

Dear brothers,

We have the honour of presenting to you the first edition of the Bulletin of Communications of the Divine Word. We hope that through this means, we can communicate and inform on Communication activities in the Congregation, which is one of the Characteristic Dimensions of our life and mission. Furthermore, we want to make visible the activities of the dimension in our Provinces, Regions and Missions. We will also present certain reflections on current issues of interest on communication in general.

We launch this first edition with an article on digital culture, its opportunities and challenges; the institutional communication of a Religious Congregation like ours. We also present certain examples of best practices and activities of Communication in PANAM, ASPAC and AFRAM Zones. In the same vein, two journalists present their opinions on Communication in the Church.

We wish therefore to invite everyone, especially the coordinators of communication in their respective Province, Region and Mission to participate in this medium of information and communication. In virtue of your being Divine Word Missionaries, we call upon you to communicate. (co.102).

Hopefully we will be more conscious of this characteristic dimension of our missionary identity and true communicators of the Word of God. 'Fear not, for I am with you'. "Communicating hope and trust in our time". (Theme for the 51st World Social Communications Day in 2017).



EDITORIAL

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Without much ado, we wish you a pleasurable reading experience.
Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all.

Modeste Munimi, SVD
General Communications Coordinator

BOARD OF EDITORS: Narcisso Celan (KEN), Eilers, Franz-Josef (PHC), A., Selvam (INH), Kerketta, Christopher (INE), Gustavo Jaimes (BOL) and Modeste Munimi (ESP)
LAYOUT: Mark Angelo M. Ramos (ESP).



BEST COMMUNICATION PRACTICES IN THE CONGREGATION

AFRAM ZONE

COMMUNICATION COURSES IN TANGAZA COLLEGE NAIROBI

By: Lawrence Muthee, SVD.

I am Lawrence Muthe'e from Kenya. I was ordained priest last June and at the moment I am working in Arusha (Tanzania) as assistant parish priest in Burka. I did my theology in Tangaza College in Nairobi. After two years of theology I went to Spain for OTP. After my two years OTP experience I stayed in Spain to complete my theological studies, before coming back to Kenya, where I got my first missionary assignment from the Superior General. During my years of theology in Kenya, I took some courses of Communication in the Institute of Social Communication (ISC) in Tangaza College.

The Tangaza Institute of Social Communication (ISC) is one of the seven institutes in Tangaza College where our young confreres from CFC Langata are studying theology and it is currently under the directorship of the Divine Word Missionaries. Through its rich curriculum the ISC has tried to understated the call to communicate the Word of God in a very specific way. By forming professional communicators from both religious and laity fronts, the ISC seeks to provide the general society with qualified, disciplined, faithful and courageous men and women who are capable and willing to use the Mass Media in a positive way, so as to transform the lives of people, inspired by Christian values. This is achieved by providing the students with the best tools to understand, interpret and tell the society's stories, and in this way contribute to its transformation. The students are formed in Christian value based skills, so that they can investigate, package and communicate life transforming information to the public.

The students of theology are given the opportunity of taking some communication courses for their pastoral work in the future. The content of these courses comprises both human communication and mass media.

As SVD, communication as one of the four characteristic dimensions is part of our identity. For this reason, the SVD theology students from the Common Formation Centre in Langata, Nairobi have been encouraged to take courses in ISC, given the advantage that Tangaza College gives the opportunity to its students in its seven institutes, to take courses in Institutes, other than where they are registered as regular students.



The Communication Policy in the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) states: "During the years of formation, a general communication education should be provided for all our students... Communication training in our formation houses should slowly lead the formants to a proper understanding of communication as a ministry. Our future missionaries should be able to give good homilies, and those who have the corresponding talents or interest, should be encouraged to make use of the theatre, dance, radio/television, and the modern digital media. (Communication Policy in the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), p.26).

As a missionary congregation, we are more than anyone else, very much aware of the rapid evolution of the missionary needs of modern society and the ever increasing necessity to improve, the way we communicate the Word of God to different peoples of our times. The fast evolving communication technology poses a huge challenge to us who are charged with communicating the life transforming message of the Kingdom of God. If we are not well prepared to meet these needs, we will end up being ineffective communicators of the Word. As the secular world chokes society with bombarding audio-visual and print content that promotes consumerism and individualism, it is our mandate to provide alternative content in the same



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platform and with the matching vigour, therefore providing options and choices for the people.

Pastoral communication means a lot more than being able to operate complicated high-tech gadgets. It means being able to use the appropriate words, gestures and medium to communicate with different types of audience, i.e. the elderly, the young and the children. In other words, providing Christian content to them. To do this, we need to acquire the necessary skills. In fact, the other three characteristic dimensions of our congregation depend enormously on communication. For instance, for the Bible ministry to achieve its objective, it needs well prepared biblical content and effective transformation of the same. In order to have effective mission animation, we need effective communicators, and finally, to address issues pertaining to Peace and Justice we need to deliver the message of unity in diversity effectively to the world.

