

Communications Week Programme

(2nd Edition in Nigeria)

SUNDAY 14 – SUNDAY 21 MAY 2023

THEME:

Speaking with the heart
“The truth in love” (Eph. 4:15)



Daily Manual



Towards the celebration of the World Communications Day
National Directorate of Social Communications,
CSN, Abuja



Pope Francis
Holy Father



Archbishop Lucius Iwejuru Ugorji
President, CBCN



Bishop David Ajang
**CBCN Episcopal Chairman,
Social Communications**



Rev. Fr. Zachariah Nyantiso Samjumi
Secretary General,
Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria



Very Rev. Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh
National Director, Social Communications
Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria

Topic: Speaking the truth with the heart leads to true conversion

ENTRANCE HYMN:

While singing the entrance hymn, the priest and the altar servers and lectors in procession for Mass, stop at the foot of the Altar.

Wonderful Words Of Life (Or similar hymn)

1. Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life;
let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life;
words of life and beauty, teach me faith and duty.

**Chorus: Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life;
Beautiful words, wonderful words,
wonderful words of life.**

2. Christ, the blessed One gives to all, wonderful words of life;
sinner, list to the loving call, wonderful words of life;
all so freely given, wooing us to heaven.
3. Sweetly echo the gospel call, wonderful words of life;
offer pardon and peace to all, wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Saviour, sanctify forever.

ENTHRONEMENT OF THE BIBLE (At the first Mass in all parishes)

The priest and the altar servers stop at the small table, covered with white cloth and with the unlit candles placed on/near the table on which the Bible is to be enthroned. The flowers are held away from the table for enthronement and placed there only after the enthronement.

INTRODUCTION

Celebrant: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Response: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, as we commence this year's Communications Week, the Church presents us with the theme, **Speaking with the heart "The truth in love"** from which we have adapted the topic for today: 'Speaking the truth with the heart leads to true conversion'. Through this liturgical celebration, we remind ourselves of the need to communicate the truth of the Gospel with love from the heart. Speaking the truth "means giving 'a reason for your hope' and doing so gently, using the gift of communication as a bridge and not as a wall." This calls for a peaceful dialogue always, allowing uncomfortable truth to be shared without resorting to quarrels. The word of God offers us the courage, to speak with the heart relying on the power of the Holy Spirit as effective tool of communicating the truth. The Bible will remain enthroned and open all through the week as a sign of God's presence in his Word that encourages us to speak the truth with a heart of love.

Let us pray

God our Father, we thank you for making it possible for us to celebrate the second edition of our Communications Week this year. May your truth and mercy ever remain with us. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us to guide and direct our activities for the week, so that we may always speak the truth with a heart filled with love. Let the fruits of our deliberations this week, help us to become more aware of our duty as Christians to make Christ known in every nooks and crannies of the world and develop the best ways of achieving that mission using the various opportunities the modern media provides. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

- *The Bible is handed to the celebrant who enthrones it*
- *The candles are lit, with the flowers placed on/near the table*
- *The Holy Mass continues thereafter*

Holy Mass

First Reading: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

“Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Gospel of Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves” (Acts 8: 5-6).

- a. People want to see beyond what we preach or say; they want WITNESS.
- b. Pope Paul VI said that the world is in need of witnesses more than of teachers. (Evangeli Nuntiandi, no. 41).
- c. Testimonies or accounts of the many social works the Church is engaged in can be effective way of *speaking* to those outside the fold or those hostile to the Church.
- d. The Church’s contributions to the society may be the only bible some people will ever read. Thus, there is need to intensify reports on the works of JDPC and St. Vincent the poor. “Let your light so shine among men, so that seeing your good works they may give praise to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)
- e. Towards this end, the Diocesan Directors of JDPC and Social Communications must work in collaboration as partners in progress.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:15-18

“Always be prepared to defend your faith, but with courtesy and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

- a. How do we effectively but gently stand up in defense of our faith, before those who challenge us?
- b. “Communicating in a cordial manner means that those who read or listen to us are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time.” (2023 WCD Message)
- c. Priests need to pay more attention to the formation of the laity through regular teaching programmes in the parish and through well prepared sermons. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* says that “Without women and men

The miracle of encounter can take place, which makes us look at one another with compassion, welcoming our mutual frailties with respect rather than judging by hearsay and sowing discord and division. (2023 WCD Message)

actively participating in the life and action of the Church, the pastors of the Church will not be able to exercise their apostolate fully and effectively” (#10).

- d. Chapter three of *Evangelii Gaudium* gives prominent place to the homily in the liturgical celebrations and for the formation of Christian character and as an action that “helps listeners link up to God with enjoyment and love.” The document observes that “the faithful attach great importance to it, and that both they and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them!” (#135) The document says that the homily “should be brief and avoid taking on the semblance of a speech or a lecture,” (#21) and should be prepared with care. For this to be possible, it recommends that “Preparation for preaching is so important a task that a prolonged time of study, prayer, reflection and pastoral creativity should be devoted to it. It therefore submits in strong terms that “a preacher who does not prepare is not 'spiritual'; he is dishonest and irresponsible with the gifts he has received” (#22) The ministers entrusted with the breaking of the word must pay worthy attention to prepare their sermon. It also extols the role of the laity in evangelisation. Hence the document complements Pope John Paul II’s 1988 apostolic exhortation on the laity, *Christifideles Laici*, in advancing the vocation and mission of the laity.[\[10\]](#) One of the important areas of the Church where the laity have a great role is towards Catechesis. (*Culled from a Paper on Communications and Social Media in the mission of the Church in the light of Evangelii Gaudium by Fr. Michael Umoh delivered at Benin Provincial Synod Seminar on November 23, 2021 in Benin City, Edo State*).
- e. We are encouraged to buy Catholic books for ourselves and our children

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

History of World Communications Day and reason for the celebration
(Page 31)

2. World Communications Day Prayer after communion (Page 31)

3. Announcement at Mass (In addition to parish announcement. Preferably made by the priest)

- a. The Communications Week programme is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). It is aimed at helping all Catholics appreciate and understand the power of the media and the need to employ them for the mission of the Church and for personal development in the digital age. This very important programme, for which the Vatican has commended our Bishops, will run every day throughout this week and ends next Sunday.
- b. The programme comes up during the evening Mass every day. For those who will not be able to attend evening Mass during the week, please create time at home or any time during the day to follow the daily programme with the online manual.
- c. You can access the manual for the daily programme on **comweeknigeria.com**. IT IS FREE.
- d. Please share the link with all your contacts
- e. **There will be Communications Day collection at all Masses next Sunday 21st May. This is to support the work of communications in the Church, in the Diocese and in Nigeria. Please donate generously.**
- f. You may wish to support the national media office directly through ZENITH BANK, 1011476802, CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT OF NIGERIA.

The call to speak with the heart radically challenges the times in which we are living, which are so inclined towards indifference and indignation, at times even on the basis of disinformation which falsifies and exploits the truth. (2023 WCD Message)

DAY TWO

Monday 15 May, 2023

Monday of the 6th week of Eastertide. Liturgical Colour: White

Topic: Speaking truth with the heart leads to generosity

First Reading: Acts 16:11-15

“She listened to us, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying. After she and her household had been baptised she sent us an invitation: ‘If you really think me a true believer in the Lord,’ she said ‘come and stay with us’; and she would take no refusal.” (Acts 16:14 & 15)

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 149:1-6,9

“The Lord takes delight in his people.”

Gospel Reading: John 15:26 -16:4

“The Spirit of truth will be my witness.”

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

- a. Study the list of themes for World Communications Day messages from 1967 to 2024. (Pg. 49)
- b. Pick two of them which you consider to be still relevant today, check the summary on google, read and share your thoughts.
- c. We need to consider introducing “Know Your Faith” or a general catechetical programme in our parishes or our various sodality groups, to further enlighten our Catholics.
- d. Societies like CBIU and Catholic Charismatic Renewal, who have strong teaching culture, are to be encouraged, supported and properly guided in their teaching programmes by priests.
- e. We need to create the mechanism to train more people, especially the youth on how to package short reports and produce short video clips on the life and activities in the Church. Diocesan/Religious Directors of Social Communications should consider this.

Communicating in a cordial manner means that those who read or listen to us are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time. (2023 WCD Message)

- f. This will enable us intensify reporting the activities in our parishes, schools, hospitals, and diocese. If we do not tell our stories, the only time people get to hear about us may be when it is negative. That is what the secular media often prefers to report because sensationalism and oddity are the elements of news they thrive on. We must try to tell our own stories, rather than waiting for others who will likely not tell them correctly.

2. World Communications Day Prayer after communion. (Page 31)

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DAY THREE

Tuesday 16 May, 2023

Tuesday of the 6th week of Eastertide. Liturgical Colour: White

Topic: Speaking truth in love leads to a change of heart

First reading: Acts 16:22 - 34

“They told him, ‘Become a believer in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, and your household too.... Afterwards he took them home and gave them a meal, and the whole family celebrated their conversion to belief in God.’” (Acts 16: 31 & 34)

- How much are we really doing as a Church to bring people, especially our lapse Catholics, back to the fold?
- How are we encouraging the work of Legionaries in our parish communities?
- What are some things driving people back to the shrine today?
- What can the Church do to stem this tide?
- How can the Church create opportunity for those who have left the fold to return with ease? **Discuss the proposal below (Under actions for the day).**

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 137(138):1-3,7-8

“You stretch out your hand and save me, O Lord”.

Gospel Reading: John 16:5-11

“Unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you. And when he comes, he will show the world how wrong it was, about sin, and about who was in the right, and about judgement” (John 16:7&8)

In a historical period marked by polarizations and contrasts — to which unfortunately not even the ecclesial community is immune — the commitment to communicating “with open heart and arms” does not pertain exclusively to those in the field of communications; it is everyone’s responsibility. (2023 WCD Message)

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

How can the Church help those who have left the fold find their way back with ease?

