



THE SALESIAN, A COMMUNICATOR IN THE INFORMATION AGE

(Documents of Consulta Mondiale 2019)





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[The Salesian, A Communicator in the Information Age]

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*Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.
Instead they put it on its stand,
and it gives light to everyone in the house.*

*In the same way,
let your light shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

(Mathew 5, 15-16)

“

*We work in the social communication sector.
This is a significant field of activity which constitutes
one of the apostolic priorities
of the salesian mission.*

*Our Founder
had an instinctive grasp
of the value of this means of mass education,
which creates culture and spreads patterns of life;
he showed great originality
in the apostolic undertakings which he initiated
to defend and sustain the faith of the people.*

*Following his example
we utilize as God's gift the great possibilities
which social communication offers us
for education and evangelization.*

(Salesian Constitutions Art. 43)

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Presentation

The Salesian Communicator

Filiberto González SDB

Introduction

The 28th General Chapter theme: ‘What kind of Salesians for the youth of today?’, has the distinctive trait of being a rich theme with the potential for generating others. It is a clear invitation to outline a profile that is able to respond to young people in today’s world, especially the poorest and most needy of them, in an ever more complex world due to rapid cultural, social and technological changes. There is no doubt that reflection on the matter, tackled from different perspectives, will produce a more complete and comprehensive vision of the profile of the Salesians in years to come.

Our Department seeks to respond to this question from the perspective of communication, a broad, essential reality that is inseparable from the Salesian mission and that runs through all its aspects.

From our beginnings, communication has been an integral part of the Salesian vocation and mission. We were born of a father who combined evangelisation, education and communication in an inseparable unity. In his circular on 19 March 1885 on the ‘dissemination of good books’, Don Bosco stated that: it is ‘one of the principal missions that the Lord has entrusted to me; and you know I have taken it up with untiring commitment despite a thousand other commitments.’ Given that publishing was the most important and developed means of communication in his time, Don Bosco presented it as ‘a very important part of our mission’ for the salvation of the young and for protecting the faith of ordinary people. He believed so much in the good that could be achieved through the dissemination of good books that he published around ‘twenty million pamphlets or volumes in less than thirty years’.

However, Don Bosco the communicator does not end with publishing and printing. His vision and mission also spurred him on to found an institutional magazine which can now be found in 134 countries around the world, in 62 editions and 31 languages: The Salesian Bulletin, a brilliant initiative for developing the sense of belonging to, involvement in and acceptance of his mission. Additionally, his talent for public relations with all kinds of people and

institutions was well known. He was a promoter of communicative arts for young people: music singing and theatre. He was a genius in the use of posters, storytelling and dreams.

Our Congregation would not have been the same without a Don Bosco who knew how to develop his talents and communicative approaches, without a Don Bosco who, with a vision of the future, knew how to use the more advanced media of his day. From the beginning, the model of the Salesian that our Father and Founder left us leads to being an evangeliser, educator and communicator at the same time.

Vatican Council II's decree, *Perfectae Caritatis*, asked for an appropriate renewal of religious life through a return to the sources of Christian life and the founders' charisms in accordance with the new times. Attentive to this invitation, the 21st General Chapter offered an article on communication in the new version of the Constitutions and Regulations in which it clearly states: 'We work in the social communication sector. This is a significant field of activity which constitutes one of the apostolic priorities of the Salesian mission. Our Founder had an instinctive grasp of the value of this means of mass education, which creates culture and spread; he showed great originality in the apostolic undertakings which he initiated to defend and sustain the faith of the people. Following his example, we utilize as God's gift the great possibilities which social communication offers us for education and evangelization.' (C 43).

All the above has brought us to the point of reformulating the theme of the 28th General Chapter, ever attentive to our founder and to the young people of our times. We have located this theme within the digital environment, a communicative reality which the great majority of the young people in the world inhabit, independently of their culture or religion, their social or economic circumstances, their political or moral tendencies. The question is focused, still respecting its essence, as follows: 'What kind of Salesian communicators for the young people of the digital world?'

Amongst all the elements of communication, why have we focused on the digital world as an important part of the profile of the new Salesian? It goes without saying that the digital reality has rapidly changed the lives of countries both poor and rich, of young people and adults, parents and children, teachers and students. We Salesians also find ourselves inside this digital reality along with the laity with whom we share the same spirit and mission. Today, everything and

everyone comes under the influence of this digital environment, but especially young people. It is even said that we have finally shifted from being ‘homo sapiens’ to being ‘phono sapiens’, to being hyper-connected human beings and society steeped in and marked by digital technology. It is something we can neither ignore nor belittle. We all live within this new environment whose anthropological influence cannot be denied and whose consequences are unpredictable.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, dedicated to young people and the faith, says in number 86: ‘The digital environment is characteristic of the contemporary world. Broad swathes of humanity are immersed in it in an ordinary and continuous manner. It is no longer merely a question of ‘using’ instruments of communication, but of living in a highly digitalized culture that has had a profound impact on ideas of time and space, on our self-understanding, our understanding of others and the world, and our ability to communicate, learn, be informed and enter into relationship with others. An approach to reality that privileges images over listening and reading has influenced the way people learn and the development of their critical sense’.