Today I am able to carry out my apostolate, especially with the youth and children, to my heart's content, because of the golden opportunity I had when I studied theology in Tangaza. I have since built on these skills and coupling with skills from other discipline makes my apostolate more effective. I have always believed that the formation of confreres should always be focused on our four characteristic dimensions from the very beginning. When the candidates join the SVD, especially after the novitiate, they need to identify the cultural dimension they can specialize in and not to wait until they are ordained or finally professed to think about it. The needs of the mission today are very different from what they were 20 years ago. Today there is a clear need for specialized ministries for both clergy and religious. The idea here is not to compete with the lay professionals but to be able to offer alternative and Christian response to the ever increasing needs of society. The secular world has commercialized almost every service to humanity. It is our mandate to give alternatives to society, by giving services based on Christian values and that respect the dignity of all people, of all cultures, race and beliefs.

It is my recommendation that our Congregation look more closely into the issue of formation, both initial and

ongoing formation and see how best we can introduce specialized ministries to complement the basic Philosophy and Theological studies especially in respect to communication. Today the world demands more from us than ever before.

ASPAC ZONE INDIAN SUBZONE

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IN INDIAN PROVINCES AND REGION

By:

Selvam Amalorpavam, SVD

National Coordinator for Communications

The Missionaries of all Provinces are engaged in the proclamation of the word of God. The main mission of the Provinces, at the present moment, is to cater for the pastoral needs of Catholics and to provide them with a good education, through means of our parishes and educational institutions, respectively in our mission states. The cultures of our missions are heavily dominated by the entertainment/cultural industry, and the impact of this on the socio-political scenario has to be undone through awareness. And the awareness is created through our Preaching ministry, Publication of magazines, Audio Video Productions, Devotional Musical Albums and Theatre ...etc.

In doing the communication ministry in the Provinces, we deal with the three main elements that deal with distinctive configurations of application and of significance in the wider life of the people of India.

- We put in place the technologies for communicating publicly showing media texts, and holding discussions for creating media awareness among the people, making them critical users of media and media texts for rural people.

- Our available communication structures limit development or set strict boundaries

- Our communication of the Word of God through preaching. We have played a major part in the faith formation and transformation of the lives of both the mission states.



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As printing plays an inseparable part in any revolution of a society, our proclamations also include the print media, publishing monthly magazines. The main material form of these magazines reflects the concerns of the society today, at the same time challenging and comforting the Catholic population, and reflecting the requirements of the change needed in our life style as bearing true witnesses to Christ.

The trainings offered by Communications centres in musical systems, dance forms, Audio Visual productions, Personal Computer hardware engineering and networking; all stand in par with the changing world. And finally, the main aim of the communications centres have been the faith formation and evangelization in India.

INC

The first Media House Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra in Indore since 1982 providing its services in the field of Media and Communications. Since its last 30 years of services it has produced one feature film 'Khristayaan, 3 short films which have been highly acclaimed in various film festivals (The Wall, The Pink Scarf, The Globe), several Video albums, video documentaries and Street plays.

The Centre has produced nearly 50 audio albums, several audio dramas and talks. Besides, Satprakashan is also producing and broadcasting daily radio programmes in Hindi for Radio Veritas-Satyaswar and Radio Vatican since 1988. Now it has launched its App 'RVA Live Mobile' and is available 24 hours live on web www.radioveritassatyaswar.org. It is also a publication house and it has published several books from here. It has its own distribution centre with the name 'St. Arnold's Religious'. It distributes its audios, videos, books and other religious articles all over India specially covering the needs of Hindi speaking states.

Workshops and Training - Satprakashan also organizes from time-to-time, in-house and outdoor (on invitation) Workshops, Trainings and seminars related to media and communications.

"We are committed to communication and to making communication more effective for life."

INH

Today we live in an age of information and media, in a world where values projected by media seem to be more accepted than real values. The term mass media describes many forms of entertainment: Television; Film, Music, Newspapers, Magazines, the Internet, and Advertising. The media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society. In a competitive economic society, parents are forced to spend longer hours at work and fewer hours with their children.

As a result, outside influences have greater access and a negative impact on our youth than ever before. The Internet and the media are bringing the outside world into our homes. The influences on the youth from movies and the music they listen to, are growing in importance. Hence, based on this understanding, here, we explore work of mass media and its impact on young people.

This medium communicates only one way, but influences us to a large extent. The Mass Media are the tools or technologies that are spreading information and entertainment to a vast number of consumers. Arnold communications started showing religious movies to Lambadi mission.

