae (analogic transmitters and receivers), even though the technology steadily improved as time went on, became more powerful (we have only to think of satellite transmissions) and developed an ever-more dynamic capacity to structure its programs and languages. Even today, short wave radio continues to be irreplaceable for people in parts of the world where the Internet and fiber optics are little more than an idea. In parts of Africa, for example, Vatican Radio is the only means by which the voice of the Pope can reach countless remote dioceses and villages, while things are totally different in zones that have experienced the "Internet boom" in the last fifteen years.

The progressive digitalization of radio signals–which decreed the end of domestic radio monopolies (car radios and transistors) as the only listening devices–urged radio broadcasters to profoundly rethink ways and strategies of communication. In this context, Catholic broadcasting stations have had to make a major effort to harmonize the thousands of digital avenues available with the type of content they transmit.

What does it mean to communicate a spiritual subject by microphone when a radio broadcast can in certain cases be "read" on

a pc screen or on a smartphone? What point is there in simply *speaking* about a religious subject in a multimedia era in which programs can be watched live and can also be easily downloaded via podcasting–a service that has by now archived the old concept of radio programs aired at specific times, typical of a rigid, out-dated way of using this medium–but that has also redefined the features of the public? And speaking of the public, how can the radio attract audiences since, thanks to the World Wide Web, people are learning to exploit content via social networks (for example, Facebook has floated the possibility of an application for listening to personalized music radio channels), which are becoming more and more widespread? For Catholic radio stations in particular, all this raises not only technological but also ethical questions.

The digital continent

In recent years, Pope Benedict XVI has sketched out a specific magisterium for Catholic communicators, who populate what he calls "the digital continent." His words should be taken into careful consideration. One of the first problems of the digital continent is that it is vastly overcrowded. This has given rise to the problem of recognition (Who am I listening to?) and therefore of reliability (Can I trust what this broadcaster is telling me?). Those who navigate the ever-changing world of the Web are faced with the daily problem of evaluating the information they are seeking from among the hundreds of thousands of websites, blogs and personal pages that the search engine obediently lists for every request. A Catholic medium like the radio could be tempted to create its own Internet page and with this believe it has satisfied requirement number one–to be present on the Web.

Even today, short wave radio continues to be irreplaceable for people in parts of the world where the Internet and fiber optics are little more than an idea.

A Christian way of being present

In this regard, the Pope, in his message for World Communications Day 2010 *(The New Media at the Service of the Word)*, says that "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."

The Pope seems to be saying that a recognizable "logo" is not enough to automatically trigger esteem and attract listeners. Far from it. In his message for Word Communications Day 2011, he continues this line of thought, saying that in order for today's new multimedia technologies to truly serve as superhighways for transmitting Gospel values, we must "challenge some of the ways of thinking typical of the web." First of all, he affirms, "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."

Consequently, "there exists a Christian way of being present in the digital world. […] To proclaim the Gospel through the new media means not only to insert expressly religious content into different media platforms, but also to witness consistently, in one's own digital profile and in the way one communicates choices, preferences and judgments that are fully consistent with the Gospel, even when it is not spoken of specifically."

This, then, is the goal of a Catholic radio station that wants to play its proper role in the world of crossmedia, preparing itself professionally and competently so that it will have a future. ●

Music and Theater: Communication and Emotion

Daniela Cologgi

The world of communications offers us infinite ways and means to send and receive messages, from the most simple and natural systems, such as gestures and words, to the most sophisticated technological ones.

Among these are music and theater–communication instruments that have not been overpowered by today's new technologies, but have instead been amplified and enriched by them.

What does music add to a text, to a message? And what does an actor's interpretation of a role add to a story? Above all, one extremely important element: emotion. Emotional "codes" allow us to not only receive, decode and understand a message, but to also interiorize it, make it our own, fix it in our memory. This significant aspect of communication should not be overlooked.

