

WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY 2017

THE GOOD NEWS PROCLAIMED ANEW BY HUMAN BEINGS



This phrase, which encapsulates the heart of the Papal Message for the 51st World Communications Day (celebrated this year on 28 May), restores a central role to human beings and their capacity to choose between good and evil. Pope Francis urges us to act like millstones and “grind” the information we receive in a constructive way, without scattering the fruits of our communication due to preconceived ideas, fears or habitual behavior. At the same time, he asks us to broaden our gaze to perceive what makes news *good*, allowing ourselves to be inspired by the words of Jesus, who is himself the unique and primary content of every communication. The Pope draws inspiration for his Message from Isaiah 43:5: “*Fear not, for I am with you,*” which is the title of his discourse. This biblical text allows us to glimpse Pope Francis’ idea of communication. For him, communication among human beings should be marked by mutual consolation, closeness and communion—just like the Good Samaritan, whom he considers to be a model of the perfect communicator because he “bends down” to lift up the most downtrodden and then “ascend” with that person to the heights.

This year’s Message is a solicitation to search for the *good* to be found in even the worst human situations, including the dark days that throw us off balance. Pope Francis is offering us a challenge: we can either numb our

conscience and withdraw into the labyrinth of self-centeredness, or else we can entrust ourselves to the One who “casts light on our route and opens new paths of trust and hope.” The Pope seems to be saying that *we ourselves* are communication: we communicate goodness, beauty, suffering and failure through our words and deeds. In the light of this, the media can be seen as *living channels* of trust and hope, even though the Pope does not say this explicitly. I am referring here to the technologies that are the “daily bread” and “driving force” of those of us who work in the world of communications. At times we forget this reminder of the Pope and instead employ counterproductive mechanisms, reducing the media to ideological weapons that destroy the fundamental and unique meaning of our mission, which is to witness to the Good News; to bring it alive by incarnating it wherever we are and in whatever we do.

In *Evangeliium Gaudium* Pope Francis urges us to take on this challenge by living and sharing the Good News in our contemporary situation, in which the networks and instruments of human communication are undergoing unprecedented development. According to the Pontiff, we have an obligation to discover and transmit the “mysticism” of living together by meeting and mixing with one another, taking each other in our arms in mutual support, participating in this “rough sea” and transforming it into a genuine experience of fraternity, a “caravan” of solidarity, a holy pilgrimage.

So let us make our own the words of this year’s papal Message by becoming more sensitive to “a constructive form of communication that rejects prejudices and fosters a culture of encounter, helping us to view the world around us with realism and trust.”

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