As said earlier, it is something intrinsic for us to communicate and it is inseparable from educating and evangelising. Hence, with a view to fulfilling our mission as evangelisers and educators of the young and of popular settings, we seek to learn how to communicate according to our times, cultures, and the languages of the people to whom we are sent. This requires entering into a dynamic and continuous formation because changes are rapid and generational shifts are increasingly short. In this sense, ongoing formation ceases to be a slogan and becomes a way of living whereby every Salesian and religious community adopts a specific mentality and specific attitudes. Individuals, teams and communities involved in the various initial formation phases, as well as methods and contents, the structures and organisation that sustain them, have responsibility for taking up this ongoing dynamic process.

In order to tackle the theme ‘What kind of Salesian communicators for young people of the digital world?’ the Department called members of the Advisory Council for Communication to Rome. This body involves provincial delegates, teachers of communication and journalists of both genders from the seven regions of the Congregation who have the ability to offer content and experiences in view of the profile of the Salesian communicator. To this end, we have succeeded in creating a representative, inclusive, professional and

experienced team. Some of the experts consulted who could not come also sent in their proposals.

In view of the diversity of communication situations in the Provinces, we are thinking of various issues that, depending on the communicative and digital reality, can enlighten and serve the provincials and their communication delegates as tools to be used in formation meetings for Salesians and lay people, or as part of the systematic formation programme. Therefore, thought was given to matters that update and complete the 'Salesian Social Communication System' (2011), the book 'Elements of communication for formation'" (2015) and the guidelines and directions presented in Acts of the General Council No. 411: 'Criteria for the appointment of lay people as delegates for communication in the provinces' (2011), and AGC 423: 'The presence of Salesians and lay collaborators in social networks' (2016). These are all valuable materials for the information, study and an appropriate and updated formation of Salesians.

Consistent with the question of the digital environment, we have decided to publish an e-book. This way, everyone can have the document available on their preferred device, without problems relating to place and time.

In formulating the proposal for topics to achieve a profile of the Salesian communicator, we were certainly not thinking of a Salesian 'specialist' in communication, something that would require university degrees, but of the Salesian at work every day in whatever kind of work. Therefore, the topics were developed bearing in mind the question of brevity, ordinary and colloquial language, with a thought to easy understanding and application. Our aim is that the Salesian be a communicator, not a scholar in the study of communication. Hence it is essential to always have Don Bosco as our model of life, seeking to personify him and make him relevant, attentive to emerging cultures and young people, with a clear passion for the Glory of God and the salvation of the souls of young people. We are certain that our proposal will assist every Salesian to shift from a homespun and closed view and experience of communication to the open kind that makes the mission and the institution visible through the use of today's languages.

Once again, I thank the members of the Advisory Council who generously gave of their preparation and experience to the service of the Department and the Congregation. And my gratitude from now on to delegates and commissions for communication and formation in the provinces for offering an integral formation that systematically includes communication in their formative programmes and

processes so as to enrich and update the profile of the Salesian demanded by God's call and our being sent to today's young people.

Enjoy your reading.

Fr Filiberto González Plasencia sdb
General Councillor for Communication

Chapter 1

Circular to the Salesians

On Spreading Good Books

Sac. Giovanni Bosco

Introduction

Turin, 19 March, St Joseph's Feast day, 1885

My dearest sons in Jesus Christ,

The Lord knows how keen my desire is to see you, be in your midst, speak with you about our things, and console myself with the mutual confidence of our hearts. But unfortunately, dear sons, my failing strength, the remnants of earlier illnesses, the urgent matters that call me to France, are preventing me for now at least, to follow the impulse of my affection for you.

Being unable to visit you in person, I am arriving by letter, and I am sure you will be happy with the constant remembrance I have of you, you who are my hope, my glory and also my support. I want to see you grow in zeal and in merit before God, every day, and so I will not hesitate to suggest various means to you from time to time which I believe will be an improvement so your ministry will be more fruitful.