Music: a universal language, important means of formation

Music, a universal language, goes beyond verbal speech and communicates through vibrations, that is to say, combinations of sound, rhythm and tempo. To listen to music, create it and reproduce it with others is a human activity whose origins are lost in the shadows of time. It is a part of not only the cultural life of a people but also the emotional life of each person. It contributes to an individual's intellectual, communicational and emotional-affective development. For this reason, it is important that even very small children be taught to appreciate music and to decode its language correctly, without neglecting its many other potentials, particularly the first instrument at our disposition: the voice. It is not by chance that "one who sings prays twice," as the famous saying of St. Augustine goes.

Music serves as an important means of formation from early childhood onward: it facilitates both socialization and appreciation of the individual. We frequently lack an education to music, especially from the aspect of formation. The famous Hungarian composer and music teacher, Zoltan Kodàly, summed up the possibilities of this discipline with the motto: "One should not only be educated 'to' music but also 'with' music." And precisely because it bypasses the more traditional routes of communication, an appreciation of music should be transmitted to a child "nine months before birth." To sing a lullaby to a newborn calms the infant and induces sleep because the mother's tone of voice transmits a sense of peace and protection. This image illustrates well the effects music can have on a person.

Theater: an art with a powerful anthropological imprint

The human voice is one of the many elements of another important instrument of communication: theater. But it is certainly not the sole, or even the most essential, one. Facial expressions, intonations, gestures,

Music and Theater: Communication and Emotion

movements: the whole body is involved in the dramatic arts.

In ancient times, theater came into being as a rite, and inasmuch as it is a means of expression-communication, it requires someone to perform it (an actor) and someone to view it (a spectator).

Theater, too, is an exceptional instrument of general formation: it helps people get to know themselves and others, makes them more keenly aware of their physical movements, and is able to convey messages not only to the audience, but also and in a special way to the performers themselves.

The history of theater offers us a vast panorama of styles, techniques and genres that have evolved and changed over time, but which continue to be studied, re-examined and utilized. Theater is an art with a powerful anthropological imprint, precisely because it springs from the human need for self-expression and communication.

If we wonder how theater ever survived the advent of cinema and television, the answer lies in its unique mode of communication. In fact, theater requires the simultaneous presence of both *broadcaster* and *receiver*–here and now, "live."

Theater, too, is an exceptional instrument of general formation: it helps people get to know themselves and others.

People should not only attend theatrical performances frequently but should also, if possible, take part in plays. They should be taught to do this beginning in childhood, in educational environments such as parishes and schools, which are often the only places with enough space available to accommodate crowds. Act-

ing out stories and events with others is not simply an enjoyable pastime. It contributes significantly to the overall development of the human personality. It involves rediscovering our natural inclination to "set a scene" by making the most of whatever is at hand. It is a way of getting to know something through physical analogy, that is, imitation.

What themes can be treated in a song or in a theatrical performance? Many–indeed, any. Even subjects useful for evangelization, such as the story of Jesus, the great themes of faith, existential questions and civic/ethical values. Naturally, the language must be suited to the art form: a topic treated in a classroom setting will not be treated the same way in a theater performance because the situations are very different. It is easy to picture how different the impact will be on a person who receives a message communicated by a teacher in a classroom and one who receives the same message in a play he/she attends. Often, the second form of communication is more meaningful and is more successful in reaching the depths of the person.

Music and theater are, then, timeless instruments of communication. From their remote beginnings up to our own day, their purpose and uniqueness have not been lost, even though to a certain extent they have been transformed.

The world is changing rapidly and today's new technologies allow us to convey our messages in an ever more advanced way. But let us never forget that the most effective message–the one that penetrates the depths of our being and changes us–is the one that touches not only our head but also our heart. ●

«Dear diary...»

