

World Communications Day

- Holy Father's Message - Liturgical suggestions for the parish - Liturgical suggestions for schools
PONTIFICIUM CONSILIIUM DE COMMUNICATIONIBUS SOCIALIBUS
MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR THE XXXV WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY
Sunday, May 27, 2001

Theme: "Preach from the housetops": The Gospel in the Age of Global Communication

1. The theme which I have chosen for World Communications Day 2001 echoes the words of Jesus himself. It could not be otherwise, for it is Christ alone whom we preach. We remember his words to his first disciples: "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops" (Mt 10:27). In the secret of our heart, we have listened to the truth of Jesus; now we must proclaim that truth from the housetops.

In today's world, housetops are almost always marked by a forest of transmitters and antennae sending and receiving messages of every kind to and from the four corners of the earth. It is vitally important to ensure that among these many messages the word of God is heard. To proclaim the faith from the housetops today means to speak Jesus' word in and through the dynamic world of communications.

2. In all cultures and at all times - certainly in the midst of today's global transformations - people ask the same basic questions about the meaning of life: Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?(cf. *Fides et Ratio*, 1). And in every age the Church offers the one ultimately satisfying answer to the deepest questions of the human heart - Jesus Christ himself, "who fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his high calling" (*Gaudium et spes*, 22). Therefore, the voice of Christians can never fall silent, for the Lord has entrusted to us the word of salvation for which every human heart longs. The Gospel offers the pearl of great price for which all are searching (cf. Mt 13:45-46).

It follows that the Church cannot fail to be ever more deeply involved in the burgeoning world of communications. The global communications network is extending and growing more complex by the day, and the media are having an increasingly visible effect on culture and its transmission. Where once the media reported events, now events are often shaped to meet the requirements of the media. Thus, the relationship between reality and the media has grown more intricate, and this is a deeply ambivalent phenomenon. On the one hand, it can blur the distinction between truth and illusion; but on the other, it can open up unprecedented opportunities for making the truth more widely accessible to many more people. The task of the Church is to ensure that it is the latter which actually happens.

3. The world of the media can sometimes seem indifferent and even hostile to Christian faith and morality. This is partly because media culture is so deeply imbued with a typically postmodern sense that the only absolute truth is that there are no absolute truths or that, if there were, they would be inaccessible to human reason and therefore irrelevant. In such a view, what matters is not the truth but "the story"; if something is newsworthy or entertaining, the temptation to set aside considerations

of truth becomes almost irresistible. As a result, the world of the media can sometimes seem no more friendly an environment for evangelization than the pagan world of the Apostles' day. But just as the early witnesses to the Good News did not retreat when faced with opposition, neither should Christ's followers do so today. The cry of Saint Paul echoes among us still: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16).

Yet, as much as the world of the media may at times seem at odds with the Christian message, it also offers unique opportunities for proclaiming the saving truth of Christ to the whole human family. Consider, for instance, satellite telecasts of religious ceremonies which often reach a global audience, or the positive capacities of the Internet to carry religious information and teaching beyond all barriers and frontiers. Such a wide audience would have been beyond the wildest imaginings of those who preached the Gospel before us. What is therefore needed in our time is an active and imaginative engagement of the media by the Church. Catholics should not be afraid to throw open the doors of social communications to Christ, so that his Good News may be heard from the housetops of the world!

4. It is vital too that at the beginning of this new millennium we keep in mind the mission ad gentes which Christ has entrusted to the Church. An estimated two thirds of the world's six billion people do not in any real sense know Jesus Christ; and many of them live in countries with ancient Christian roots, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or no longer consider themselves members of the Church and live lives far removed from the Lord and his Gospel (cf. *Redemptoris missio*, 33). Certainly, an effective response to this situation involves much more than the media; but in striving to meet the challenge Christians cannot possibly ignore the world of social communications. Indeed, media of every kind can play an essential role in direct evangelization and in bringing to people the truths and values which support and enhance human dignity. The Church's presence in the media is in fact an important aspect of the inculturation of the Gospel demanded by the new evangelization to which the Holy Spirit is summoning the Church throughout the world.