Centre has two months' course for college students on Communication, Computer, Documentary film Editing and Mass Media. The Students actively participated in all the classes. It was really an enriching experience for students. The centre has produced a documentary on Arnold Janssen life History and an Awareness programme for rural people in the Telugu language on Pregnancy. The centre also offers training in Visual Productions, Personal computer hardware engineering and networking.





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INE

Youth Feast.

A youth feast for the youths of all the SVD parishes in INH Province were organized by Fr. Pushparaj SVD and K. Antoniswamy SVD, youth coordinators in collaboration with Arnolds Social Service Centre, INH Biblical and communication coordinators. A host of topics such as personality development, passion for mission – a lesson from St. Arnold Janssen, Career Orientation, the impact of Social Media today, the role of Bible in the life of the youth etc.



The Internet and the media are bringing the outside world into our homes. We have started a new website for the province. The name of the website is www.inhsvd.in. you will be getting most of the society documents, publications and mission work on our website. It will be available icon for INH Publication.

The centre has been trying its best to find various ways and means to re-evangelize among Christians and spread the gospel values among the non-Christian brethren too. The main undertakings of Arnold Communications are training in media, media education and awareness for various groups, for promoting Christian values, human development, peace and harmony among the people of different faiths. In the field of media education, the centre will organize media awareness seminars and workshops for students, youth and college students for this year.

Communication activities in INE strictly speaking refer to the Province Communication Centre, St. Arnold Vikas Sanchar, Jharsuguda. Besides the activities of the centre there are a number of individual confreres, who because of their own interest, have taken up some publications, Audio productions or spreading socio-cultural and health awareness etc. through talks and film shows and so on.

St. Arnold Vikas Sanchar ("SAVS" in short) is the Communication Centre of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) INE Province as well as the Regional Communication Centre for the Catholic Church in Orissa, catering for the media needs of all the five dioceses of Orissa. The communication ministry in the Eastern Indian Province of SVDs was begun by Fr. Mathew Poovanpuzha, SVD, in the year 1974 receiving the guidelines, from the then

Provincial Superior, Fr. Liam Horsfall, SVD and Bp. Herman Westerman, SVD, "to promote catechesis, support catechetical work, and help the process of deepening the faith of the people in the diocese of Sambalpur." Later on, in 1984, at the request of the Regional Council of Bishops in Orissa, and with the recommendation of the Provincial Planning Committee of the SVD in the Eastern Province, this centre was made the Regional Communication Centre for Orissa to cater for the media needs of all the Five Catholic Dioceses of Orissa. The Society of the Divine Word was given the responsibility of providing staff, developing, financing and running the centre as the Regional Communication Centre for the Five Catholic dioceses of Orissa, under the supervision of the Bishop of Sambalpur, in whose diocese the centre is located. Today Vikas Sanchar animates and coordinates the media activities in all the five Dioceses of Orissa.



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St. Arnold Vikas Sanchar has been meeting the communications needs of the five dioceses of Orissa and the SVD Eastern Indian Province, which includes the states of Orissa, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal, from 1974. It was begun as a media centre on a small scale, mainly for catechetical purposes, but as the services of the centre expanded and more people joined the staff, the Centre was dedicated to the founder of the Society of the Divine Word, St. Arnold Janssen. Hence it was named "St. Arnold Vikas Sanchar". The Name indicates the over-all development of the people we serve in this mission. The main aim of the centre has been the faith formation and evangelization in the whole Region of Orissa, through Mass Media and (Traditional) low cost media activities.

Media Awareness Seminars & courses for Seminarians, youth and other groups.

The centre has taken up a media workshop for Holy Spirit Junior Sisters, two days' media/social media awareness seminar to around 200 students at Turbunga, two days' classes on social media to the SVD Major Seminarian at Divya Jyoti, Sason, three days' classes on media and especially Social Media to SDB Pre-Novices at Jharsugda and A Seminar to Mothers at Belpahar Parish on 'Social Media and it's effect on Family Values'.

ING

Our Mission stations in our Region are spread in 5 civil States and 6 Dioceses. Communities are spread far and wide in the valleys and on the hills, yet we communicate with our confreres and communities. Some mission stations are too far away from internet facilities, cell phone networks, and other basic communication amenities.

Northeast is rich in many languages and our confreres are able to communicate in the local dialect of the people. People have accepted the SVD missionaries and they want more, because SVDs are quick in picking up the local dialect and accommodating themselves to local cultures and traditions. As a communication coordinator takes up the newsletter work 'The Messenger, ING.'

INM

We take some classes on 'Media Education' to the six schools in Tripura, for the students. They have shot two documentary films on 'Boat people' and on 'Malaria awareness' in Tripura. Some of our missionaries involved in producing an audio CD on church hymns in Hrangkhaw. Kokborok dialect in Tripura. Fr. Petrus Baraik svd painted a Pentecost picture in the Ambassa Church in a traditional tribal way. Through this creative painting Tripura tribal culture is depicted and communicated to the local church.