Manolo Pizzoli
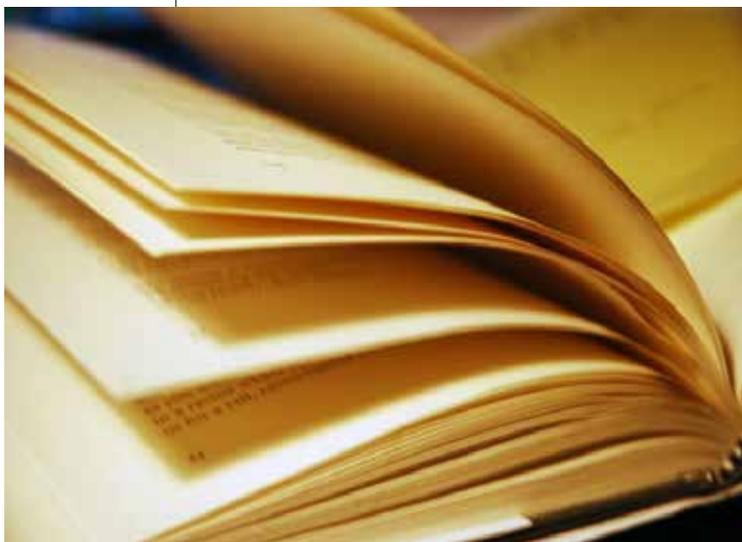
Once upon a time there existed something known as a *secret diary*, the faithful friend in whom a person confided his/her worries, fears, hopes and plans. As teenagers, many of us probably kept this kind of journal in which we recorded the events of our day in a very personal way. And precisely because the things recorded were so intimate, most of us probably kept our diary hidden from everyone else.

Today we call a diary a "blog" and it is no longer jealously guarded from the eyes of others. Instead, we put our thoughts online, making them accessible to everyone. But the truly revolutionary feature of today's "diaries" is that the thoughts they contain can be read and commented upon by anyone. Thus online diaries take on a life of their own and allow us to dialogue with others.

In the light of this, we can say that blogs–and indeed the whole social network system–are bringing about a vast cultural transformation that is powerfully impacting not only the way we communicate but communication itself. As Pope Benedict XVI says, "The new digital technologies are bringing about fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships" *(Message for the 43rd World Communications Day)*.

Notions concerning blogs

Let us rapidly review here some notions concerning blogs so as to understand how they function and how they can be used in the Church's mission of evangelization.

To define a blog is rather complex since the word does not have any literal meaning. It is a combination of the term *web* and *log*, with "web" referring to the Web and "log" to "diary" or "journal." So a blog would be, as stated previously, an online diary.

Blogs became popular in the United States beginning in the late 1990's. In fact, the first blog went online on 17 December 1997 when Jorn Barger, an American, decided to post on the Internet his reflections on everything from literature to science.

The most notable structural feature of blogs is that they are virtual spaces in which a person can post content of any type, usually displayed chronologically from the newest entry back to the oldest. This material is preserved in an archive that can be organized according to week, month or year and is often divided into categories to make it easier to track the key subjects of the texts.

Another feature of blogs is that they often allow the insertion of various types of material (pdf files, pictures, videos, audio files) into the text.

Many blogs offer the reader a chance to comment on the texts, giving the author feedback on what he/she posted. Here it would be well to make a distinction between the interaction and communication typical of a blog and that of social networks. Social networks (like Facebook, for instance) offer users immediate interaction and the opportunity to exchange or "post" news on one's bulletin board. This information consists of short phrases, often accompanied by a link, videos or pictures. The language used is very casual and the content is usually drawn from recreational pursuits or day-to-day happenings. Blogs, instead, tend to offer content that is more structured in format and more formal in language due to the type of subjects treated.

A style of Christian presence through the use of blogs

So, to reassume the characteristics of a blog, an online space to share one's experi-

ences, and in which others can intervene to comment. A language and a way of communicating thet are inovative. Let us now ask the question raised by Pope Benedict XVI: "Is there also a style of Christian presence in the digital world?" *(Message for the 43rd World Communications Day)*, and I would add, *including through the use of blogs?*

Certainly yes, and there are many online examples to substantiate this. A Christian must be a Christian everywhere, including in cyberspace. He/she should witness to the Faith in a coherent way through his/her digital profile, way of communicating, and by making choices and judgments that are in harmony with the Gospel message.