As the whole Church seeks to heed the Spirit's call, Christian communicators have "a prophetic task, a vocation: to speak out against the false gods and idols of the day - materialism, hedonism, consumerism, narrow nationalism..." (Ethics in Communications, 31). Above all, they have the duty and privilege to declare the truth - the glorious truth about human life and human destiny revealed in the Word made flesh. May Catholics involved in the world of social communications preach the truth of Jesus ever more boldly and joyfully from the housetops, so that all men and women may hear about the love which is the heart of God's self-communication in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever (cf Heb 13:8).

From the Vatican, 24 January 2001, the memorial of Saint Francis de Sales.

JOANNES PAULUS II

-Liturgy Resources for World Communications Day
Prepared by the Bishops' Committee for the Media

Art and Environment - "Setting the scene"

Attention can be drawn to World Communications Sunday through a variety of visual and aural resources:

Have in a prominent place in the foyer of the Church or in the Church and artistic arrangement of the visual reminders of the media and our commission to preach the Word. Elements in this display could be a Lectionary, a large map of the world or a globe, ask the local newsagent for old 'newstand' sheets (the A3 sheets used to promote newspaper headlines and magazine covers), a film projector or a film monitor. Plants and flowers could be placed within the display as well. Appropriate banners, "Go out and proclaim the Good News to all the Earth" could be placed in a prominent place within the Church or the foyer of the Church Approach the local cinema and borrow large posters of several films that have positive values. Place them on the notice boards or other suitable locations in the Church. Have a television and video machine in the foyer of the Church or in the Church before Mass playing films like: Franco Zeffirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth" (1976); Cecil B De Mille's, "King of Kings" (1927); Pier Paolo Pasolini's, "The Gospel according to Matthew" (1964); David Greene's "Godspell" (1973); Norman Jewison's "Jesus Christ Superstar" (1973); Denys Arcand's "Jesus of Montreal" (1989). Have the soundtrack from "The Mission" playing in the foyer of the Church or in the Church.

The Liturgy

Gathering Hymn Sing a new song (McAuleyConnolly) AHB 102 (especially verses 1, 5 & 6) Be Thou My Vision (Trad.) AOV 9 Praise to You O Christ Our Saviour (Farrell) 28 AOV, 407 GA God has Chosen Me (Farrell) 497 GA Praise God from whom all blessings flow (Trad) 10 AOV, 384 GA Out of Darkness (Walker) 134 AOV 504 GA

Presiders Introductory Remarks:

On this the Sixth Sunday of Easter we celebrate World Communications Day. We recall that the Easter commission of the Lord was never intended to be for a select few, but through every means He gives us, we are sent to proclaim His Easter gifts of love, life and peace.

Penitential Rite

Lord Jesus, you are the message of our salvation, Lord Have Mercy Lord Jesus, you send us out to proclaim your truth and love, Christ Have Mercy Lord Jesus, you are our light and our lamp, Lord Have Mercy

Opening Prayer

(Adapted from the first option for Propers for the Sixth Sunday of Easter in accordance with Section 32 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal: "This (prayer) expresses the theme of the celebration and by words of the priest a petition is addressed to God....")

Ever living God, Help us to celebrate our joy In the resurrection of the Lord And to express by what we communicate in word and deed The love we celebrate

Grant this, though our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit One God, for ever and ever, Amen.

First Reading: Acts 15:1-2; 22-30

Psalm:

Let all the peoples praise you O Lord, Ps 60 (Willcock) GA60, PFSAll people that on earth do dwell, Ps 100 (Trad.) 25 AOV, 353 GAThis is the day, Ps 118 (Willcock) GA 70, PFSLet all the earth, Ps 66 (Willcock) PFSThe Lord is my light, Ps 27 (Willcock) GA 27, PFS

Second Reading: Revelations, 21:10-14, 22-23

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: John 14:23-29

Homily (755 words)(These words are given as a guide to how the Homilist may tie together the Gospel of the 6th Sunday of Easter with World Communications Sunday.)

It is not possible to be a private believer in Christ. From the first Easter until now, those who have been baptised have entered the tomb and been raised to new life in Christ and commissioned by Him to proclaim our faith to the world. This charge is not an optional extra. In season and out of season, each one of us is sent to publicly profess Jesus Christ as theWay, the Truth and the Life.

Our primary and most important proclamation is how we live. The quality and generosity of our life at home, at work and in society is the benchmark on which our words will rise and fall. For those Christians still persecuted for their faith, the goodness of their life, in the face of suffering, remains a powerful proclamation.