INM

A National Institute of Missiology and Communications

The vision of this Centre for Missiology and Communications, Ishvani Kendra, is, "To animate people in the light of the Word of God and translate the Word into meaningful propositions and viable models of action in the contemporary world." And its mission is, "To echo the Voice of God; to function as a hub of radical new thinking and action; providing inspiration, coordination, and assistance in the work of evangelization of the Church in India as well as in Asia."

Keeping in mind this vision and mission of the Institute we organize many courses, seminars and workshops, together with the resident staff, the resource persons and other collaborators. We have received appreciation from the Bishops, Provincials, Superiors and participants for organizing various seminars and workshops at our Institute.

Turn your passion into a profession.

This course on the Art and Techniques of digital filmmaking is designed primarily for students who are planning a career in the media. The course attempts to go beyond skills and techniques. Students are encouraged to criticize the social framework within which the media operates. We offer a chance for students to interact with distinguished media personnel - journalists, filmmakers, critics, photographers, advertising and publicity.



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Professionals - who form the teaching faculty for this course. In addition to classroom teaching, the emphasis is on individual and group projects, assignments and independent research. Students are expected to do a project of professional nature within the stipulated time. Emphasis will be given to producing works that are of professional and broadcasting quality which will help students enter the media industry with a portfolio which has been highly evaluated.

The communication department of the Institute functions not merely for productions alone, but it is an integral part of various programmes and thus missiological seminars and workshops are supported by various audio-visual programmes. During our seminars and courses, we conduct meaningful meditations guided by the communication department every day, using various audio-visual aids. On alternative days, films are shown reflecting the theme of the subjects they deal with. The participants do appreciate the integral approach and it is very effective for learning, reflection and personalization. From Last year on words the communication department has reached out to brothers and people around in arranging one year long courses. At present, we have students studying art and techniques of Film making.

Mission Scan and Website

We continue our free e-mail service of Mission Scan. Altogether, we send Mission Scan to interested readers all over the world. We have nearly 7500 e-mail addresses in our mailing list. It contains documentation, news items concerning Missiological activities in the world, the abstracts of new Books on Mission and messages or communications from the official Church. Many appreciate this service, especially those who are working in the missions in Africa and Latin America. The website (www.ishvanikendra.com) contains regularly updated news articles and the information about our Communication Department.

Ishvani Journal

Our regular publication of the Journal Ishvani Documentation and Mission Digest goes to the print regularly and four issues of IDMD reaches people all over the world.

The Social-Pastoral Communication Program of UST Graduate School and UST Faculty of Sacred Theology in cooperation with St. Joseph Freinademetz Communication Center (JFCC)

present



THE GOSPEL
IN DIGITAL SOCIETY:
AN IDEALITY AND CHALLENGE

THE UST SOCIAL-PASTORAL COMMUNICATION
MA/STL PROGRAM – AN SVD INITIATIVE
BY: FRANZ-JOSEF EILERS, SVD

With the beginning of the new academic school year August 2016 in some Philippine Universities 2016 it is now 15 years that the first steps for an academic program in Pastoral and Evangelizing Communication at the Graduate School of more than 400 years old (1611) Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila were made. It was the initiative and planning, of the that time, two secretaries of the FABC (“Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences”) offices for Education and Social Communication, Frs. Vincente Cajilig, op and Franz-Josef Eilers,svd to negotiate with the University and propose the respective program. The project began the school year 2001/2002 with a class on “Introduction to Social Communication” which had been offered for 25 years for seminarians in the “Divine Word Seminary” in Tagaytay (1985-2010) . Over the first years a full program was slowly developed at the UST Graduate School offering some 13 specialized courses in communication for Pastoral ministry. Since 2008 the program became also part of the Theological Faculties of the Pontifical University which offers students with and Bachelor in Theology or equivalent the possibility to receive, beside the MA of the Graduate School but also the Roman Licentiate in Theology (STL) with one thesis in the field.

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Up till now the program has 'produced' some 42 graduates, coming from beside the Philippines, from other Asian countries, including China, Korea, Vietnam, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand. An additional dozen students are working at the moment on their final (MA/STL) and two candidates are preparing for a doctorate.

The program has also developed its own Christian Communication Model where it is not any more the Sender who initiates his desire to 'convince' the receiver (S-M-R) but the Message as the Word of God (M-s-R) which is central, and where the whole communication process is seen in a participatory way leading to networking rather than to a hierarchical approach. Beside the specialized courses students are also expected to select some other courses of their interest which are related to their interest or programs. The University of Santo Tomas with some 40 00 students provides many offers and possibilities also for communication students to develop their own abilities according to their own needs and interests. Occasionally the UST program also organizes specialized academic and research conferences like in October 2016 one on "The Gospel in digital Society: Asian Realities and Challenges".



dimension in our PANAM Zone, permit me to present the same document shared during our Workshop on Characteristic Dimensions in Quito, Ecuador at the beginning of this year.