Even though nothing can replace the unique and profound role of the Liturgy and the sacraments in our experience of God, the new modes of communication (like blogs) "can provide a supplement and support in both preparing for the encounter with Christ in community, and sustaining the new believer in the journey of faith which then begins" (John Paul II, *Message for the 36th World Communications Day*, 2002).

Concrete possibilities

At the end of this brief look at blogs, their importance in today's cultural context, and the contribution they can make to the Church's work of evangelization, here is one last thought regarding their concrete possibilities, taking into consideration the steady increase of the new media and social networks.

It is a given that blogs will undergo inevitable technological changes with regard to software and modes of interaction. But this will not endanger the substance and purpose of this instrument, namely: to function as an online diary–a personal publishing activity that recounts situations in a simple, immediate and interactive way.

We can also say that blogs can help to re-establish the balance of the whole media system because they integrate the traditional broadcast media (which limit themselves to transmitting news *sic et simpliciter* ("as it is and simply") with all the online media, which make the most of relational communications between groups or networks of individuals.

In fact, media experts say we cannot claim that the role and value of the traditional media have been superseded by the new interactive media. Instead, the traditional media (primarily newspapers and television) can benefit from the challenge offered them by the latest innovations in the world of communications. But in order to reap this benefit, it is necessary that the traditional media give priority to increasing the quality and credibility of their communications so as to serve the public more competently and thus fulfill the heart of their mission.

Within this panorama, blogs can serve as "meeting places" between advancing modernity and traditional forms of narrating reality, the strong point here being the rapport of trust between the persons online, reinforced by the sharing of information.

As was already said, the proclamation of the Gospel must take advantage of the new "places" of communication (blogs, social networks and other web 2.0 channels) the modern *agora* that can serve to bring God closer and make him more tangible to today's "internauts."

The Liturgy as Communication

Carlo Cibien, ssp

It is enough to examine the roots of the word "liturgy" to see immediately that communication is intrinsic to it. In fact, the Greek word combines *leitos* (public) + *ergon* (work) = *leitourgia* (*"public worship service").* But who is the communicator? In the Christian Liturgy, there are two levels of communication: the first and foremost is the divine level, but it is the second level–the human one–that helps us perceive the first and it is also the one that can be analyzed. At times it happens that the Liturgy does not communicate very effectively on the human level. To remedy this, Vatican Council II "cleaned up" liturgical rituals so as to make them more meaningful.

A "Multicoded" Communication

Communication through the Liturgy is complex and multicoded. From the aspect of communication, it has similarities to a theater performance. In fact, like a stage show, the Liturgy too has a "director" who works within a "furnished" space in which lighting, objects and the "costumes" worn all play meaningful roles. The persons who perform various ministries in the liturgical service are the "actors." The liturgical rituals themselves include elaborate attitudes, gestures, "spoken parts" and music.

Liturgical rites are not improvised. On the contrary, they are regulated by the rubrics (the *Instructions* or *Principles/Rules)* that precede every sacramental rite.

When the science of communications (semiotics) enters into play in a liturgical event, even though it stops at the phenomenal aspect (the features that strike our senses), it is clear that the divine aspect cannot be omitted because otherwise the liturgical celebration would not be fully understood.

The Entrance Procession

Here is an example: with regard to the Introductory Rites of the Mass, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says: "After the people have gathered, the Entrance Chant begins as the priest enters with the deacon and ministers. The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and

accompany the procession of the priest and ministers" (n. 47).

