



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013

LIVING OUR
Relationship
WITH
JESUS CHRIST

"The latest media of social communication are indispensable means for evangelization, and for enlightening the minds and hearts of people."
(I.M. 163)

05/20/13

Vatican II | *What Difference Does it Make?*

DOCUMENT: **INTER MIRIFICA**
On the Instruments of Social Communications

The Vatican II Decree on Social Communications did not only address the communication issues of the day (1962), but contains uncanny foresight present in our current age of mass communication and social media.

The Vatican II Fathers believed the Catholic Church was commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel and bring salvation to every man and judges it her duty to preach the news of redemption with the aid of the instruments of social communication and instruct mankind as well, in their worthy use.

The document makes it clear that "if these instruments are to be properly employed, it is absolutely necessary that all who use them know the norms of morality and apply them faithfully in this field." The document also places a responsibility on everyone concerned with mass communication to develop an "upright" conscience on the use of these instruments, particularly with respect to certain issues which are rather sharply debated in our times.

The Vatican II Decree also speaks on a personal level with a message as

applicable today as it was 50 years ago, "Parents should be mindful of their duty to guard against shows, publications, and the like which would jeopardize faith or good morals. Particular efforts should be expended to protect young persons from literature, shows, and messages which would be injurious to them at their age... people, especially the young, should take care to develop moderation and self-control in the use of these instruments."

Religious shepherds and laymen alike are asked to fulfill their duties in this field, especially by performing skillfully and with apostolic ardor. Currently, we witness this as the Pope and our Bishops are tweeting and utilizing other social media messaging.

The document concludes by saying "The Council entreats all men of good will, especially those who control these instruments, to strive to apply them solely for the good of mankind. The fate of humanity grows daily more dependent on the right use of these media."

Robert Tayek

Reflection Questions

1. In your daily life, have you accepted the responsibility to develop an "upright" conscience in your use of mass media and social media?
2. Have you ever applied the norms of morality as taught by the Church to what a young person sees on television, at the movies, or experiences on the internet?
3. Parents or guardians, have you realized your duty to guard against the media messages which can be harmful to young people?

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