For us, however, fortunate enough to live in freedom, much has been given and much is required.

Like the earliest Church the commission to proclaim Christ to our world can be daunting. We can be overwhelmed by the demands, beset by the problems and put off by the costs. In our fear, however, the Risen Lord comes and with gifts of peace and reassurance. "Do not let your hearts be troubled, do not be afraid". We would not be here today if the disciples of Jesus, like Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Barsabbas, had not overcome their fears, relied upon the Holy Spirit for courage and went out to announce the truth they received from Lord.

We are heirs to their witness. We are sent to live and proclaim the Easter Gospel to all people who, through grace, have ears to listen.

As Pope John Paul II has constantly reminded us "the impact of the media in today's world can hardly be exaggerated". He says that we are living through a "cultural revolution where facts and values are constantly being exchanged", where, for many people, "the experience of living is to a great extent an experience of the media". The Pope teaches us that, "theproclamation of Christ must be part of this experience"

None of us live outside our media saturated Australian culture. And it is to this culture that the Risen Lord sends us.

We should not be overwhelmed by the demands of our mission. To be an intelligent and constructively critical consumer of the media is a significant contribution to our task. By attending to what we listen to on the radio, watch on TV, see at the cinema, browse on the internet or read in print entails that we exercise the Spirit's gifts for discernment and right judgment. Parents, especially, have obligations to oversee the media their children consume. We cannot complain about our Australian media

culture and continue to listen to the same commentators, buy the same newspapers and magazines, watch the offending television programmes and visit the same websites. We will effect a change in the behaviour of our media if we threaten their commercial interests by our patterns of consumption.

We should not be beset by the problems in our mission. The Australian media culture is very secular. The Pope reminds us, however, that whenever the media "calls attention to authentic human needs, especially those of the weak, the vulnerable, and the marginalised" these can be "an implicit proclamation of Christ." So while we eagerly look for opportunities to explicitly proclaim Christ, we can endorse any media which tells stories that promotes the Cardinal Virtues, the Christian Values or even explores the consequences of sin.

We should not be put off by the costs of our mission. Increasingly, our faith and values put us at odds with the majority of our society. To be a witness to the Risen Christ has always carried a personal cost. On our behalf there are many agencies sponsored by the Church who continue to work in all areas of the media, to influence it for good. In the future, the Church will need to be even more creative in finding ways to speak with those who are yet to hear of God's love in Jesus Christ.

"To proclaim Christ, however, is not only a duty, but a privilege". For this same Christ loves us so dearly He has come and made his home with us. On this Communications Sunday let us recommit ourselves to proclaiming, in word and deed, His saving love. And at this Eucharist let us pray that the Church's mission in the media may create a world free of fear and full of peace.

Prayers of the Faithful God our creator, your message goes out to all the earth, until the end of time. Give us wisdom to discern how best to proclaim your love in our modern world and Eater courage to fulfil our commission.

That all baptised people may announce by how they live the saving love of the Gospel. Lord hear us. That Christians employed in the media industry may bring to bear on their work the values of their faith. Lord hear us. That children may learn from their families how to make good choices in their use of all media. Lord heard us. That legislators may enact laws which publicly protect human dignity and build up our culture. Lord hear us That investors and owners of media companies may understand the great responsibility they have for promoting the common good and that al of us may be vigilant consumers of their products. Lord hear us. That we may support all those people who work for the Church in print, radio, television, film and the internet and they may be rewarded for their labours in reaching out to those drawn to hear God's word. Lord hear us. God of all Revelation, listen to these prayers. Bless our work to bring your kingdoms here on earth so that all people will know your saving deeds through Jesus Christ who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn for the Preparation of the Gifts

Remain in my love (Willcock) 159 AOV I have seen the Lord (Hurd) 98 AOV Be Not Afraid (Dufford) 114 AOV, 449 GA Open My Eyes Lord (Manibusan) AOV 166

Preface and Eucharistic Prayer

Eucharistic Prayers for Masses for various needs and occasions Option C: "Jesus the Way to the Father" is an appropriate prayer for today

Communion Hymn Lord you give the great commission (Tread.) 313 GA By your priestly power O risen Lord (McAuley/Connolly) GA 386 O God our help in ages past (Trad.) AOV 175 O Christ the Great Foundation (Trad.) GA 483 I heard the voice of Jesus say (Trad.) GA 468