If we carefully analyze the above-cited words, many aspects related to communication can be noticed. We are presented with an assembly context laden with meaning from the very start, with the entrance of several persons appointed to carry out specific roles. These individuals are clothed in sacred vestments and file into the church in a particular order: "The procession is led by the thurifer carrying a thurible with burning incense. He is followed by ministers bearing lighted candles, and between them an acolyte or other ministers with the cross. These are followed by the lector or a deacon carrying the book of the Gospels, which should be slightly elevated. Last comes the priest who is to celebrate the Mass (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* nn. 120, 172). The words and music of the entrance chant set the tone of the procession, which gives the assembly a "direction" and "goal." The numerous codes activated by the procession hark back to the individual semiotics used: the spatial (proxemics), gestural (kinesics), olfactive, iconic-visual, dress and sound codes, etc. The entrance procession reminds the worshipers that they are "on the way" to their heavenly homeland. The cross tells them that they are living a time of redemption and resurrection in Christ, whose cross is elevated as a guide and standard, but also as a model and reference point for each believer and for the Church as a whole. Alongside the cross, the Gospel represents the Living Word, Christ, who accompanies the Church and never abandons her. When heeded, this Word can transform the assembly into a missionary Church whose members proclaim the Word through their lives, lovingly united to Christ in the sacrament in which he gives his body and pours out his blood.

Thus the Eucharistic Celebration begins with a collection of codes that reinforce one another. And it is only right that this be so because the purpose of the Introductory Rite is to draw and "launch" the assembly and therefore it should involve the worshipers in a powerful way. Let us try to imagine a Liturgical Celebration in which the entrance hymn is sung by just the choir (or, even worse, one in which a taped song is used) and

To take an active, personal part in liturgical communication, one must understand what one is doing.

in which the procession has been shortened: it is made from the sacristy to the altar by the priest alone, who performs all the other ministerial roles. In this case, it is clear that the power of the rite to communicate its message is drastically reduced, if not rendered ineffective. The communicational power of the Liturgy can be further weakened by readings that are proclaimed too quickly and/or with unclear diction, by a sermon that lacks form and substance, by repetitive and distracting gestures, by a poorly-conducted ceremony that flattens everything through a hurried mumbling of prayers, making it hard for the worshipers to follow the Liturgy and participate in it…. The result of all this is the death of liturgical communication.

From Codes to Persons: the Christian as a "Sign"

The setting of the Eucharistic Celebration is charged with symbolic meanings, some of which are immediately understood and others which are less obvious. Some things like the altar, the lectern and the "throne" of the celebrant are clearly identifiable and their significance is immediately understood. However, it is more difficult to grasp the significance of other sacred objects or areas in the church such as the baptistery or the apse. At times "devotion" has played cruel tricks and has created a conflict of communication, such as when the tabernacle is placed on the same level as the altar or on top of it.

Because the Liturgy is a complex communication, it is necessary to be initiated into it. To take an active, personal part in liturgical communication, one must understand what one is doing. Often the points of reference are the Bible and Christian Tradition (let us call to mind iconological codification). But one aspect that must never be forgotten is that liturgical communication always takes place through the first Christian "sign," which is the Christian him/herself. If it is true that it is not the church that makes the Christian, it is equally true that liturgical communication implies that the Christian is the first subject of communication, capable of responding to the salvific communication of God in Christ.

For a deeper treatment of this subject, cf. C. Cibien, "Comunicazione e liturgia" in D. Sartore–A.M. Triacca–C. Cibien (editors), "Liturgia," *Dizionari San Paolo,* St. Paul Editions, Cinsello Balsamo (Milan), 2001, pp. 410-428.

E-Books: Things That Can't Be Touched Risk Losing Their Value!

Fr. Marco Sanavio

A lot of people don't like e-books. For them, a book is a printed volume that you leaf through while sitting under an umbrella on the beach or some other vacation spot.

Printed books occupy physical space in our homes; we take them with us if we move house; they make noise if we drop them on the floor. It is precisely because of their physical consistency, which accompanied us through the years of our formation and remains our basic point of reference, that Marshall McLuhan, the famous Canadian mass-mediologist, underscored that books were central to the "Gutenberg Era," that is, from the invention of printing up to the beginning of the 20th century.

Nor should we forget that religious communication has also come down to us through printed material: catechisms, the Bible and theology books have weighed down the school bags and back packs of many of us.