- a. At a seminar, this matter was discussed and the summary was that, as a Church we first need to identify those common occasions when those who left the Church ‘visit’ the Church again. These include special ceremonial occasions like wedding of relatives or friends, landmark thanksgiving celebrations of birthdays, retirement or promotion at work, baby presentation or during funerals or outings.
- b. Occasions as these are to be considered as educable moments of encounter which the Church should employ not only to help Catholics who left the fold to reconnect with their *roots*, but also creatively use in reaching out in love to non-Catholics who have come to celebrate with their friends – the celebrants.
- c. Conscious of this possibility therefore, there is need for a diocesan plan towards this end. It would be a good move for the diocese to have a pastoral plan, with very clear communication dimensions built into it, to respond to this need, so as to produce a guideline to be followed in all parishes in the diocese.
- d. This primary awareness also challenges the parish priest who must realise the opportunity presented to him as something not to be toiled with, and therefore avoid the temptation of treating such occasions as just one of those daily events in the parish or as something of no significance.
- e. Some of the steps that can be taken, subject to the peculiar circumstance of each diocese and the different parts of the diocese include:
 - i. Come up with a pastoral plan and a syllabus for this purpose.
 - ii. Train the priests, the catechists and other pastoral agents on how to handle this pastoral need.
 - iii. Priests in turn are to grow this awareness in all liturgical ministers so

that they can put in their best while officiating during such occasions. Ushers need to be courteous; choiristers need to be well-prepared, disciplined and simple; lectors are to ‘proclaim’ clearly and distinctly without distractions, etc.

- iv. **In view of the need to be at our best, the common practice whereby non-commissioned lectors or even the celebrants or their children are allowed to take the readings or the psalm on such days is strongly to be avoided. Experience has sufficiently shown that such novelties often end up making a caricature of the liturgy, leading to avoidable distraction and embarrassment.**
- v. Only commissioned and well prepared ministers should be allowed to function at liturgical celebrations since these duties are not mere role plays but ministries. When we allow those dramas in the church on such occasions, we ‘demarket’ the faith and the Church. Those who left the Church will by these ugly experience find reinforcement for why they should not return. But if things go well, the singing, the sermon, the courtesy from the ushers, a fire of hope may be lit in the heart of that brother or sister who has been thinking or may begin to think about how to return ‘home’.
- vi. There is need to train a committee in all parishes whose duty it is to answer all calls and lovingly direct all those who express the desire to return to the fold.
- vii. **In view of the above, the inner front page of all liturgical brochures, whether printed by the Church or by the celebrants, should be reserved to always post a standard message of welcoming everyone and encouraging those who may want to return or want to know more about the faith, to call or text a given number.**
- viii. Apart from the parish committee who can handle such calls, there may should be a central diocesan evangelisation team or a similar body of well trained persons fully available in this digital age to guide the persons on their journey back ‘home’.

Francis de Sales’ meek attitude, humanity and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, made him an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love.
(2023 WCD Message)

(NB. The above ideas are proposals and not legislation since such liturgical regulations in a diocese are subject to the directives of the Bishop of the Diocese. However, they are strongly proposed for consideration).

2. Communications Day Prayer after communion

3. Announcement at Mass (In addition to parish announcement, preferably made by the priest)

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One could say about him (Francis de Sales): "A pleasant voice multiplies friends, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies" (Sir 6:5). (2023 WCD Message)

Topic: Speaking the truth with sensitivity to others' opinion

First Reading: Acts 17:15,22-18:1

“So Paul stood before the whole Council of the Areopagus and made this speech: Well, the God whom I proclaim is in fact the one whom you already worship without knowing it.” (Acts 17:22 & 23)

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 148:1-2,11-14

“Your glory fills all heaven and earth.”

Gospel Reading: John 16:12-15

“The Spirit of truth will lead you to the complete truth.” John 16:13

Actions for the Day

- 1. Teaching**
 - a. Sensitivity and Respect**
 - i. We notice how Paul, by being sensitive to the opinion of his audience and their right to be different, intelligently sought and used that tiny point of similarity to connect with them.
 - ii. According to Pope Francis, “It is necessary to overcome the tendency to “discredit and insult opponents from the outset [rather] than to open a respectful dialogue” (2023 WCD Message).
 - iii. Again, “The miracle of encounter can take place, which makes us look at one another with compassion, welcoming our mutual frailties with respect rather than judging by hearsay and sowing discord and division” (2023 WCD Message).
 - iv. Rather than always hammering on differences, it often pays to seek common grounds, respecting the opinion of others while lovingly presenting our position.

Communication should never be reduced to something artificial, to a marketing strategy, as we might say nowadays, but is rather a reflection of the soul, the visible surface of a nucleus of love that is invisible to the eye. (2023 WCD Message)

- v. Thus rather than argue about matters of faith, it is better to dialogue. Dialogue presupposes the openness to listening to others just as we desire to be listened to. In dialogue, there is no room or need for disrespect.
 - vi. Pope Francis says that “The call to speak with the heart radically challenges the times in which we are living, which are so inclined towards indifference and indignation, at times even on the basis of disinformation which falsifies and exploits the truth” (2023 WCD Message).
 - vii. However, before we can engage in a meaningful dialogue with others about our faith, it is expected that we first know and understand our faith, then strive to have a fair knowledge of the faith and culture of others.
- b. Do not be discouraged, allow the Spirit of God**
- i. In the first reading, much as some were tuned off because Paul touched on the dead rising, there were still some who still believed and were baptised.
 - ii. It follows that, as disciples of Christ, which we all are as Christians by virtue of baptism, we must make effort to lead people to Christ. But while doing this, we must not forget that it is God doing His work through us. Only God can prosper our efforts. Scripture says, “Paul plants, Apollo waters, only God grants increase.” (cf. 1 Cor. 3:6)
- c. Social Media, the new Areopagus. Use your talent there for God**
- i. Furthermore, Paul spoke to the people who do not belong to the Christian fold at the public square of the time, the Areopagus. This was the public place where important ideas and ideologies were shared and contested.
 - ii. “Sometimes friendly conversations can open a breach even in the most hardened of hearts” (2023 WCD Message).
 - iii. Today, the Social Media is the modern Areopagus. Thus, today we talk of netizens instead of citizens because people across the globe are more connected to one another on the internet than in cities.

It is from this “criterion of love” that, through his writings and witness of life, the saintly Bishop of Geneva reminds us that “we are what we communicate”. (2023 WCD Message)

- iv. We need to ask ourselves how much of the message of Christ is available on the social media for the netizens; that is, the citizens of the net which is the new form of social communities? How much of Christ and his message is present on the net?
- v. Paul being a well informed and educated man, used his intellectual ability to speak about the risen Lord. How much of our ICT skills/talents do we bring to bear in matters of faith and for the mission of Christ?

SPECIAL CALL: Are you into ICT or you know someone who is? Are you capable of creating cartoons? The Catholic Church in Nigeria is setting up a body for all those in ICT. The body is known as Catholics in ICT (Cath-ICT). Please send “ADD ME CATHICT” to 09060006198. If you know a Catholic friend or relative who is into ICT or has special media skills, kindly send “Invite to CATHICT” to 09060006198. Thank you.

2. Communications Day Prayer after communion

3. Announcement at Mass (In addition to parish announcement. Preferably made by the priest)

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Topic: Speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit to make disciples for Christ

First Reading: Acts 1:1-11

“They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, ‘Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.’” (Acts 1:10&11)

- It is now the Spirit of Christ which is at the heart of the Church, inspiring all its activity.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 46(47):2-3,6-9

“God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.”

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:17-23

“God made him sit at his right hand in heaven.” (Ephesians 1:20)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

“He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’” (Matthew 28:19&20)

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

a. The Church is Communication.

- I. Going by the gospel reading of today, we are not told the name of the mountain or the location. But it was on that mountain that Jesus commissioned his followers to discipleship, giving them the mandate to make disciples of all people of every nation. That means that the mission of the Church has no boundaries and must continue as long as there are human beings on earth.
- ii. Sing the hymn: There is a call come ringing (CHB 3)

- iii. Jesus backs this mandate with a promise of his divine presence, to always be with his disciples, which is the meaning of the name the angel gave him, 'Emmanuel'.
- iv. The great commission to go make disciples of all nations and *to teach* implies that the Church is communication, since to teach necessarily implies to communicate. The Church cannot exist if it does not communicate. For the Church therefore, communication is not an option.
- v. Aetatis Novae says: "Catholic media work is not simply one more program alongside all the rest of the Church's activities: social communications have a role to play in **EVERY ASPECT** of the Church's mission." (Aetatis Novae, 17)

b. Communication vs effective communication

- i. However, it is said that 'everyone communicates, but very few communicate effectively.' While Communication is an act, which is NATURAL; effective communication is a skill, which is NURTURAL. We must learn/train ourselves to communicate effectively.
- ii. All pastoral agents must be trained to communicate effectively. This programme has already started in some of our major seminaries, convents and dioceses.
- iii. *Communio et progression* (1971) strongly advocates that all priests need media education and training in the nature and use of the different media tools. "A training that grounds a man in the basic principles governing the working of the media in human society is nowadays clearly necessary for all [...]. Training should include a practical consideration of the special nature of each medium and of its status in the local community and how it can best be utilized. And this should be done with special reference to man and society."
- iv. Supporting the thoughts already expressed in the previous document of 1970, *Communio et progressio* says: "If students for the priesthood and religious in training wish to be part of modern life and also to be at all effective in their apostolate, they should know how the media work upon

the fabric of society, and also the technique of their use. This knowledge should be an integral part of their ordinary education".