Recessional Hymn Who will speak if you don't (Haugen) GA 509 City of God (Schutte) 57 AOV, GA 498 Take Christ to the World (Walker) GA 396 We have no other boast (Willcock) GA 91 Take the Work of God with you (Harrison) GA 494

Key for hymn references: AOV As One Voice AHB The Australian Hymn Book GA Gather Australia PFS Psalms for Feasts and Seasons

OTHER ACTION

Organise a parish family film night at the local cinema Have a trivial pursuit night on entertainment and trivia Hold a great debate on the topic, "There is nothing worth watching on TV these days!" Hold a competition for the best design of a parish web-site Convene a parish jury to judge the local print journalist that promotes the best human values Convene a parish jury to judge the local radio commentator that promotes the best human values Convene a parish jury to judge the local TV presenter that promotes the best human values Present the awards after the main Sunday Mass on World Communications Day Invite all the people involved in the local media to the Mass for World Communications Day.

This resource has been prepared by Father Richard Leonard, SJ, Director of the Australian Catholic Film Office, an Office of the Bishops' Committee for the Media. ACBC School Liturgy Resources for World Communications Day

Art and Environment - "Setting the scene"

Attention can be drawn to World Communications Sunday through a variety of visual and aural resources:

Have in a prominent place in the foyer of the School an artistic arrangement of the visual reminders of the media and our commission to preach the Word. Elements in this display could be a Lectionary, a large map of the world or a globe, ask the local newsagent for old 'newstand' sheets (the A3 sheets used to promote newspaper headlines and magazine covers), a film projector or a film monitor. Plants and flowers could be placed within the display as well. Appropriate banners in the classrooms could read, "Go out and proclaim the Good News to all the Earth" or could be placed in a prominent place in the school foyer. Approach the local cinema and borrow large posters of several films that have positive values. Place them on the notice boards or other suitable locations around the school. Have a television and video machine in the foyer of the school or in the school library playing films like: Franco Zeffirelli's "Jesus of Nazareth" (1976); Cecil B De Mille's, "King of Kings" (1927); Pier Paolo Pasolini's, "The Gospel according to Matthew" (1964); David Greene's "Godspell" (1973); Norman Jewison's "Jesus Christ Superstar" (1973); Denys Arcand's "Jesus of Montreal" (1989). Have the soundtrack from "The Mission" playing in the school foyer or library. Liturgy for School or classroom assembly

Gathering Hymn Sing a new song (McAuley/Connolly) AHB 102 (especially verses 1, 5 & 6) Be Thou My Vision (Trad.) AOV 9 Praise to You O Christ Our Saviour (Farrell) 28 AOV, 407 GA God has Chosen Me (Farrell) 497 GA Praise God from whom all blessings flow (Trad) 10 AOV, 384 GA Out of Darkness (Walker) 134 AOV 504 GA

Presider's introductory remarks This week the Church celebrates World Communications. Jesus commanded us to go out and proclaim his Good News. We

are not sent by Jesus to just a few chosen people but, through every means He gives us, we are sent to proclaim His Easter gifts of love, life and peace to all people, everywhere.

Let us pray,

Ever living God, help us to celebrate our joy in the resurrection of the Lord and to express by what we communicate in word and deed the love we celebrate.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