The "E" (electronic) age has profoundly transformed learning models to the point of "dematerializing" documents, study aids and money by transferring them from place to place by means of bits. But precisely at a time in which it might seem clearer than ever that knowledge and culture are not material goods and thus can take advantage of non-material aids, we have discovered that there is more immediate satisfaction in anchoring ourselves in habit and in the standard mentality rather than switching over to a new one.

I am thinking in particular about people who were trained to run book stores furnished with book shelves and catalogues, and who are used to handling orders and making packages. How can such people imagine their work as being confined to a computer screen or to a stock room, without any contact with other individuals?

E-books are too new to have made a dent in our hearts and wallets. They were officially "born" in 1971 when American author Michael S. Hart created Project Gutenberg, a volunteer effort to digitize and archive public domain books to encourage their distribution via the Internet. This fulfillment of the dream of copyleft (a method for making books freely available to the public) was a death knell to copyrights and to jobs that depend on the publishing industry.

E-books are made up of these elements: a text that is converted into the standard format for electronic publishing and a PC tablet or e-reader to read the text. In the electronic version of a book, the "place" where the text is stored is not visible to the eye–it is an immaterial space inaccessible to us.

But an e-book does not necessarily exclude its printed form. In general, those who buy e-books don't stop buying books in their classic printed form and vice-versa. It is not only possible for e-books and printed books to live together–it is even advantageous for them to do so!

What is important is that book buyers do not fall into the disagreeable habit of thinking that an electronic book must necessarily be sold at a very low price, or else be offered free or even be pirated. Because things that can't be touched risk losing their value! ●

Perhaps the Time Has Come for an Even-Newer Journalism

Riccardo Benotti

Back in 1914, a small group of English, French and German immigrants lived peacefully together on a little island lost in the midst of the vast ocean. The island was not equipped to receive cablegrams and was visited only occasionally by an English mail boat. In September of that year, the inhabitants, while awaiting the arrival of the boat, were still discussing one of the main events in the last newspaper they had received two months earlier, namely: the upcoming trial of Henriette Caillaux, accused of killing Gaston Calmette, the director of *Le Figaro* (a French daily newspaper). Henriette, the wife of France's Minister of Finance, had shot Calmette point-blank because she believed him responsible for a press campaign against her husband. So it was with more than usual impatience that the entire population of the island gathered on the dock that morning in mid-September, eager to find out from the captain of the mail boat what sentence had been passed on Madame Caillaux. Instead, they were greeted with the astounding news that France and England had been at war with Germany for the past six weeks. During that time, the French, English and Germans on the island had all been living together like friends instead of enemies….

This is the story with which, at the first half of the last century, Walter Lippman, an American journalist, opened his talk on the important role information plays in creating public opinion. At that time journalism–which served to both spread news and comment on it–was taking on a bigger and bigger role in the process of building society. In our day, however, it seems that printed news, challenged by the new media, is in a stage of transition. Even though creating public opinion is still the fundamental goal of the traditional mass media like TV and radio (it is enough to think of the by-now compulsive race of many candidates for public office to make sure they appear on TV), there has been a significant rise in the number of newspaper readers who are abandoning printed news in favor of news available through the Internet. But does this trend confirm the fact that traditional journalism is now a thing of the past? Or does it offer us the chance to rethink journalism and perhaps point it in new directions?

Over the course of history, the print medium underwent major innovations whenever it listened to the times and changed with them. One of these pivotal moments was the 1970's, which saw the dawn of a "new journalism" in the United States. In a time in which American society was still feeling the effects of the Kennedy administration and was also rocked protests of the young, flower children and anti-war protests, a type of journalism written with the language and structure of literature emerged.