- v. Underscoring the need for priests and pastoral agents to have media skills and media literacy, the document also says "Since people in today's culture are trained and regulated not only by books and teachers, but in ever greater dependence on the audio-visual media, it is much to be desired that the priests shall know how to use these media well, that is, not passively giving in to them, but capable of judging them critically."
- vi. Like some past documents, *Communio et progressio* urges that pastors take up the responsibility of training the faithful in the use of the media. "Pastors of souls have the task of instructing and directing the faithful on how to use these media in a way that will ensure their own salvation and perfection and that of all mankind."
- vii. Like *Inter mirifica*, this document also advocates for parental mediation of media use by children and urges priests to assist parents in this onerous task. It says that "Parents and teachers should urge children to make their own choice even if the educators should reserve at times the final decision to themselves" (*Communio et progressio*, 67).
- viii. In view of the above, more dioceses need to arrange special media seminars for priests already working in the field, as effective communication will not only impact the celebration of the sacraments, but also aid the general style of administration in the parish. Effective communication will boost the leadership style of the priest so that he works more towards building the community, since for communication to be authentic, it must build the community.
- ix. *Communio et progressio* says that the essence of communication is for the good of the human person and the advancement of his society. "The unity and advancement of men living in society: these are the

chief aims of social communication and of all the means it uses.

These means include the press, the cinema, radio and television. The constant improvement in the media puts them at the disposal of more and more people who in their daily lives make increasing use of them.

More than ever before, the way men live and think is profoundly affected by the means of communication.” (Communio et progressio. #1)

- x. What is the nature of communication in our parish community? In what ways do we fail to communicate effectively?
- xi. How can we improve the communication in our parish community and other Church institutions?

c. 10 ways of enhancing communication in our parish community

- i. Note just the highlights of the 10 ways of enhancing communications in your parish community (Page 42). Studying and discussing them will be tomorrow.

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I dream of an ecclesial communication that knows how to let itself be guided by the Holy Spirit, gentle and at the same time, prophetic, that knows how to find new ways and means for the wonderful proclamation it is called to deliver in the third millennium. (2023 WCD Message)

- d. Please share the link with all your contacts.
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We have a pressing need in the Church for communication that kindles hearts, that is balm on wounds and that shines light on the journey of our brothers and sisters. (2023 WCD Message)

Topic: Speaking the truth from the heart to re-ignite confidence and hope in Christ

First Reading: Acts 18:9-18

“At Corinth one night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, ‘Do not be afraid to speak out, nor allow yourself to be silenced: I am with you. I have so many people on my side in this city that no one will even attempt to hurt you.’ So, Paul stayed there preaching the word of God among them for eighteen months.” (Acts 18: 9-11)

- a. Jesus, the Emmanuel, had promised his followers his abiding presence. He also assured them that he would protect them and send them the Holy Spirit who would teach them what to say at every time.
- b. There are often in every community, opinion leaders who are hostile to the word of God and would stop at nothing to attack the mission of Christ and God’s ministers.
- c. We feel this more concretely today in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part, where our Christian brethren are currently going through so much persecution and marginalisation.
- d. How do we still fulfil the mission of the Church, communicating the goodnews of Jesus, in such hostile and toxic environment?
- e. How are we reaching out to support and encourage our persecuted brethren?

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 46 (47): 2-7

“God is king of all the earth.”

Gospel Reading: John 16:20-23

“So, it is with you: you are sad now, but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you.” (John 16:22)

Today more than ever, speaking with the heart is essential to foster a culture of peace in places where there is war; to open paths that allow for dialogue and reconciliation in places where hatred and enmity rage. (2023 WCD Message)

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

- i. Continuing from yesterday, study the 10 ways of enhancing communications in our parish community (Page 42)
- ii. Discuss the the points, noting how they apply to your parish/institution and what needs to be improved upon.

2. Communications Day Prayer after communion

3. Announcement at Mass (In addition to parish announcement. Preferably made by the priest).

- a. The Communications Week programme is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). It is aimed at helping all Catholics appreciate and understand the power of the media and the need to employ them for the mission of the Church and for personal development in the digital age. This very important programme, for which the Vatican has commended our Bishops, continues every day throughout this week and ends next Sunday.
- b. The programme comes up during the evening Mass every day. For those who will not be able to attend evening Mass during the week, please create time at home or any time during the day to follow the daily programme with the online manual.
- c. You can access the manual for the daily programme on **comweeknigeria.com**. IT IS FREE.
- d. Please share the link with all your contacts
- e. **There will be Communications Day collection at all Masses on Sunday 21st May. This is to support the work of communications in the Church, in the Diocese and in Nigeria. Please donate generously.**
- f. You may wish to support the national media office directly through **ZENITH BANK, 1011476802, CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT OF NIGERIA.**

It is necessary to overcome the tendency to "discredit and insult opponents from the outset [rather] than to open a respectful dialogue". (2023 WCD Message)

Topic: Speaking with patience and spiritual earnestness

First Reading: Acts 18:23-28

“He (Apollos) was an eloquent man, with a sound knowledge of the scriptures, and yet, though he had been given instruction in the Way of the Lord and preached with great spiritual earnestness and was accurate in all the details he taught about Jesus, he had only experienced the baptism of John.” (Acts 18:24 & 25)

- a. Pope Francis dedicated some portion in this year’s WCD message to drawing our attention to the virtues of St. Francis de Sales. He said: “One could say about him (Francis de Sales): “A pleasant voice multiplies friends, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies” (Sir 6:5).”
- b. He also described him thus: “Francis de Sales’ meek attitude, humanity and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, made him an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love.” (2023 WCD Message)
- c. Similar qualities with which St. Francis de Sales is described are found in St. Bernadine of Siena whose feast we celebrate today. He is known as the patron of “Advertisers.” He served the sick in the hospital; and even with the outbreak of the great pestilence in 1400, he “persuaded” other young men to do the same. The ability to persuade others comes from the heart that is passionate enough to speak to other hearts.

It is terrifying to hear how easily words calling for the destruction of people and territories are spoken. Words, unfortunately, that often turn into warlike actions of heinous violence. This is why all belligerent rhetoric must be rejected, as well as every form of propaganda that manipulates the truth, disfiguring it for ideological ends. (2023 WCD Message)

- d. Speaking is an act natural to everyone, but great speakers also possess the gifts or skill of eloquence in delivering their speeches.
- e. To speak with great spiritual earnestness requires deep knowledge of the matter, effective delivery that is devoid of acrimony and toxicity, but rich with a language that can disarm even hardened souls. After all, the letter kills, but the spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6).
- f. “A soft tongue will break a bone”, says the book of Proverbs (25:15). (Quoted in 2023 WCD message)
- g. Effective communication comes from the heart with its persuasive character.
- h. In the 2023 WCD message, Pope Francis said “As I have emphasised, “In the Church, too, there is a great need to listen to and to hear one another.” (2023 WCD Message)
- i. “We have a pressing need in the Church for communication that kindles hearts, that is balm on wounds and that shines light on the journey of our brothers and sisters.” (2023 WCD Message)
- j. Do you speak about Jesus from your heart or from your head?
- k. Do you speak to the hearts of your audience “Cor ad cor Loquitur” or you parrot what you hear and read from others?
- l. Do you have sound knowledge of the sermon you preach; are you bold and energetic when you speak of the ills and injustices of the society or you are simply passive and insensitive?
- m. Do you pray, seeking the guidance of the Spirit, and create time to prepare your sermon well before you speak to your congregation?
- n. Chapter three of Evangelii Gaudium gives prominent place to the homily in the liturgical celebrations and for the formation of Christian character and as an action that “helps listeners link up to God with enjoyment and love.” The document observes that “the faithful attach great importance to it, and that both they and their ordained ministers suffer because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them!” (#135) The document says that the homily “should be brief and avoid taking on the semblance of a speech or a

As Christians, we know that the destiny of peace is decided by conversion of hearts, since the virus of war comes from within the human heart. (2023 WCD Message)

lecture," (#21) and should be prepared with care. For this to be possible, it recommends that "Preparation for preaching is so important a task that a prolonged time of study, prayer, reflection and pastoral creativity should be devoted to it. It therefore submits in strong terms that "a preacher who does not prepare is not 'spiritual'; he is dishonest and irresponsible with the gifts he has received" (#22). The ministers entrusted with the breaking of the word must pay worthy attention to prepare their sermon. It also extols the role of the laity in evangelisation. Hence the document complements Pope John Paul II's 1988 apostolic exhortation on the laity, *Christifideles Laici*, in advancing the vocation and mission of the laity.[\[10\]](#) One of the important areas of the Church where the laity have a great role is towards Catechesis. *(Culled from a Paper on Communications and Social Media in the mission of the Church in the light of Evangelii Gaudium by Fr. Michael Umoh delivered at Benin Provincial Synod Seminar on November 23, 2021 in Benin City, Edo State).*

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 46 (47): 2-3,8-10

God is king of all the earth.

Gospel Reading: John 16:23-28

***"I tell you solemnly, anything you ask for from the Father he will grant in my name."* (John 16:23)**

- a. Jesus Christ as a preacher, a great speaker and communicator par excellence, is an example of speaking with spiritual earnestness and accuracy in what he taught about himself.
- b. Here we find one who spoke about His Father with great confidence and authority, because he was of one heart with the Father. Communication can be effective and persuasive if it is from the heart and not artificial or fake.