It is worth noting that all PRM (Provinces, Regions and Missions) had their Coordinator/Secretary of Communication. From this, we can deduce that in our PRM, there is the interest of working and strengthening this trademark of the SVD missionary family. There is also the professionalization and specialization of confreres dedicated to this dimension which further shows concern and interest with being more apt and efficient in the responsibility received.

PANAM ZONE

COMMUNICATING THE WORD IN PANAM

By: Roberto Gallardo, SVD

"The Word was made flesh, and revealed the glory of the Father" (cf. Jn 1:14)

From the founding generation, we can discover the interest imbedded in our congregation for development through the characteristic dimension of Communication, be it through the use of the means of communication or through the interest shown in creating fraternal relationships among the communities of missionaries. The characteristic dimension of Communication in the SVD PANAM Zone is implicitly manifested in our missionary, spiritual and pastoral identity. As a starting point for this outline of the current situation of Communication, and as a characteristic

More and more, we perceive with insistence the need for the support of our local superiors in order to push forward the initiatives proposed in this dimension. It is only when Communication is taken as a characteristic dimension of the missionary essence and duty, do we see the challenges and the consequent coherence of missionary testimony, which calls for more inter-dimensional activities that involve both confreres and lay faithful who work in our 4 characteristic dimensions.

In most of the PRM, we see the presence of Communication Media: radio, television, parish bulletins, social networks etc. Also, formative courses are offered to communicators and efforts are made to make communication as pure as possible through the solution of conflicts, talks on interpersonal relationships, etc.



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Mention can be made of some concrete activities that have been realized in our dimension:

- Collaboration in editing, diagramming and diffusion of provincial bulletins, web pages and social networks.
- Elaboration and consultancy for missionary calendars.
- Organization and execution of workshops for communicators
- Recording and diffusion of Sunday Masses for the local Communication Media: "Mass at Home".
- Sunday missionary video-message on social network
- Support in the realization of the Year of Vocation on Provincial levels. The possibility of collaborating with the Zonal level was offered, the opportunity was created, but there have been no inputs.
- Elaboration of materials on the inter-dimensional level
- Collaboration and consultancy for publications (Magazines, Reviews, etc).

It is convenient to mention the challenges that this dimension faces on the Zonal PANAM level.

- to strengthen the interest and communication among the PRM coordinators of social communication.
- healthy interest of our confreres in mission for the Characteristic Dimension of Social Communication.

RADIO VERBO IN PARAGUAY

By: Jacob Puthankudy, SVD

The 8th of September 2010 was a memorable day in the history of the Paraguayan province of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), not only for the centenary celebration of missionary presence in Guarani land, but also for the commencement of a Radio communication project.

Today, after completing 5 years of functioning from the border city of Ciudad del Este (City of the East), which borders on Argentina and Brazil, this radio has left its mark on the Divine Word's presence and its mission in Paraguay in a very visible way. Radio "El Verbo" FM (The Word FM) and "La Voz de la Libertad" FM (The Voice of Freedom FM), are two Catholic radio stations of the six that exist in Paraguay.

The project was realised with the collaboration of the community and until now, is self-sufficient. The principal goal is to communicate the principles and values of the Gospel, through the dimensions of our congregation and with the active participation of our committed laity. In some way, we can affirm that the active participation of our community is a sign of belongingness and co-responsibility in our evangelization efforts through their willingness to participate in all the activities of the radio, in various capacities.

Today, the Communication Network El Verbo is made up of two emissions, AM and FM together with their corresponding 24-hour non-stop programmes. The principal characteristic of the radio is the voluntary work of its professionals in the programmes on different themes: religious, cultural, socio-economic, educational and political focussing on formation and education in all aspects of an integrated life. The transmission of the programmes is also given in Portuguese for the benefit of our listeners across the border in Brazil.

During these five years, we have paid much attention to developing health-related issues and issues concerning education, the environment and social security. We have work-related agreements with the Catholic University, in the departments of Legal Sciences, Health and Accounting, with the support of professors and alumni from different professions who offer free services and use the opportunities available in our radio programmes.



**RADIO
EL VERBO**



Hopefully in the near future, our Communication Network El Verbo can be integrated into the extension program of Communication studies so that the students can get more involved in the Radio's programmes. Presently, the students of Communication Sciences in the Universidad Nacional Del Este (National University of the East), do their internship with the Radio as part of the requirements for completing their studies. >>>

We remain firm in our dreams to bring about transformation in our society with the Gospel principles and values, which is our biggest challenge today, in the face of so much manipulation of information in favour of the more privileged sectors of society. Ours is a grain of sand in this immense duty. We believe that with this mission we can help create a more responsible and committed community, open to the numerous changes needed in our country.