With explosive innovative force and an innate ability to involve the reader, this new journalism broke away from the traditional rules of impartiality and balanced writing and instead recounted stories through the eyes of persons directly involved in them. This new form of journalism streaked through the sky of the national and international press like a meteor, blazing a trail that modern journalism continues to follow. One of the best known representatives of the trend was Truman Capote whose "non-fiction novel," *In Cold Blood*, should hold an important place in the library of every journalist and communicator because it is an example of how journalism can respond to the challenges facing the traditional print medium in this digital age of "hot media" and Twitter. ●

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World Communications Day

Portals as Access to "Somewhere Beyond"

In the wake of Benedict XVI's resignation as Pope, his Message for World Communications Day 2013 (May 12), entitled, *"Social Networks: portals of truth and faith; new spaces for evangelization,"* takes on new significance, in particular the word "portal." In fact, the word acquires a loftier meaning than that intended in the Message and becomes a symbol of discontinuity, a doorway to "somewhere beyond," giving access to a higher relationship.

At first reading, the primary content of the Message is the Pope's invitation to take one of the challenges posed by the social networks to the Church and her mission–an invitation in continuity with his previous Messages. Benedict XVI offers us a positive approach to the new communications technologies, focusing on social networks in particular since they are making a strong impact on people's perceptions of themselves, of reality and of relationships. He says that relationships in the digital world are not only virtual but also real because social networks are "part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young." They are an environment in which people must "make an effort to be authentic" because "what we ultimately share is our very selves."

New technologies: a gift for humanity

Benedict XVI invites us to appreciate the potential of social networks to promote human development and solidarity. At the same time, he urges us to improve our "ability to employ the new languages, not just to keep up with the times, but in order to communicate effectively," combining the written word, images and sound to involve people emotionally and intellectually, keeping in mind the value of dialogue, reasoned debate, logical argumentation and non-aggressive persuasion. If in the digital environment "it is easy for heated and divisive voices to be raised," believers should recall that "Elijah recognized God in a still, small voice," not in the great and strong wind of sensationalism.

Although this year's Message takes a step forward with respect to the Pope's previous

Messages for WCD, it remains in continuity with them. In fact, his earlier Messages acknowledged the new technologies as "a gift for humanity" (2009) and "an indispensable instrument" (2010) even though they "are changing not only the way we communicate, but communication itself" (2011). Furthermore, "social networks have become the starting point of communication for many people who are seeking advice, ideas, information and answers. In our time, the Internet is becoming ever more a forum for questions and answers" (2012). And in this year's Message the Pope notes that the social network culture is generated by its users and that an exchange of information can become communication, friendship, connection and communion.

The World Wide Web, Twitter, Facebook, Blogs–all these words have become a part of our everyday vocabulary because, as Paulines, we cannot do without these resources in carrying out our apostolate. They are not simply a trend: they are new ways of being with others, of sharing ideas, of living authentically, of building communion.

Communications Week

In keeping with our charism, the FSPs and SSPs of Italy have been collaborating with one another since 2006 to help the general public pay greater attention to the Pope's annual Message for World Communications Day (which up to then had been notoriously ignored by almost everyone).To achieve this goal, all the book centers of both Institutes combine their energy and creativity to organize and celebrate an annual "Communications Week" prior to WCD.

The upshot is that each year 50 Italian cities host a program rich in events such as meetings for various groups of people (teachers, catechists, pastoral workers, cultural animators), as well as organize musical performances, formative encounters in the book centers for children and teens, and moments of relaxation and celebration–all centered on the WCD theme.

In close connection with Communications Week, the

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Reti Sociali:
**PORTE DI VERITÀ E DI FEDE;
NUOVI SPAZI DI EVANGELIZZAZIONE**

Paulines also hold a "Traveling Festival" that visits a specifically-chosen diocese each year so as to make our pastoral work in the field of communications more concrete to the people. In agreement with the bishop and through his diocesan communications office, the FSPs and SSPs organize various initiatives to celebrate the always more complex world of communications and help the people learn to be comfortable in it.

So far, we have visited the dioceses of Salerno, Bari, Brescia, Alba, Caserta, Padua and Caltanissetta. This year we will be traveling to Avezzano.