Each of us is asked to engage in this effort (to build a civilization which is better than the one we have received), but it is one that especially appeals to the sense of responsibility of those working in the field of communications so that they may carry out their profession as a mission. (2023 WCD Message)

- c. Communicators are advertising agents for the kingdom of God when they eloquently deliver with righteousness the message they propagate.
- d. In the attractive age of the social media, more creativity is needed to present the message of Christ in a more receptive manner. It must be the same undiluted message, but with new means.
- e. Pope John Paul II said: “The commemoration of the half millennium of evangelization will gain its full energy if it is a commitment, not to re-evangelize but to a New Evangelization, new in its ardor, methods and expression.”
- f. Pope Benedict XVI said: “We need to re-propose faith in a culture which has lost the instinct to believe.”
- g. In the 2023 WCD message, Pope Francis said: “I dream of an ecclesial communication that knows how to let itself be guided by the Holy Spirit, gentle and at the same time, prophetic, that knows how to find new ways and means for the wonderful proclamation it is called to deliver in the third millennium.” (2023 WCD message)
- h. For instance, how can we make the catechism/teachings of the Church more interesting to little children and to all?
- i. Why do most children find it boring to attend catechism classes today?
- j. How can we translate catechism contents and many of the parables and stories in the bible into cartoon and dance forms?
- k. Can our pre-marriage courses also be made available online at the diocesan level so that there is a unified programme handled by experts?
- l. Online marriage course will also give the couple the opportunity to attend the same programme in the case where they do not live in the same vicinity.

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

- a. In the past, media education was mainly concerned with the corroding effects of commercial films on the society and especially on young consumers. The common features of these films were drugs, sex, violence and murder. Today the horizon has widened due to social media which now makes the media available to far more people than ever

before with so much ease than never imagined. Unlike in the past where so much was required to produce a media work like a film or a commercial, the advent of digital media and the corollary support given by the revolutionary Smartphone make citizen journalism a reality that the world must contend with for a long time. With everyone now able to produce media contents with ease, using their Smartphones and sharing through the internet technology, it means there is a huge number of amateurs who lack knowledge and ethics of the job. Today therefore, people create all forms of unsuitable materials and share just anything without verifying. The society is awash with junks in forms of fake news and inappropriate images and messages.

- b. The document, *Primo Sinodo Romano* issued on 29th June 1960 by the Vatican Press challenges priests and those in charge of formation to teach and guide their parishioners and students on the correct way of applying themselves to these media tools. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the document says, "regarding "shows" in general, "the clergy and all the associations and works of apostolate shall exert themselves to form in the faithful a right conscience concerning the use of the modern audio-visual media." It also states that "Parents are to be mindful of their duty to watch carefully, lest shows, printed matter, etc., offensive to faith or morals penetrate the home or lest their children become exposed to such things outside the home" (*Inter mirifica*, 10). This need has become even greater today because of the ubiquitous nature of the social media, enhanced move by the portability of smartphones.
- c. *Communio et progression* states that "Pastors of souls have the task of instructing and directing the faithful on how to use these media in a way that will ensure their own salvation and perfection and that of all mankind." Like *Inter mirifica*, this document also advocates for parental mediation of media use by children and urges priests to assist parents in this onerous task. It says that "Parents and teachers should urge children to make their own choice even if the educators should reserve at times the final decision to themselves" (*Communio et progressio*, 67).

(Paragraphs b & c are culled from a Paper on The mind of the Church on media and communications by Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh, 2021).

- d. Since the world and especially the youth, known as the plugged-in generation, are more atuned to the social media, how is the Church making conscious effort to meet them where they gather?
- e. Our youths should be exposed to massive media education like media skills and media literacy so that they can begin to produce more positive contents for their generation and become social media influencers.

In this way, we may be able to reach those audience who find it hard to accept the teachings of the Church.

- g. Discuss those areas the members of your parish community need a deepening of knowledge, so that they can become equipped to speak eloquently about Jesus with spiritual earnestness.
- h. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* spoke about the need to make Catholics ‘missionary disciples’. In chapter one of the document, he proposed that parishioners should be trained to be evangelizers. In view of this, it came up with the term “missionary disciple” which describes what every baptized member of the Catholic faith is called to be, “agents of evangelisation” (#120). We need to make our parishes completely mission-oriented” (#28) Even the Church as an institution must manifest and operate as a missionary disciple (#40), whereby its theology is to enhance evangelisation and not to be a stumbling block.
- i. How are we responding to this call?

2. Communications Day Prayer after communion

3. Announcement at Mass (In addition to parish announcement. Preferably made by the priest)

- a. The Communications Week programme is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). It is aimed at helping all Catholics appreciate and understand the power of the media and the need to employ them for the mission of the Church and for personal development in the digital age. This very important programme, for which the Vatican has commended our Bishops, continues every day throughout this week and ends next Sunday.

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- c. You can access the manual for the daily programme on **comweeknigeria.com**. IT IS FREE.
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- e. **There will be Communication Day collection at all Masses on Sunday 21st May. This is to support the work of communications in the Church, in the Diocese and in Nigeria. Please donate generously.**
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DAY EIGHT

Sunday 21 May, 2023

Sunday of the 7th week of Eastertide. Liturgical Colour: White

Topic: Speaking from the heart, “The truth in love” (Eph. 4:15)

57th WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY CELEBRATION

First Reading: Acts 1:12-14

“All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.” (Acts 1:14)

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 26(27):1,4,7-8

I am sure I shall see the Lord’s goodness in the land of the living.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:13-16

“It is a blessing for you when they insult you for bearing the name of Christ, because it means that you have the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God resting on you. but if anyone of you should suffer for being a Christian, then he is not to be ashamed of it; he should thank God that he has been called one.” (1 Peter 4: 14 & 16)

- This reading, coming after Ascension, shows that sharing in the suffering and persecution of Christ is a way of sharing in his glory.

Gospel Reading: John 17:1-11

‘I am not in the world any longer, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.’

- Jesus declares that he has successfully accomplished his purpose on earth.
- What is our purpose in the world?
- To continue in his steps, to show forth God’s goodness in the world.

Actions for the Day

1. Teaching

Read the summary of the Pope's message for 2023 World Communication Day (Pg. 33)

2. Communications Day Prayer after communion

3. Announcement at Mass (In addition to parish announcement. Preferably made by the priest)

- a. The Communications Week programme ends today. We thank all those who participated actively in the programme.
- b. For those who could not, for one reason or the other, kindly feel free to access the handbook on **comweeknigeria.com** and go through the teachings as they are still very relevant and helpful.
- c. Please be a missionary disciple by sending this message to all on your contact:
"To access Catholic teachings and news on the Catholic Church in Nigeria, kindly send "ADD ME" to 09060006198. Thank you.
- d. **There will be a collection at all Masses for Communications Day, today, Sunday 21st May, to support the work of communications in the Church, in the Diocese and in Nigeria. Please donate generously.**
- e. You may wish to support the national media office directly through **ZENITH BANK, 1011476802, CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT OF NIGERIA. Thank you.**

SOME RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR COMWEEK

Material 1

World Communications Day Prayer

(To be said as part of post communion prayer throughout the ComWEEK)

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Help us to recognize the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion.

Help us to remove the venom from our judgements.

Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.

You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world:

Where there is shouting, let us practice listening;

Where there is confusion, let us inspire harmony;

Where there is ambiguity, let us bring clarity;

Where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity;

Where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety;

Where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions;

Where there is prejudice, let us awaken trust;

Where there is hostility, let us bring respect;

Where there is falsehood, let us bring truth.

Amen.

Material 2

History of World Communications Day and reason for the celebration (By Patrick Duffy)

a. **What is World Communications Day?**

Every year, on the Sunday before Pentecost, the Church celebrates the achievements of the communications media and focuses on how it can best use them to promote gospel values.

b. **What is it?**

World Communications Day was established by Pope Paul VI in 1967 as an annual celebration that encourages us to reflect on the opportunities and challenges that the modern means of social communication (the press, motion pictures, radio, television and the internet) afford the Church to communicate the gospel message.

c. **Where did it come from?**

The celebration came in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, which realised it must engage fully with the modern world. This realisation is expressed in the opening statement of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* on “The Church in the Modern World”, which says: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anguishes of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anguishes of the followers of Christ as well.”

d. **Why is it celebrated every year?**

In setting it up on Sunday 7th May 1967, less than two years after the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI, knowing that the Church is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history, wanted to draw attention to the communications media and the enormous power they have for cultural transformation. He and his successors have consistently recognised the positive opportunities the communications media afford for enriching human lives with the values of truth, beauty and goodness, but also the possible negative effects of spreading less noble values and pressurising minds and consciences with a multiplicity of contradictory appeals.

e. **The communications world: First Areopagus of the modern age**

Pope John Paul II (1990) in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* 37 said: “The world of communications is the first Areopagus of the modern age, unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as a ‘global village’. The communications media have acquired such importance as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration for many people in their personal, family and social behaviour. In particular, the younger generation is growing up in a world conditioned by the mass media.”

Increasingly aware of the world as a global village and the power of the media as a free market place for philosophies and values, the Church

has sought to be in there with its message and to use the media to proclaim the values it sees are beneficial for human development and for the eternal welfare of people.

f. **Analysis and action**

Two important documents of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications – *Communio et Progressio* (1971) and *Aetatis Novae* (1992) have presented an analysis of the world of the communications media and made recommendations for the Church's action. The Vatican itself has set a headline in updating its use of the full range of the communications media. On a recent visit to Vatican Radio, Pope Benedict was presented with an iPod of the music of Mozart in which he has a particular interest.

g. **The Internet In 2002**

The Pontifical Council for Social Communications produced two documents on the Internet. The first is an analysis of the opportunities and challenges the Internet presents for evangelisation and is entitled 'The Church and Internet.' The other sets out an ethical code which should guide its use and is entitled 'Ethics in Internet.'

