



POPE: SPREAD THE WORD USING NEW MEDIA

Addresses Participants of Social Communications Council

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 29, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is encouraging media professionals to take up the challenge to use the new technologies of the digital age to spread the word of God, while keeping the content unaltered.

The Pope said this upon receiving in audience participants in the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, who met this week in Rome to work on a pastoral instruction that will demonstrate a willingness to dialogue with the "digital culture."

The last document of pastoral guidance for the Church's communicative commitment -- "Aetatis Novae" -- was issued in 1992.

The plenary was the first one presided over by Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, who was named president of the council in 2007.

"A genuine revolution is taking place in the realm of social communications," the Pontiff said to the participants in the assembly, "of which the Church is ever more responsibly conscious."

"These technologies make speedy and penetrating communication possible, with a capacity to share ideas and opinions; to facilitate acquiring information and news in a personal way that is accessible to all," he added.

Recalling the two pastoral instructions on the media -- "Communio et Progressio" of Pope Paul VI and "Aetatis Novae" -- the Holy Father called for a further "careful analysis on the presence and action of the Church in this field."

Same message

The new means of communication constitute "a challenge for the Church, called to proclaim

the Gospel to men of the third millennium, keeping the content unaltered, but making it comprehensible thanks also to the instruments and means harmonious with the mentality and the cultures of today."

The Holy Father invited those present to "take up the challenges that these new technologies pose to evangelization."

He urged: "Promote a culture of respect for the dignity and value of the person, a dialogue rooted in the sincere search for truth, of friendship that is not an end in itself, but rather capable of developing the gifts of each one to put them at the service of the human community.

"In this way, the Church exercises what we could describe as a 'diakonia of culture' in the present 'digital continent,' traversing its paths to proclaim the Gospel, the only Word that can save man."

Benedict XVI also noted the need to reflect on various elements of the media culture, such as ethics, and the need to train local Churches to use media to evangelize, and to understand its importance.

"In the case of believers," he noted, "the necessary appreciation of the new media technologies must be supported always by a constant vision of faith, knowing that, beyond the means that are used, the efficacy of the proclamation of the Gospel depends in the first place on the action of the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church and the way of humanity."

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