

TO TELL A STORY IS TO COMMUNICATE



Narrate, discern, renew...with the *Story of Stories* (Sacred Scripture) in the background and in one's heart. The Message of Pope Francis for the 54th World Communications Day, published on 24 January 2020, the Memorial of St. Francis De Sales, is based on these three verbs. Inspired by Exodus 10:2, "That you may tell your children and grandchildren," the document revolves around an expression that completes its title: "Life becomes story." A story woven by the human being, who—as the Pope explains—is a "storyteller because, from the beginning of life, he/she hungers for stories and is influenced and oriented by them."

But the Pope warns us that not all stories are good stories, especially those that promote gain, possession, unrestrained consumption, chatter and gossip, violence and falsehood. He notes that these give rise to destructive and provocative stories that, instead of strengthening social ties and the

cultural fabric, "wear down and break the fragile threads binding us together as a society."

Francis cites the example of *deepfake* to explain how technologies can alter the authenticity of content and turn our understanding of it upside down. This is a risk that he already brought to attention in his 2018 Message for WCD, in which he insisted on the need for "a journalism of peace," capable of counteracting false news and helping to promote person-to-person communication. Persons to whom the successor of Peter entrusts Sacred Scripture and the Book of Exodus, in which God's "remembrance" of his people leads to their liberation from oppression. This is the power of memory, which binds humanity to its past but at the same time opens doors to the future through the renewal of stories and their transmission from generation to generation.



But this projected metamorphosis is not limited exclusively to the telling of stories. It is embodied in all people of good will who help to shape the human story by their efforts to concretize its beauty (what is upright and good) in their existence. Without a doubt, this heritage of beauty includes "the Scriptures, the stories of the saints, and also those texts that have shed light on the human heart and revealed its beauty."

Because, the Pope concludes, "when we remember the love that created and saved us, when we make love a part of our daily stories, when we weave the tapestry of our days with mercy, we are [truly] turning another page."

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