Material 3

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 57th WORLD
DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS **MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE FRANCIS**
FOR THE 57th WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Theme: Speaking with the heart "The truth in love" (Eph 4:15)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

After having reflected in past years on the verbs "to go and see" and "to listen" as conditions for good communication, with this Message for the LVII World Day of Social Communications, I would like to focus on "speaking with the heart". It is the heart that spurred us to go, to see and to listen, and it is the heart that moves us towards an open and welcoming way of communicating. Once we have practised listening, which demands waiting and patience, as well as foregoing the assertion of our point of view in a prejudicial way, we can enter into the dynamic of dialogue and sharing, which is precisely that of *communicating in a cordial way*. After listening to the other with a pure heart, we will also be able to *speak following the truth in love* (cf. Eph 4:15). We should not be afraid of

proclaiming the truth, even if it is at times uncomfortable, but of doing so without charity, without heart. Because “the Christian’s programme” — as Benedict XVI wrote — “is ‘a heart which sees’”. [1] A heart that reveals the truth of our being with its beat and that, for this reason, should be listened to. This leads those who listen to attune themselves to the same wave length, to the point of being able to hear within their heart also the heartbeat of the other. Then the miracle of encounter can take place, which makes us look at one another with compassion, welcoming our mutual frailties with respect rather than judging by hearsay and sowing discord and division.

Jesus warns us that every tree is known by its fruit (cf. *Lk* 6:44): “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (v. 45). This is why, in order to communicate *truth with charity*, it is necessary to purify one’s heart. Only by listening and speaking with a pure heart can we see beyond appearances and overcome the vague din which, also in the field of information, does not help us discern in the complicated world in which we live. The call to speak with the heart radically challenges the times in which we are living, which are so inclined towards indifference and indignation, at times even on the basis of disinformation which falsifies and exploits the truth.

Communicating cordially

Communicating in a cordial manner means that those who read or listen to us are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time. Those who speak in this way love the other because they care and protect their freedom without violating it. We can see this style in the mysterious wayfarer who dialogues with the disciples headed to Emmaus, after the tragedy that took place at Golgotha. The Risen Jesus speaks to them with the heart, accompanying the journey of their suffering with respect, proposing himself and not imposing himself, lovingly opening their minds to understand the profound meaning of what had happened. Indeed, they can joyfully exclaim that their hearts burned within them as he spoke to them on the road and explained the Scriptures to them (cf. *Lk* 24:32).

In a historical period marked by polarizations and contrasts — to which unfortunately not even the ecclesial community is immune — the commitment to communicating “with open heart and arms” does not pertain exclusively to those in the field of communications; it is everyone’s responsibility. We are all called to seek and to speak the truth and to do so with charity. We Christians in particular are continually urged to keep our tongue from evil (cf. *Ps* 34:13), because as Scripture teaches us, with the same tongue we can bless the Lord and curse men and women who were made in the likeness of God (cf. *Jas* 3:9). No evil word should come from our mouths, but rather “only such as is good for edifying, as

fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear” (*Eph* 4:29).

Sometimes friendly conversations can open a breach even in the most hardened of hearts. We also have evidence of this in literature. I am thinking of that memorable page in Chapter XXI of *The Betrothed* in which Lucia speaks with the heart to the *Innominato* [the Unnamed] until he, disarmed and afflicted by a healthy inner crisis, gives in to the gentle strength of love. We experience this in society, where kindness is not only a question of “etiquette” but a genuine antidote to cruelty, which unfortunately can poison hearts and make relationships toxic. We need it in the field of media, so that communication does not foment acrimony that exasperates, creates rage and leads to clashes, but helps people peacefully reflect and interpret with a critical yet always respectful spirit, the reality in which they live.

Communicating heart to heart: “In order to speak well, it is enough to love well”

One of the brightest and still fascinating examples of “speaking with the heart” is offered by Saint Francis de Sales, a Doctor of the Church, whom I wrote about in the Apostolic Letter, [Totum Amoris Est](#), 400 years after his death. In addition to this important anniversary, I would like to mention another anniversary that takes place in 2023: the centenary of his proclamation as patron of Catholic journalists by Pius XI with the Encyclical, [Rerum Omnium Perturbationem](#). A brilliant intellectual, fruitful writer and profound theologian, Francis de Sales was Bishop of Geneva at the beginning of the XVII century during difficult years marked by heated disputes with Calvinists. His meek attitude, humanity and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, made him an extraordinary witness of God’s merciful love. One could say about him: “A pleasant voice multiplies friends, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies” (*Sir* 6:5). After all, one of his most famous statements, “heart speaks to heart”, inspired generations of faithful, among them Saint John Henry Newman, who chose it as his motto, *Cor ad cor loquitur*. One of his convictions was, “In order to speak well, it is enough to love well”. It shows that for him communication should never be reduced to something artificial, to a marketing strategy, as we might say nowadays, but is rather a reflection of the soul, the visible surface of a nucleus of love that is invisible to the eye. For Saint Francis de Sales, precisely “in the heart and through the heart, there comes about a subtle, intense and unifying process in which we come to know God”. [2] By “loving well”, Saint Francis succeeded in communicating with Martin, the deaf-mute, becoming his friend. This is why he is also known as the protector of people with impairments in communicating.

It is from this “criterion of love” that, through his writings and witness of life, the saintly Bishop of Geneva reminds us that “we are what we communicate”. This goes against the grain today, at a time when — as we experience especially on social media — communication is often exploited so that the world may see us as we would like to be and not as we are. Saint Francis de Sales disseminated many copies of his writings among the Geneva community. This “journalistic” intuition earned him a reputation that quickly went beyond the confines of his diocese and still endures to this day. His writings, Saint Paul VI observed, provide for a “highly enjoyable, instructive and moving” reading. [3] If we look today at the field of communications, are these not precisely the characteristics that an article, a report, a television or radio programme or a social media post should include? May people who work in communications feel inspired by this saint of tenderness, seeking and telling the truth with courage and freedom and rejecting the temptation to use sensational and combative expressions.

Speaking with the heart in the synodal process

As I have emphasised, “In the Church, too, there is a great need to listen to and to hear one another. It is the most precious and life-giving gift we can offer each other”. [4] Listening without prejudice, attentively and openly, gives rise to speaking according to God’s style, nurtured by closeness, compassion and tenderness. We have a pressing need in the Church for communication that kindles hearts, that is balm on wounds and that shines light on the journey of our brothers and sisters. I dream of an ecclesial communication that knows how to let itself be guided by the Holy Spirit, gentle and at the same time, prophetic, that knows how to find new ways and means for the wonderful proclamation it is called to deliver in the third millennium. A communication which puts the relationship with God and one’s neighbour, especially the neediest, at the centre and which knows how to light the fire of faith rather than preserve the ashes of a self-referential identity. A form of communication founded on humility in listening and *parrhesia* in speaking, which never separates truth from charity.

Disarming souls by promoting a language of peace

“A soft tongue will break a bone”, says the book of Proverbs (25:15). Today more than ever, speaking with the heart is essential to foster a culture of peace in places where there is war; to open paths that allow for dialogue and reconciliation in places where hatred and enmity rage. In the dramatic context of the global conflict we are experiencing, it is urgent to maintain a form of communication that is not hostile. It is necessary to overcome the tendency to “discredit and insult opponents from the outset [rather] than to open a respectful dialogue”. [5] We need communicators who are open to dialogue, engaged in promoting integral disarmament and committed to undoing the belligerent

psychosis that nests in our hearts, as Saint John XXIII prophetically urged in the Encyclical [Pacem In Terris](#): “True peace can only be built in mutual trust” (No. 113). A trust which has no need of sheltered or closed communicators but bold and creative ones who are ready to take risks to find common ground on which to meet. As was the case sixty years ago, we are now also living in a dark hour in which humanity fears an escalation of war that must be stopped as soon as possible, also at the level of communication. It is terrifying to hear how easily words calling for the destruction of people and territories are spoken. Words, unfortunately, that often turn into warlike actions of heinous violence. This is why all belligerent rhetoric must be rejected, as well as every form of propaganda that manipulates the truth, disfiguring it for ideological ends. Instead, what must be promoted is a form of communication that helps create the conditions to resolve controversies between peoples.

As Christians, we know that the destiny of peace is decided by conversion of hearts, since the virus of war comes from within the human heart. [6] From the heart come the right words to dispel the shadows of a closed and divided world and to build a civilization which is better than the one we have received. Each of us is asked to engage in this effort, but it is one that especially appeals to the sense of responsibility of those working in the field of communications so that they may carry out their profession as a mission.

May the Lord Jesus, the pure Word poured out from the heart of the Father, help us to make our communication clear, open and heartfelt.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, help us listen to the beating of hearts, to rediscover ourselves as brothers and sisters, and to disarm the hostility that divides.

May the Lord Jesus, the Word of truth and love, help us speak the truth in charity, so that we may feel like protectors of one another.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 24 January 2023, Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales.

FRANCISCUS

[1] Encyclical Letter [Deus Caritas Est](#) (25 December 2005), 31.

[2] Apostolic Letter [Totum Amoris Est](#) (28 December 2022).

[3] Cf. Apostolic Epistle [Sabaudiae Gemma](#), on the IV Centennial of the Birth of Saint Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church (29 January 1967).

[4] [Message for the LVI World Day of Social Communications](#) (24 January 2022).

[5] Encyclical Letter [Fratelli Tutti](#) (3 October 2020), 201.

[6] Cf. [Message for the 56th World Day of Peace](#) (1 January 2023).

Material 4

Nuggets from Pope Francis message for 2023 World Day of Social Communications

By Rev. Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh

Theme: Speaking with the heart: “The truth in love” (Eph 4:15)

Introduction

Communications Week (ComWEEK), as approved by the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Nigeria (CBCN) begins from Sunday 14 May and ends on Sunday 21 May 2023. It is to be celebrated in all parishes throughout Nigeria.