COMMUNICATION IN THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LIVING

BY: FR. CHRISTOPHER KERKETTA, SVD

“Communication” is an essential element for healthy community living. Every human community needs communication. In order to maintain a healthy relationship between two or more people, an appropriate system of communication needs to take place. In fact a healthy communication between persons is like oxygen that keeps the human relations alive, active and meaningful. Human relationship is all about engaging in appropriate and healthy communications.

When we refer to the community life of consecrated people in a religious order, like that of the Divine Word Missionaries, live and work in communities, international and intercultural nature as its DNA, a deeper level of communications, such as, sharing of thoughts, ideas, emotions, feelings among the confreres is required. A deeper level of communication also requires an appropriate, moderate and healthy communication with oneself (intra-communication) and with other members of the community (inter-personal communication).

ALL LEADERS ARE GOOD COMMUNICATORS

All the towering world leaders are eloquent communicators. A person may be intelligent or highly qualified in his/her field but if he fails to communicate himself to others he/she will never be recognized as a leader. For recognition in the world one has to be equipped with both verbal and non-verbal



communications skills. Professionally, if one seeks any job, or aspires to higher position, one must be able to demonstrate himself/herself significantly as a skilled communicator. To be more specific, one must have the ability to speak with an appropriate clarity and must be able to demonstrate his/her ideas with varied vocabularies either through speech or through writings. And above it is expected that a person should develop the skills of a good listener and a team worker. All these are the

characteristics of an effective and a successful leader. The art of communication and leadership both reciprocate in the making of a successful person.



SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

The conventional meaning of communication is to transfer a message or a piece of information through an appropriate medium to the receiver and vice versa. Communication skills are dynamic by nature. People who try to improve their communication skills work hard and achieve their goal. Actually, success in life is often determined by the ability or skill to communicate effectively and meaningfully. Strictly speaking, in today's highly competitive and secular world there is no room for success if a person fails to communicate effectively. However, communication for consecrated religious leaders means much more than mere conventional understanding of communication process.

RELIGIOUS VOCATION: A PROPHETIC CALLING TO COMMUNICATE

One must understand that religious vocation is a prophetic calling from God and is essentially never self-centric. They are the mouthpieces of God who calls, consecrates, empowers and mandates them with His mission of holistic liberation of humanity and of the entire creation. Thus every religious is called for leadership and expected to become, therefore, a good and effective communicator. The prophetic religious call, also demands a significant amount of listening. A good communicator or and a spiritual leader is basically a good listener. He/she listens to the inner divine voice and communicates it with others in the same spirit and truth. For a religious leader, these two communication skills, a good orator and an active listener can be developed and enriched significantly by living in a healthy religious community, where we learn to listen to each other patiently and with dignity. A good speaker is basically a good listener.

COMMUNITY + COMMUNICATION = COMMUNION

We cannot imagine a human community in the absence of significant and appropriate communication among the members of the community. An exemplary community life and its reflection in missionary activities must give the religious missionaries their peculiar identity different from members of purely social organizations. Praying together as one family, celebrat-

ing the holy Eucharist, sharing the community meals together, community entertainments, discussions and meetings, engaging in interpersonal sharing, living a life of moderate transparency etc. are some of the activities that enrich and strengthen the religious life and communication in the community. Good relationship among the members of the community is possible only when there is mutual y sincere communication with one another.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY + COMMUNICATION + COMMUNION = JOY

Pope Francis in his letter to the consecrated people, writes, "I want to say one word to you and this word is 'Joy'. Wherever consecrated people are, there is always joy!" These words of the Pope underline one of the very important aspects of religious life. Every consecrated religious must emit joy for oneself and for others living around him/her.

But where does this joy come from? Joy comes from within oneself and it has to be nurtured by sharing with others in the community we live. In fact, only by sharing with others our joy and happiness become more tangible. The effective and affective communication benefits every member of the community and generates joy. Communication in the community plays an important role. It is more than pure information. It is a bridge of double via that connects the feelings among members of the community. Community communication is basic to help brothers or sisters to develop strong self-esteem and a healthy personality and good social relationship.





The 15th General Chapter (2000) of our Congregation introduced the term "Prophetic Dialogue" into the missionary lexicon of our activities. The Chapter describes prophetic dialogue as "the most profound and adequate compression" of our SVD missionary vocation. This dialogue is realized with different areopagus other religions or beliefs, the faith seekers, the modern culture in which we live, etc. Permit me the expression areopagus in the book of the Acts of the Apostles where some epicurean philosophers and stoics take Paul in order that he might explain that "strange" teaching he tried to communicate: the Good News of Jesus the Risen Christ (Acts 17).