Each year, the program of events focuses on five communications "paths": the *path of knowledge* (the rapport between communications and the many forms of knowledge); the *path of beauty* (manifested through the world of art); the *path of languages* (via its anthropological, technological and social aspects); the *path of solidarity* (which explores forms of relating to others through volunteer services); and the *path of togetherness* (a celebration of communion–the natural fruit of profound and genuine communication). ●

Anyone who would like to know more about Communications Week can visit our website: www.settimanadella-comunicazione.it.

A Religious TV Program is a Program for Everyone

Rosario Carello

Is a religious TV program meant to be viewed only by believers? Is it conceived, written, and performed only for a few of the faithful? This is an important question. In a time characterized by thousands of TV channels, where one can find programs for hunters, fishers, tennis players, rock music, etc., does faith run the risk of becoming just another segment of the viewing market? Should it be fenced in to protect it? Should it be a privileged place available to those who are passionate about a certain category of things? But can faith be considered "a certain category of things"? Like mystery novels or science fiction?

No, because it's not. Faith is not a hobby nor is it a personal passion to be cultivated with other like-minded people. It is impossible to think of a product that recounts faith as just another sector of the market industry and thus open to cynical attack.

Instead, the instruments of communication must be used to reach as many people as possible–those, as Blessed James Alberione taught, who live on the fringe of life. "Where is humanity going?" Fr. Alberione wrote. "Where and how and toward what goal is it moving, this humanity that is continually renewing itself on the face of the earth?" Pay attention here, because we are a part of this humanity and sooner or later we all wind up on the fringe of life. By humanity I mean the hordes of people that flood the streets every morning on their way to work. We too are part of this pressured crowd that never has enough time, that lives in a continual rush, and that risks reaching old age without ever having understood how God sees things–without being aware of the tender, loving gaze with which he regards us every moment of our life.

A fruitful meeting point

When I began to produce a religious TV program, I immediately realized that I could not let it become a ghetto: it had to be open to everyone. Indeed, I have come to see that my program has to be even more open than it already is. It isn't a case of throwing wide the door; it's a case of breaking down the walls so as to interact directly with life on the street. Why? Because, to my way of thinking, a TV program that speaks about faith is the only kind of TV program understandable to everyone. It is a genuine public service. There is no need to believe in order to ask the questions common to all of us. And every living, breathing person asks these questions because they touch our daily life. Questions like: How can I grow? How can I face the aging process? How can I raise my children? Why have children in the first place? And what if it is not possible to have them? What is my vocation in life? What are my plans for the future? We have questions about our mistakes, our hopes, our illnesses, our joys; questions about death, wealth, poverty, justice. My program doesn't give textbook answers to these questions. It explores them by recounting personal experiences, stories, the words of the saints, the teachings of the Pope, offering everyone God's perspective on things. Who talks about things like this today–even outside "religious" circles, that is, among the laity? No one. Life has been numbed by most of the media. People have told me: "But if you speak about God, you color your topic and cut yourself off from others." Which is the last thing I want to do. So my answer is: You can't respond to needs without pointing out a goal. A vague answer is of no help to anyone.

In fact, believers listen to my program so as to understand life better, while unbelievers can find in it something to use as a measuring rod. So a religious TV program is a fruitful meeting point. It is not a half-hour catechism lesson. It is neither the pride of a minority group nor the dictatorship of the majority.

Nevertheless it *is* communication and thus has its rules. We should not be afraid of directing our message to the crowds, to the average person. We should not be afraid to speak about everything, using the language of today. Jesus himself used parables. This means that we should not resort to intellectualism, as happens all too often. Another rule concerns the industrial aspect of production, that is to say: format, huge audiences, global choices, major investments, cross media. These should all be bound together by a spirituality of communication, which is currently lacking, but which can be discovered by those who study Fr. Alberione more profoundly. In witnessing to a bonding of spirituality and culture in the world of communications, the Founder of the Pauline Family continues to show us the way through his intuitions. ●