For 57 years consecutively, successive Popes have maintained the tradition of releasing a message annually towards celebration of the World Communications Day (WCD). The document is always based on a theme chosen by the Holy Father for each year. The theme always relates to the power or influence of the media or the tools of social communications on the human person and his society; or how the Church is expected to take advantage of the rapidly growing media revolution for the advancement of her Christ-given mission.

In view of the above, for this year 2023, Pope Francis has chosen as theme for our reflection, “Speaking with the heart, the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). His message was released to the general public on 24 January, 2023.

Find here, 24 nuggets capturing some of the highpoints of the impressive document. For those who may not be able to read through the entire document, these nuggets could give a sufficient insight into the crux of the Pope’s message, which is a follow up to the messages of the past two years. Please enjoy it and share with others.

- 1. It is the heart that spurred us to go, to see and to listen, and it is the heart that moves us towards an open and welcoming way of communicating. (2023 WCD Message)**
- 2. After listening to the other with a pure heart, we will also be able to speak following the truth in love (cf. Eph 4:15). (2023 WCD Message)**

3. **The miracle of encounter can take place, which makes us look at one another with compassion, welcoming our mutual frailties with respect rather than judging by hearsay and sowing discord and division. (2023 WCD Message)**
4. **In order to communicate truth with charity, it is necessary to purify one's heart. (2023 WCD Message)**
5. **The call to speak with the heart radically challenges the times in which we are living, which are so inclined towards indifference and indignation, at times even on the basis of disinformation which falsifies and exploits the truth. (2023 WCD Message)**
6. **Communicating in a cordial manner means that those who read or listen to us are led to welcome our participation in the joys, fears, hopes and suffering of the women and men of our time. (2023 WCD Message)**
7. **In a historical period marked by polarizations and contrasts — to which unfortunately not even the ecclesial community is immune — the commitment to communicating “with open heart and arms” does not pertain exclusively to those in the field of communications; it is everyone's responsibility. (2023 WCD Message)**
8. **We are all called to seek and to speak the truth and to do so with charity. (2023 WCD Message)**
9. **Sometimes friendly conversations can open a breach even in the most hardened of hearts. (2023 WCD Message)**
10. **Francis de Sales' meek attitude, humanity and willingness to dialogue patiently with everyone, especially with those who disagreed with him, made him an extraordinary witness of God's merciful love. (2023 WCD Message)**
11. **One could say about him (Francis de Sales): “A pleasant voice multiplies friends, and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies” (Sir 6:5). (2023 WCD Message)**

12. **Communication should never be reduced to something artificial, to a marketing strategy, as we might say nowadays, but is rather a reflection of the soul, the visible surface of a nucleus of love that is invisible to the eye. (2023 WCD Message)**
13. **It is from this “criterion of love” that, through his writings and witness of life, the saintly Bishop of Geneva reminds us that “we are what we communicate”. (2023 WCD Message)**
14. **We experience especially on social media — communication is often exploited so that the world may see us as we would like to be and not as we are. (2023 WCD Message)**
15. **May people who work in communications feel inspired by this saint of tenderness (Francis de Sales), seeking and telling the truth with courage and freedom and rejecting the temptation to use sensational and combative expressions. (2023 WCD Message)**
16. **As I have emphasised, “In the Church, too, there is a great need to listen to and to hear one another.” (2023 WCD Message)**
17. **We have a pressing need in the Church for communication that kindles hearts, that is balm on wounds and that shines light on the journey of our brothers and sisters. (2023 WCD Message)**
18. **I dream of an ecclesial communication that knows how to let itself be guided by the Holy Spirit, gentle and at the same time, prophetic, that knows how to find new ways and means for the wonderful proclamation it is called to deliver in the third millennium. (2023 WCD Message)**
19. **“A soft tongue will break a bone”, says the book of Proverbs (25:15). (2023 WCD Message)**
20. **Today more than ever, speaking with the heart is essential to foster a culture of peace in places where there is war; to open paths that allow for dialogue and reconciliation in places where hatred and enmity rage. (2023 WCD Message)**

- 21. It is necessary to overcome the tendency to “discredit and insult opponents from the outset [rather] than to open a respectful dialogue”. (2023 WCD Message)**
- 22. It is terrifying to hear how easily words calling for the destruction of people and territories are spoken. Words, unfortunately, that often turn into warlike actions of heinous violence. This is why all belligerent rhetoric must be rejected, as well as every form of propaganda that manipulates the truth, disfiguring it for ideological ends. (2023 WCD Message)**
- 23. As Christians, we know that the destiny of peace is decided by conversion of hearts, since the virus of war comes from within the human heart. (2023 WCD Message)**
- 24. Each of us is asked to engage in this effort (to build a civilization which is better than the one we have received), but it is one that especially appeals to the sense of responsibility of those working in the field of communications so that they may carry out their profession as a mission. (2023 WCD Message)**

Material 5

Stop using personal phones for office work, Padre Umoh advises Church Leaders

The National Director of Social Communications at the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Abuja, Very Rev. Fr. Mike Nsikak Umoh has appealed to Church leaders to secure separate phone and line for their office use. Padre Umoh gave the advice during a 3-day workshop/meeting of the Diocesan/Religious Directors of Communications which was organised by the National Directorate of Social Communications and held at the Catholic Secretariat Resource Centre, Abuja. Some of the Participants at the just concluded 3-day workshop for Directors of Communications in Nigeria. The National Director stressed that in order to make it easier for parishioners to access their priests and services in the parish, it is better to have a separate phone line which can be attended to by even the parish secretary or any designated parish staff. He said “In view of the COVID-19, every channel that will keep pastors close to their flock, and enable the flock to connect with their pastors, must be explored.” Moreover, Fr. Director

explained that “Too often, priests are accused of not picking their calls. It is definitely not possible for priests, especially those working in high density parishes, to pick all calls that come on their phones as long as they use personal phone as their official number. In the process of avoiding some calls, they are likely to miss very important calls from well-meaning parishioners who are in serious need of pastoral attention like a sick call.” He goes further to argue that “If a phone line is dedicated, and other parish workers are delegated to attend to it by directing messages to the priests or appropriate persons in the parish, the likelihood of such ugly incidence will be highly reduced. In fact there are many things people need from the parish office which do not require their physical presence.” Additionally, Padre Umoh affirms that this measure will also help checkmate some security dangers priests and pastoral agents are exposed to when they allow their personal lines go too public, as well as ease transfer of parish from one priest to another.

Material 6

10 Practical Ways of improving communications in the Parish Community

By Padre Michael Nsikak Umoh, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria

Summary from PowerPoint

a. Introduction:

These points are helpful for parishes. But also, for Schools, Hospitals and other Church institutions. Even concerning parishes...not totally applicable; depending on geographical location and many other variables.

The Church is communication and cannot exist without communication (Tierney, p. 49). The Church is communication the whole life of the Church is about communicating Christ, who is the concrete revelation of the Father, made known by the power of the Holy Spirit.

UNFORTUNATELY, a parish can be very busy without communicating Christ. The parish is where the Church lives. Parishes are communities of faith, of action, and of hope. They are where the gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where believers are formed and sent to renew the Earth.” (Communities of Salt and Light, NCCB).

b. The 10 ways to improve communications in the parish are:

1. Signboards, Noticeboards & Banners

Artworks are silent but eloquent communicators. Be concerned with the nature and positioning at their location. It is the only contact most people will have about you

Regularly replace old and deplorable ones and watch out for wrong spellings. How is your Notice Board?

Use only well designed and printed banners and place them well. Remove them after the events.

2. Parish Phone Line

(Read material 5 above)

Get an official line for the parish or your institution... it is very important. Don't rely on personal lines for office use.

The official line should be available to the secretary even in the absence of the priest. Parishioners should be able to access the parish with relative ease for some of their needs without appearing physically in the office

3. Sound System

No church architectural design is complete without consideration for the sound system. Especially the big churches.

If we are to choose one, between a beautiful church and a church with a good sound system, the later must be preferred. **BUT BEST TO HAVE BOTH.**

Only the best, so that people can hear the word of God and understand

4. Office Staff

Teach your staff how to relate well with the public. They must treat guests and visitors to the office with respect. Teach parish staff respect and courtesy. Periodic meetings with parish staff is important. Make the vision of the parish, diocese and Church repeatedly clear to them.

BAD ATTITUDE IS BAD COMMUNICATION

5. Parish Bulletin/Magazine

Bulletins are mostly used in parishes. Almost all parishes produce one. But then, how is the content? Do we just fill it with Mass intentions and greetings? What percentage of faith-building issues are in our bulletin? Let us try enrich it.

The idea of Deanery or Diocesan Bulletin can be very helpful. We need to grow into that. This requires a central editorial body that ensures the contents are very edifying. It comes out cheaper and better.

As for brochures and magazines produced in parishes and the diocese, it is good we critically look into the habit of filling all pages with goodwill messages without much about the faith. We need to make the best of the brochures we print and always target some percentage of the pages for faith-building.

6. Cleanliness

Cleanliness is next to Godliness. A dirty church cannot communicate God. So, let us always check our Church compound, inside the Church building. And the premises

We need to check the Vestments, Linens and the Vessels we use at Mass. The state and quality of these objects may speak volumes about our faith

7. Training, Training & Re-Training Of Liturgical Ministers

a. Ushers:

The only impression some visitors will ever have of us and go away with will be their encounter with our parish ushers. Thus, the ministry is not for people with unstable character or with bad attitude. This is not just a society, but a MINISTRY. One needs the Charism... humble, simple and gentle

b. Lectors:

Lectors are PROCLAIMERS of the Word, not just readers. Their appearance must not be distracting. They need to understand how to engage the microphone.