The new information and communication technologies, with the preponderance of the Internet, have created a new culture, an amalgamation of cultures and guidelines for social behaviour. It is the whole

IN PROPHETIC DIALOGUE WITH THE NEW DIGITAL CULTURE

By: Modeste Munimi, SVD

world: EVERYONE. This digital world represents today a new areopagus with whom we must dialogue. D. Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Dublin sees the internet as the "new Athens", the new areopagus, a 'global village' to be conquered by Christ. Our challenge is to become witnesses of Christ in this strange new world, to enter into dialogue with the digital culture. (The New media and the work of Evangelisation'--Archbishop Eamon Martins, 2014).

We live in a new communicative ecosystem. That is how Scolari, C. puts it when he refers to the new digital culture. (Scolari, C (2008): Hypermediations. Elements for a Theory of Interactive Digital Communication, Barcelona, Gedisa). He says this new ecosystem is presided over by a digital culture, with new exigencies to which we do not know yet how to adapt ourselves. We can therefore understand why out of the blue, this new culture with the new information and communication technologies can create a scare and generate distrust sometimes. Some speak of the instability that can be observed in these new media. Others point out their provisional character. However, going beyond whatever considerations we can make, it is yet unclear the consequences these new information technologies bring

to our society and its institutions such as the Church and our Congregations.

In the light of the preceding paragraph and from our perception of prophetic dialogue, we see the need to enter into dialogue with this new informative and communicative scenario, the new digital era. This dialogue will permit us to understand how these new



technologies operate and the opportunities they offer, especially for evangelization. In other words, how does this digital culture with all its associated technologies and their potentials, benefit our evangelization effort?

What do we mean by digital culture and its potentials? The new digital culture is a new platform of communication and information. It is a new paradigm of communication in which the lectors or users from wherever in the world are not only passive receptors, but participate in the construction and interpretation of the information received. It is the case for example of the social media. These are some of them, in accordance with their categories: Facebook.com (social network), twitter.com (microblogging), youtube.com (videos), Blogger.com (blogging), linkedin.com (professional social network), flickr.com (fotos), wordpress.com (blogging), Instagram.com (fotos) and Myspace (social network). There are many more channels. Now, the question is, in which way can we make these potentials work for us, and what are the consequences they can bring to our evangelization effort and our missionary activities?



"Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel" (Mk 16,15). Social media opens up new ways for New Evangelization. "The growing dialogue in social networks about faith and belief confirms the importance and relevance of religion in public debate and in societal life." Thus says Pope Benedict XVI. (Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI for the XLVII World Social Communications Day). Social media offer us the opportunity to transmit the Word of God, to give our testimony of faith to the millions of users who await us and also have something to share with us. Evangelization through social network opens up a new kind of relation "on-line" among human beings. It is a place of meeting and listening. (Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI for the XLVII World Social Communications Day).

As some maintain, the digital culture or the social media have facilitated, in the Church, the movement from a "closed" evangelization in the traditional and formal sense, to a dialoguing and participative evangelization. Maybe the maximum expression of this affirmation is represented by the youth. We have moved from the scenario where only the master brings the Good News to others, attempting to show them how to live, to a participative evangelization (the bi-directionality of emission and reception), in which everyone shares/recounts his experience of God in his personal history. It is sufficient to take a look at the quantity of sketches, images and religious messages that are in circulation on WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc. in order to realize this.

To dialogue with the new digital culture implies also drawing attention to certain aspects that can be harmful to society and its institutions, such as the Church. The social networks, which are inventions of the digital world, "are capable of favouring relations and promoting the good of society, but can also lead to an ulterior polarization and division between people and groups. The digital environment is public square, a place of encounter, where we can either encourage or demean one another, engage in a profitable discussion or unfair attacks", affirms Pope Francis (Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 50th World Social Communications Day (2006), Communication and Mercy: a fruitful encounter).

The new technologies of information and communication or what we call social media also have their limitations just like any human invention. For one, we are informed of the ever-increasing cases of cyber-stalking or cyber-bullying of mostly children and adolescents. Also, these digital spaces have become places for exhibitionism, excesses of vanity, the frailness of our privacy, the misinformation (information without contrast), of pornography, insults, etc. Under the excuse of anonymity, people create false profiles that serve as platforms for insulting others and diverse types of discriminations. With these damaging effects, appeals are made for responsibility and ethics of users. For Mons. Celli, the positive character of the social networks "require that one acts in respect of privacy, with responsibility and dedication to the truth, and with authenticity, given that one shares not only information and knowledge, but also, in substance, one communicates a part of oneself.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in his message asked for commitment and responsibility from those who use social media. The Social networks, affirms the Pope, "must face the challenge of being truly inclusive: thus benefiting from the full participation of those believers who wish to share the Message of Jesus and the values of human dignity promoted by His teachings." (Benedict XVI, Social Networks: Gateways of truth and faith; new avenues for evangelization). Responsibility requires that we know how to orient our relationship with these new technologies, instead of being guided by them. (Pope Francis' message for the 49th World Social Communications Day, 2015).

