

From the MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER BENEDICT XVI FOR THE 42nd WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY "The Media: At the Crossroads between Self-Promotion and Service. Searching for the Truth in order to Share it with Others." [Sunday, 4 May 2008]

4. The role that the means of social communication have acquired in society must now be considered an integral part of the "anthropological" question that is emerging as the key challenge of the third millennium. Just as we see happening in areas such as human life, marriage and the family, and in the great contemporary issues of peace, justice and protection of creation, so too in the sector of social communications there are essential dimensions of the human person and the truth concerning the human person coming into play. When communication loses its ethical underpinning and eludes society's control, it ends up no longer taking into account the centrality and inviolable dignity of the human person. As a result it risks exercising a negative influence on people's consciences and choices and definitively conditioning their freedom and their very lives. For this reason it is essential that social communications should assiduously defend the person and fully respect human dignity. Many people now think there is a need, in this sphere, **for "info-ethics"**, just as we have bioethics in the field of medicine and in scientific research linked to life.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20080124_42nd-world-communications-day.html

From the MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 48TH WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter [Sunday, 1 June 2014]

May the image of the Good Samaritan who tended to the wounds of the injured man by pouring oil and wine over them be our inspiration. Let our communication be a balm which relieves pain and a fine wine which gladdens hearts. May the light we bring to others not be the result of cosmetics or special effects, but rather of our being loving and merciful "neighbours" to those wounded and left on the side of the road. Let us boldly become citizens of the digital world. **The Church needs to be concerned for, and present in, the world of communication, in order to dialogue with people today and to help them encounter Christ.** She needs to be a Church at the side of others, capable of accompanying everyone along the way. The revolution taking place in communications media and in information technologies represents a great and thrilling challenge; may we respond to that challenge with fresh energy and imagination as we seek to share with others the beauty of God.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html

From the MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY 24 January 2018 “The truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32). Fake news and journalism for peace

Freedom from falsehood and the search for relationship: these two ingredients cannot be lacking if our words and gestures are to be true, authentic, and trustworthy. **To discern the truth, we need to discern everything that encourages communion and promotes goodness from whatever instead tends to isolate, divide, and oppose.** Truth, therefore, is not really grasped when it is imposed from without as something impersonal, but only when it flows from free relationships between persons, from listening to one another. **Nor can we ever stop seeking the truth, because falsehood can always creep in, even when we state things that are true.** An impeccable argument can indeed rest on undeniable facts, but if it is used to hurt another and to discredit that person in the eyes of others, however correct it may appear, it is not truthful. We can recognize the truth of statements from their fruits: whether they provoke quarrels, foment division, encourage resignation; or, on the other hand, they promote informed and mature reflection leading to constructive dialogue and fruitful results.

Excerpt: Pope Pius XII to Catholic Journalists Feb 17 1950 (Unofficial translation)

Finally, we would like to add another word regarding public opinion within the Church itself (of course, allowing room for free discussion). In this, we cannot be surprised by the presence of those who do not know the Church or who know it poorly. The Church is a living body, and something would be missing from her life if public opinion were lacking: the fault of which would fall on pastors as well as the faithful. But even here, the Catholic press can serve us very well. In this service much more than in any other, the journalist must maintain the character of which we have spoken, exhibiting a firm respect and deep appreciation for the Divine order, in this case, towards the Church as it exists, not only in its eternal designs, but as it lives concretely here below in space and time; Divine yes, but formed by human members and organs.

If one has this character, the Catholic journalist will know how to protect himself against mute servility or uncontrolled criticism. He will agree, in firm wisdom, with the formation of a Catholic opinion in the Church, above all when, as today, this opinion oscillates between two equally dangerous poles, an illusory and unreal spiritualism and a disruptive and materialistic realism. Avoiding these two extremes, **the Catholic press must exercise its impact on public opinion in the Church among the faithful. Only in this way will it be possible to elude all false ideas, by excess or defect, about the mission and potential of the Church** in the temporal order and, in our days, particularly in social matters and in the need for peace.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/it/speeches/1950/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19500217_la-presse.html

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1950/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19500217_la-presse.html

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/es/speeches/1950/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19500217_la-presse.html