This is a ministry for liturgical service, not for showmanship, therefore, it is advisable that ONLY LECTORS SHOULD READ at Weddings or Funeral Masses or Thanksgiving celebrations like birthdays or wedding anniversaries, and not the wedding couples or relatives or children of the deceased at funeral or Thanksgiving Masses. This, among other things, is to ensure that the sacredness of the celebration is not compromised, and to avoid unnecessary distractions during Mass.

c. Choirs

The role of the Choir is very crucial at Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Communication between priest and choir is therefore key to ensuring a smooth and spirit-filled liturgical celebration. To guarantee this, periodic Liturgical

Summit for all liturgical ministers should be held in the parish.

It is a good practice to choose the hymn ahead based on the readings, theme and celebration of the day. The organ and other instruments should be good and used appropriately to accompany the hymns rather than to display dexterity or to entertain. The use of the organ at all Masses is advisable, if the parish can afford it, let every Mass truly be a celebration. It is good to sponsor some youth for training in music and use of instrument: organ, sax, violin, drums, etc

8. Websites & Social Media Platforms

Not many parishes in Nigeria have a website at the moment, but it is very good if you can. It is also true that a good number of parishes who have the website do not really manage them well. This calls for more awareness and training in the use of media technologies for pastoral endeavours.

All parishes are however expected to hook up to the NIGERIA CATHOLIC NETWORK by login onto nigeriacatholicnetwork.com

The use of WHATSAPP has proven to be a very easy and smart way to organise and manage parish communities. It facilitates inter and intra communication in the parish community.

In using the WhatsApp in parishes, be careful of the danger of lumping up all parishioners in a group. Make a distinction between group and broadcast. Better to have all societies on group with the parish number on all groups. But all individual parishioners and groups must be on the broadcast list of the parish. Thus, only the parish office should have direct access to ALL parishioners. Other social media apps like FACEBOOK, Instagram and many more can also be helpful.

The parish can go into Live streaming of their programmes. But note the CBCN regulations when it is LIVE BROADCAST OF MASS (Link.com)

Building the media skills of youths in the parish and our schools will turn out to benefit the Church before long.

9. Projector

We are in the age of sight and sound, thus the use of projector in worship can greatly enhance active participation. But care must also be taken to avoid it becoming a source of distraction when wrongly used

Thus, like everything concerning the media, skill and adequate preparations is

very important. Children love it, adults appreciate it, and it helps build the community spirit in liturgical worship.

10. Parish Communication Committee

No pastoral plan is complete without a communication dimension. It is recommended that diocesan directors coordinate the establishment of communication committee in the parishes in the diocese by engaging media experts among the laity.

But it also means that all lay apostolate bodies and pious societies should have a communication coordinator for the same reason we have publicity committees during parish harvest festivals and anniversaries.

Aetatis Novae says that “Catholic media work is not simply one more program alongside all the rest of the Church’s activities: social communications have a role to play in every aspect of the Church’s mission” (*Aetatis Novae*, 17).

Therefore, everything we do in the Church must have the communication plans.

Thank you for your kind attention

(Rev. Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh is the National Director of Social Communications of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria).

MATERIAL 7

Speaking the Truth in Love

By Rev. Fr. Gerald M. Musa

The 57th World Day of Social Communication 2023 focuses on the theme of "Speaking with the heart - The truth in love," which is based on a biblical verse from Ephesians 4:15. The theme resonates with an African proverb which states “Truth should be in love and love in truth.” In his message, Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of seeking and communicating the truth with charity, which means doing so with love, kindness, and empathy towards others. He explains how words and actions have a significant impact on relationships, especially in today's world where communication and media are more accessible and widespread. He encourages everyone to cultivate a culture of honest and compassionate communication.

Currently, there are numerous books that focus on teaching skills for effective

communication, public speaking, and speech theories. However, there is a shortage of literature that stresses the importance of speaking the truth with kindness. Although speaking is considered an art, it is wise to communicate truthfully with a compassionate approach. Wise people say knowledge is the awareness of what to say, while wisdom involves understanding when and how to express it. Plato, the ancient philosopher, believed that it takes seven years of silent inquiry to learn the truth and an additional fourteen years to master the ability to convey it to others. In the Hausa language, there is a well-known proverb that says, "knowing how to talk (speech) is an asset" (Magana jari ce). Parents, preachers, teachers, leaders, media practitioners, and everyone need not only to learn the art of speaking but how to speak with compassion.

Frequently, we tend to discourage other people through our manner of speaking, teaching, and preaching. Our criticisms often lack positivity and encouragement, and instead are filled with condemnation without any commendation. For example, as parents, preachers, teachers, and leaders, we have a tendency to be harsh on children, congregations, students, and subordinates, as we dwell solely on condemning them without finding creative ways of parenting, preaching, teaching, and leading. Often, preachers forget the aphorism which says, "Love the sinner, but hate the sin." Preaching requires speaking with compassion and love, bringing back sinners into the sheepfold, and making the gospel message attractive even to those who appear to be irredeemable. The Apostle Paul urges his readers to speak in a way that is uplifting and appropriate for the situation, imparting grace to those who hear us (Ephesians 4:29).

Furthermore, the media has a responsibility to communicate truth with compassion. Pope Francis advocates for kindness in the media to avoid fueling bitterness, anger, and conflict. Instead, media should help people reflect on reality with a critical but respectful attitude. Films and cinema often aim to address important issues such as hate crimes, politics, intolerance, and prejudice. However, some movies may unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes and misrepresent people based on their ethnicity, race, religion, gender, profession, or disabilities in an attempt to convey a certain message. In these cases, the truth portrayed in the film becomes biased, distorted, and lacking in compassion.

More still, Journalists have a social responsibility to balance truth with compassion. Investigative journalists play a crucial role in uncovering the truth about public servants and the quality of service which they render to the public. It

is important for journalists to remain unbiased and not shower undue praise on politicians or forget their responsibility to hold them accountable. Journalists must act as watchdogs and point out areas where politicians could improve their service to the public. In as much as there are seasoned investigative journalists who have worked assiduously in unfolding the truth through the media, there are also many gossip media outlets that thrive on rumours, gossip, and fake news. Socrates' triple-filter test avers the importance of speaking truth with love. In this test, Socrates would only listen to a story only if it was true, good, kind, useful, and necessary. Journalists should also strive to follow this test and only report on stories that meet these criteria.

The danger of Gossip Media is their inclination to spread false information and damage the reputation of people without verifying their sources. While the media have a duty to expose wrongdoing and hold public officials accountable, news stories should be guided by the truth and compassion. Journalists can imbibe the principles of constructive journalism that encourage them to seek and share the truth in a positive and engaging manner. Constructive journalism becomes even more urgent in today's world where love can be blind to the truth, and where truth can be spoken without love. The 2023 message of the Pope reminds media practitioners and people of goodwill about the importance of balancing love and truth.

The theologian Eberhard Arnold once said that "Truth without love kills, but love without truth lies." Therefore, it is important for everyone, not just media organizations or users, to speak truthfully in love. The habit of speaking the truth in love requires wisdom, taking into account timing, circumstances, communication channels, approach, tone, and word choice. The biblical story of Prophet Nathan and David provides a good example of how to approach truth in love. Prophet Nathan was tasked with confronting King David about his adultery and murder. Nathan approached David privately and began his speech with a parable. He rebuked David with love and fearlessly declared God's verdict, leading David to admit his faults. Everyone needs a Nathan in their life - the government, friends, and authorities - someone who can combine love, courage, communication skills, and wisdom in speaking the truth.

Continued on page 65

Material 8

THEMES FOR WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY FROM 1967 – 2023

The Holy Father's message for World Communications Day is traditionally published in conjunction with the Memorial of St. Francis de Sales, patron of writers (January 24).

World Communications Day, the *only* worldwide celebration called for by the Second Vatican Council ([INTER MIRIFICA, 1963](#)), is celebrated in most countries on the Sunday before Pentecost.

Click on any link below to review a document.

YEAR	THEME OF MESSAGE	POPE
1967	<u>Church and Social Communication: First World Communication Day</u>	Paul VI, 7 May 1967
1968	<u>Social Communications and the Development of Nations</u>	Paul VI, 26 March 1968
1969	<u>Social Communications and the Family</u>	Paul VI, 7 April 1969
1970	<u>Social Communications and Youth</u>	Paul VI, 6 April 1970
1971	<u>The role of Communications Media in promoting unity among men</u>	Paul VI, 25 March 1971
1972	<u>The Media of Social Communications at the Service of Truth</u>	Paul VI, 21 April 1972
1973	<u>The Mass Media and the Affirmation and Promotion of Spiritual Values</u>	Paul VI, 1 May 1973
1974	<u>Social Communications and Evangelization in Today's World</u>	Paul VI, 16 May 1974
1975	<u>The Mass Media and Reconciliation</u>	Paul VI, 19 April 1975
1976	<u>Social Communications and the Fundamental Rights and Duties of Man</u>	Paul VI, 11 April 1976
1977	<u>Advertising in the Mass Media: Benefits, Dangers, Responsibilities</u>	Paul VI, 12 May 1977
1978	<u>The receiver in Social Communications: his expectations, his rights and...</u>	Paul VI, 28 April 1978
1979	<u>Social Communications: Protecting the Child and promoting his best int...</u>	John Paul II, 23 May 1979
1980	<u>Social Communications and Family</u>	John Paul II, 1 May 1980
1981	<u>Social Communications and Responsible Human Freedom</u>	John Paul II, 10 May 1981
1982	<u>Social Communications and the Problems of the Elderly</u>	John Paul II, 10 May 1982
1983	<u>Social Communications and the Promotion of Peace</u>	John Paul II, 15 May 1983
1984	<u>Social Communication: Instruments of Encounter Between Faith and Culture</u>	John Paul II, 3 June 1984