Introduction Presider: So much of the modern media is about making choices about what we see and hear. In this dramatic presentation, based on the story in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus meets Bartimeaus, the blind beggar, and presents him with choices similar to the ones we have to make as well. Reader A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark Reader And they came to Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, Bartimeaus, a blind beggar, the son of Timeaus, was sitting by the roadside. And when he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Bartimeaus Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me! Leader And many in the crowd rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, Bartimeaus Son of David, have pity on me! Leader Jesus stopped and said, Jesus Call him. Leader And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Get up, he is calling you." And throwing off his cloak he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, Jesus What you want me to do for you? (Jesus, the other disciples and the crowd freeze) Bartimeaus What do I want? What on earth do I want? (Bartimeaus is fixed for a moment and then his face begins to light up.) I think I want to see. Poor So you think you want to see, do you? Once you could see, and much of what you saw disgusted you. You prayed then you would not have to see all those things in this world that disturbed and unsettled you. Your prayer was answered. You know now our darkness and pain. Bartimeaus But who are you? Poor We other voices of the poor and helpless. Hungry We are the voices of those who hunger and thirst for food and shelter. Captive We the desperate voices of all those unjustly bound and oppressed. Elderly We are the cries of the lost, all those pushed aside and put away because we remind you of the frailty of life. All Do you really want see us, Bartimeaus? Bartimeaus I don't know. I'm confused. I think I want to see. I really do! Poor Are you sure you want to see the stranger who is poor in many ways? Bartimeaus Yes, I do want see you! (The poor person makes a healing gesture over Bartimeaus' face and goes to a position in front of Jesus.) Hungry Once before you turned away from me, Bartimeaus Will you listen to the pleas of the starving all around you? Bartimeaus Yes, I want a see you too! (The hungry person makes a healing gesture over Bartimeaus' face and goes to a position in front of the poor person.) Captive You turned away from me, Bartimeaus. Will you forget me when your sight returns? Bartimeaus Who are you? Captive I am all that is captive within you, the voice of all those bound because of fear and ignorance. You say you want to see me? Bartimeaus Yes, I do want to see not part, but all of life. (The captive person makes a healing gesture over Bartimeaus' face and goes to a position in front the hungry person.) Elderly Do you want to see all of us who are not born, or who have not died yet and are put away from public view? Bartimeaus Yes, I do what a see all of this, all of you! (The elderly person makes a healing gesture over Bartimeaus' face and goes to a position in front of the hungry person. Jesus and the disciples unfreeze.) Jesus What you what me to do for you? Bartimeaus Teacher, I want to see again. Jesus Be on your way, your faith has healed you. (At this point

each of the symbolic figures has been standing with their hands in front of an covering their faces. After Jesus says this each one goes down on his/her knees into a squatting position and the uncovers his/her face. Bartimeaus reaches out for Jesus. In turn each of the symbolic figures stand aside as they help Bartimeaus to get closer and closer to Jesus. When Bartimeaus reaches Jesus, Jesus embraces him. Everyone walks off together.) Reader This is the Gospel of the Lord All Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ Cast Reader; Bartimeaus, Jesus, Captive, Elderly, Poor, Hungry, Disciples, Crowd.

(Adapted from Michael Moynahan SJ, "Bartimeaus", Once Upon A Miracle:drama for worship and religious education, New York: Paulist Press, 1993.Used with permission.)

Prayers of the Faithful God our Creator, your message goes out to all the earth, until the end of time. Give us wisdom to discern how best to proclaim your love in our modern world and Easter courage to fulfil our commission.

That Christians employed in the media industry may bring to bear on their work the values of our faith. Lord hear us. That we may learn from one another, our teachers and our families how to be make good choices in what we see and hear in the media. Lord hear us. That what we see and hear in the papers, TV, on radio and at the cinema move us to create a more just world for all God's people. Lord hear us. That we may support all those people who work for the Church in print, radio, television, film and the internet and they be rewarded for their labours in reaching out to those drawn to hear God's word. Lord hear us. Loving God , listen to these prayers. Bless our work to bring your kingdom here on earth so that we all people will know your saving deeds through Jesus Christ who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

Recessional Hymn Who will speak if you don't? (Haugen) 509 GA City of God (Schutte) 57 AOV, 498 GA Take Christ to the world (Walker) 396 GA We have no other boast (Willcock) GA 91 Take the Word of God with you (Harrison) 494 GA

Key AOV: As One Voice GA: Gather Australia

Action

Organise a school film outing to the local cinema. Have a family trivial pursuit night on entertainment and media trivia. Hold a great debate on the topic, "There is nothing worth watching on TV these days!" Hold a competition for the best design of a school web site. Conduct a competition for the school's entries into the Young Catholic Journalist of the Year. Have a mock Academy Awards for the song, TV programme, film and website which promotes the best human values. Invite any parents who may be involved in the media or local media personalities disposed to the Church to speak to classes and/or a School assembly. Notes for inclusion with the School Newsletter:

This week the Church marks World Communications Sunday.

We all know how powerful the media is. As Pope John Paul II has constantly reminded us "the impact of the media in today's world can hardly be exaggerated". He says that we are living through a "cultural revolution, where facts and values are constantly being exchanged", where, for many people, "the experience of living is to a great extent an experience of the media". The Pope teaches us that, "the proclamation of Christ must be part of this experience"

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