"It is not technology that determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use adequately the means at our disposal", says Pope Francis in his message for the 50th World Social Communications Day, whose theme was: "Communication and Mercy: a fruitful encounter." Access to digital networks entails a responsibility for the other person whom we do not see but who is nonetheless real and has a dignity which must be respected. The internet can be used properly to build a society which is healthy and open to sharing", underlines the Pontiff.



Let us end with these recommendations of Mons Eamon Martin when choosing any of the social media. Discernment is important, affirms the prelate. For that, Mon Eamon Martin proposes 10 fundamental principles for the responsible and efficient use of social media. ([http:// www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/05/20/the-new-media-and -the-work-of-evangelisation-archbishop-eamon-martin/](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/05/20/the-new-media-and-the-work-of-evangelisation-archbishop-eamon-martin/))

- 1.Be positive and joyful. Offer ‘digital smiles’ and have a sense of humour. Remember that it is the ‘joy of the Gospel’ that we are communicating.
- 2.Strictly avoid aggression and sermonising online; try not to be judgemental or polemical.
- 3.Never bear false witness on the internet.
- 4.Fill the internet with charity and love, always giving rather than taking.
- 5.Understand criticisms. Have a broad back when faced with criticisms. When possible, gently correct.
- 6.Pray in the digital world! Establish sacred spaces, opportunities for silence, reflection and meditation.
- 7.Establish connections, relationships and build communion.

Luis Badilla. Editorial Director and founder of II Seismograph

I cannot give a univocal answer because it depends on who is speaking. There are particular Churches that communicate well. The immense majority of the episcopates communicate badly or they simple do not communicate at all. If we think about the Vatican, the response is even more articulate. The Pope communicates very well, or better said, he is the communicator per excellence because he wishes to make himself heard. For him, communication is in the Gospel message itself. The apostolic see, however, sometimes communicate well and succeeds in making the message heard, but in many occasions it communicates very badly.

Pope Francis, his style, his physical pastoral, his language, his gestures... Francis is convinced, rightly, that Christianity is the most relevant act of communication of history and, in fact, Christianity is essentially “communication”. It is God Himself who decides to communicate to His creatures and, for this reason, incarnates His Son to communicate with humanity and by means of His person to inaugurate the salvation and the entire divine design.

Most certainly, by bettering and adjusting structures, mechanisms, customs, language styles... But that is not enough! The Church does not sell any merchandize and does not need public relations. The ecclesial community is not a corporation that is supposed to seize the market and compete in the promotions and in the sales of commercial brands. The Church would communicate much better if it assumed totally the conviction that it is a person who communicates and, therefore, the first thing to do is to elaborate its own communicative theory that, by definition, would be exclusive and unique. The Church will never communicate her message following the childish and immature or conceited high-profile, styles and artifices that Francis would call “Mundane communication”. This is one of the greatest and fundamental challenges of the pontificate.

Source: Vida Nueva, Magazine 15-21/10/2016, P. 36



OPINION

The experts say...

Does the Church communicate well? Yes/No
Which is the strongest point of the Church in regard to communication material?

What does the Church need to change in order to communicate better?

Andrea Tornieli. Vaticanist of the Vatican Insider and Stampa

No: An extraordinary reserve of testimonies, of positive histories. And the fact that, by its nature, the Christian faith is good news (Gospel) to communicate. To believe less in what is technical and dedicate herself more to what she communicates, to the essential, starting with abandoning the self-referring jargons that are not understandable to the outsiders, as well as being more humble.

NOTICE OF INTEREST

The Holy See has announced that the theme of the 51st World Social Communications Day in 2017 is: "Fear not, for I am with you". Communicating hope and trust in our time". Pope Francis' message for the said celebration "will be published as it is a tradition on the feast of St Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists", on 24th January 2017.

The Vatican Secretariat of Communications, explaining the meaning of the theme, underlined that "numbing our conscience or allowing ourselves to be overcome by desperation are two possible ailments that can affect the present system of communication".

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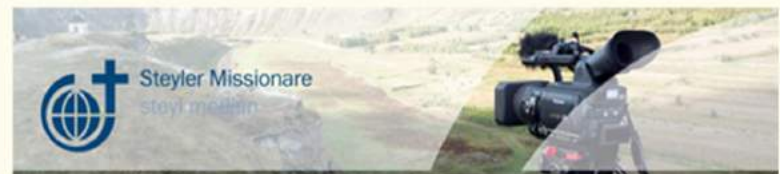
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 vanish before the light of the word and the spirit of
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