1985	<u>Social Communications for a Christian Promotion of Youth</u>	John Paul II, 19 May 1985
1986	<u>Social Communications and the Christian Formation of Public Opinion</u>	John Paul II, 11 May 1986
1987	<u>Social Communications at the Service of Justice and Peace</u>	John Paul II, 31 May 1987
1988	<u>Social Communications and the Promotion of Solidarity and Fraternity...</u>	John Paul II, 15 May 1988
1989	<u>Religion in the Mass Media</u>	John Paul II, 7 May 1989
1990	<u>The Christian message in a computer culture</u>	John Paul II, 27 May 1990
1991	<u>The Communications media and the unity and progress of the human family</u>	John Paul II, 12 May 1991
1992	<u>The proclamation of Christ's Message in the Communications Media</u>	John Paul II, 31 May 1992
1993	<u>Videocassettes and audiocassettes in the formation of culture and</u>	John Paul II, 23 May 1993
1994	<u>Television and family: guidelines for good viewing</u>	John Paul II, 15 May 1994
1995	<u>Cinema: communicator of culture and of values</u>	John Paul II, 28 May 1995
1996	<u>The Media: Modern Forum for Promoting the Role of Women in Society</u>	John Paul II, 19 May 1996
1997	<u>Communicating Jesus: The Way, the Truth and the Life</u>	John Paul II, 11 May 1997
1998	<u>Sustained by the Spirit, communicate hope</u>	John Paul II, 24 May 1998
1999	<u>Mass media: a friendly companion for those in search of the Father</u>	John Paul II, 16 May 1999
2000	<u>Proclaiming Christ in the Media at the Dawn of the New Millennium</u>	John Paul II, 4 June 2000
2001	<u>Preach from the housetops: The Gospel in the Age of Global Communication</u>	John Paul II, 27 May 2001
2002	<u>Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel</u>	John Paul II, 12 May 2002
2003	<u>The Communications Media at the Service of</u>	John Paul II, 1 June 2003

	<u>Authentic Peace in the...</u>	
2004	<u>The Media and the family: A Risk and a Richness</u>	John Paul II, 23 May 2004
2005	<u>The Communications Media: At the Service of Understanding...</u>	John Paul II, 8 May 2005
2006	<u>The Media: A Network for Communication, Communion and Cooperation</u>	Benedict XVI , 28 May 2006
2007	<u>Children and the Media: A Challenge for Education</u>	Benedict XVI , 20 May 2007
2008	<u>The Media: At the Crossroads between Self-Promotion and Service...</u>	Benedict XVI , 4 May 2008
2009	<u>New Technologies, New Relationships, Promoting a Culture of...</u>	Benedict XVI , 24 May 2009
2010	<u>The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at...</u>	Benedict XVI , 16 May 2010
2011	<u>Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age</u>	Benedict XVI , 5 June 2011
2012	<u>Silence and Word: Path of Evangelization</u>	Benedict XVI , 20 May 2012
2013	<u>Social Networks: Portals of Truth & Faith: New Spaces for Evangelization</u>	Benedict XVI , 12 May 2013
2014	<u>Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter</u>	Benedict XVI , 1 June 2014
2015	<u>Communicating the Family: A Privileged Place of Encounter ...</u>	Francis , 17 May 2015
2016	<u>Communication and mercy: a fruitful encounter</u>	Francis , 8 May 2016
2017	<u>Fear not, for I am with you: Communicating Hope and Trust ...</u>	Francis , 28 May 2017
2018	<u>The truth will set you free: Fake news and journalism for peace</u>	Francis , 13 May 2018
2019	<u>We are members one of another: From social network communities to ...</u>	Francis , 2 June 2019
2020	<u>That you may tell your children and</u>	Francis , 24 May 2020

	<u>grandchildren: Life becomes history</u>	
2021	<u>Come and See: Communicating by Encountering People Where and as ...</u>	Francis , 16 May 2021
2022	<u>Listening with the ear of the heart</u>	Francis , 29 May, 2022
2023	<u>Speaking with the heart 'The truth in love' (Eph. 4:15)</u>	Francis , 24 January, 2023

List of committee members and contributors

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13. Rev. Fr. Moses Iorapuu
14. Mr. Vincent Njoku
15. Rev. Fr. Michael Umoh
16. Rev. Fr. Leo Ehiemere
17. Rev. Fr. Anthony Godonu

Composition of Nigeria Catholic Social Communications Commission (NCSCC)

The Commission shall be composed of the following: Bishop Chairman for Communications, The National Director of Social Communications, 4 NMA members, 10 PRCC members, 3 Lay media experts chosen by the National Director, National Presidents of the Nigeria Catholic Media Bodies (**NCCB**): **CAMPAN**, **CAEAN**, **SIGNIS**, **Cath-ICT** (Catholics in ICT), **CML** (Catholic Media Lecturers) and **CMP** (CATHOLIC MEDIA PROPRIETORS, and or any media group as may be deemed important to be established.

The Bishop Chairman for Communications **MOST REV. DAVID AJANG**

The National Director of Soc. Comms. **V. REV. FR. MICHAEL UMOH**

Four Nigerian Catholic Social Communications Advisers (NCSCA)

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Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Gerald **MUSA**

Very Rev, Fr. Dr. Martin **ANUSI**

Sr. Oluwakemi **AKINLEYE**

Three National Communications Experts (NCE) *Lay media experts appointed by the National Director*

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Mr. Tony Chiejina

Mr. Sanctus Amaechi

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BENIN CITY	Fr. Stephen OKOJIE (Benin)
CALABAR	Fr. Justin UDOMAH (Uyo)
IBADAN	Fr. Anthony AKIWOWO (Ibadan)
JOS	Fr. Andrew DANJUMA (Pankshin)
KADUNA	Fr. Christopher OMOTOSHO (Sokoto)
LAGOS	Fr. Anthony GODONU (Lagos)
ONITSHA	Fr. George ADIMIKE (Onitsha)
OWERRI	Fr. Leonard EHIMERE (Umuahia)
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National Presidents of the Nigeria Catholic Communications Bodies (**NCCB**):

SIGNIS: Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Patrick **ALUMUKU**

Nigerian Catholic Communications Lecturers (NCCL)

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Gerald **MUSA** (**Coordinator**)

CAMPAN: Mr. Patrick **OSU**

CAEAN: Dr. Charles **OKWUOWULU**

Catholics in ICT (Cath-ICT) **TO BE FORMED**

Catholic Communications Proprietors (CMP)

Sir Soji **OLAGUNJU** (**Coordinator**)

LIST OF ALL COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORS (DIOCESES)

NATIONAL DIRECTOR: Very Rev. Fr. Michael Nsikak Umoh

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The truth can be difficult to handle, but there's an obligation to challenge evil, debunk falsehoods, and refute errors. When administering an injection in a hospital, the nurse or doctor usually uses a gentle approach that encourages the patient to willingly submit. Similarly, fraternal correction involves communicating the truth with love, particularly when addressing someone who has done wrong and is vulnerable. Our choice of words, tone, and demeanour are crucial in conveying our message effectively. It is more important to communicate with kindness and sincerity than to merely state the truth. We all desire friends who speak the truth in love rather than sycophants who inundate us with flattery. The Bible verse from Proverbs 27:6 suggests that criticism from a friend can be trusted, while praise from an enemy may be dangerous. We often feel the need to express our opinions forcefully and without regard for others. However, the World Communication Day message challenges us to communicate difficult truths with empathy and compassion.

Many truths are spoken in a negative way, with bitterness, resentment, or rudeness. This can be hurtful and counterproductive, causing the person to become defensive or shut down. I completely agree with the idea that speaking the truth in love requires prudence. It's important to consider the feelings and circumstances of the person or people we are speaking to when sharing the truth with them. We should aim to speak with kindness, empathy, and sensitivity.

An African proverb, "Do not tell the man carrying you he stinks," is a great example of this. It underscores the importance of showing gratitude and respect for those who are helping us, even if we may have some criticism or feedback for them. We should strive to speak the truth with grace, choosing our words carefully and speaking with a kind and compassionate tone.

I appreciate St. Paul's letter to the Colossians. He admonishes us to let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. This means that our words should be both gracious and wise, adding flavour and meaning to the conversation. By doing so, we can help others receive the truth in a way that is constructive and helpful. There is much to learn from Jesus who is rightly called the perfect communicator in the way that he approached sinners with love and compassion. He was able to speak to their hearts and show them the way to salvation through his affectionate and empathetic language, as well as his manner of approach. What sets Jesus apart from other religious leaders of his time, such as the Pharisees, was his approach to communicating with people. Unlike the Pharisees who were quick to judge and condemn, Jesus spoke with love and understanding.

He was able to reach out to public sinners and those who were lost in sin, and his message of love and forgiveness attracted them to him. Even when he spoke to the Pharisees, who were resistant to his message, Jesus was brutally frank and direct, speaking the truth about their hypocrisy and self-righteousness. He could balance speaking the truth with love and compassion while being firm when necessary. By imitating the example of Jesus, we can learn to communicate with love and compassion and help others see the truth in a way that is constructive and life-giving.

In conclusion, examining our motivation for speaking the truth is important. Are we driven by negative emotions such as ego, pride, malice, hatred, vengeance, or envy? Or are we motivated by love? If our motivation is not love, even if we speak an eloquently and impressive language, it will be like a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Fr. Musa is the Director of the Centre for the Study of African Culture and Communication of the Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.



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