One of these that I want to warmly recommend to you, for the glory of God and the good of souls, is the spreading of good books. I don't hesitate to call this means 'Divine', since God Himself used it to regenerate humankind. There were books inspired by Him that have brought correct teaching to all the world. He wanted all the cities and villages of Palestine to have copies and that each Sabbath there would be reading in the religious assemblies. At the beginning these books were the sole patrimony of the Hebrew people but, once the tribes were taken into captivity in Assyria and amongst the Chaldeans, the Sacred Scriptures were translated into the Syro-chaldean language, and all of central Asia had them in their own languages.

Once Greek was in the ascendancy, the Hebrews brought their colonies to every corner of the world and with them the Sacred Books were multiplied 'ad infinitum'; and they even enriched the libraries of pagan peoples through their

version of the Septuagint. Orators. Poets and philosophers of those times drew not a few truths from the Bible. God prepared the world for the coming of the Saviour principally through his inspired writings.

It behoves us, then, to imitate the work of the Heavenly Father. Good books, spread amongst the people, are one of the active ways to preserve the kingdom of the Saviour in so many souls. The thoughts, principles, the morals of a Catholic book have substance drawn from the Apostolic books and tradition. They are so much more necessary today in the face of the army of impiety and immorality wreaking havoc in the sheepfold of Jesus Christ, leading on and dragging down to perdition those who are careless and disobedient. It is necessary to fight weapon with weapon. You can add that the book, even if on the one hand it does not have the power of the living word, on the other hand offers even greater advantages in certain circumstances. The good book can enter a house where the priest cannot, it is even tolerated by bad people as a gift or remembrance. It does not get embarrassed when presenting itself, and does not worry if it is neglected; when read it teaches truths calmly; if not liked, it does not complain, yet it leaves feelings of misgiving that sometimes spark a desire to know the truth. Meanwhile it is always ready to teach.

Sometimes it remains gathering dust on the table or in the library. No one give it a thought. But come a time of loneliness, or sadness, or boredom or a need for relaxation, or a time of anxiety about the future, and this faithful friend shakes off its dust, opens its pages and the wonderful conversions of St Augustine, Blessed Columbine and St Ignatius happen all over again. Polite in dealing with those who are fearful through human respect, it arouses suspicion in no one. Familiar with those who are good, it is always ready to talk things over; it goes with them at every moment, everywhere. How many the souls saved by good books, how many preserved from error, how many encouraged in doing good! Someone who gives a good book might have no other merit than to awaken some thought of God, but has already gained an incomparable merit before God. And yet how much more is gained. Even If not read by the one to whom it was given or for whom it was intended, a book in a family is read by a son or daughter, a friend or neighbour. A book in a village then passes into the hands of a hundred people.

God alone knows the good that a book given as a mark of friendship produces in a city, a travelling library, a worker's club, a hospital. No one should fear that a book would be refused by someone just because it is good. The contrary is the case. A confessor of our age used to take his store of good books with him every time

case. A complete outfit used take his store of good books with him every time he went down to the wharves at the port in Marseilles, to give to the stevedores, the craftsmen, the sailors. These books were always accepted happily and gratefully and sometimes read immediately with keen interest.

Having said all that, and leaving aside much of what you already know, I want to point out why, not only as Catholics but especially as Salesians, you should be enthusiastic and spare no effort or means to spread wholesome books:

1. This was amongst the main tasks Divine Providence entrusted to me, and you know how much effort I spent on it, notwithstanding the thousand and one other occupations I had. The raging hatred of the enemies of good, and attacks on me personally, show how error recognises a formidable opponent in these books and how they are an undertaking blessed by God, for exactly the opposite reason.

2. In fact, the marvellous distribution these books have had is an argument that proves God's special assistance. In less than 30 years the total number of publications and books we have spread among ordinary people amounts to about twenty million. If some of them have been ignored, others have had hundreds of readers, and thus we can certainly reckon that the number of people who have benefited from our books is much greater than the number of books we have published.

3. This spreading of wholesome literature is one of the principle purposes of our Congregation. Article 7 of the first paragraph of our Regulations says of the Salesians: "They shall devote themselves to spreading good books among the people, using all the means which Christian charity inspires. By word and writing they will seek to counteract the godlessness and heresy that is trying in so many guises to creep in amongst the uncultured and unlearned. They should direct the sermons they preach to the people from time to time, triduums, novenas and the spreading of good books, to this end".

4. Amongst the books to be spread I propose that we stick to those that have a reputation for being good, moral and religious, and we should give preference to those produced by our own presses. The reason is that the material benefit that results becomes charity through the support it provides for the many poor young people we have, and because our publications tend to form an orderly system, that embraces on a vast scale all the classes that make up human society. I won't dwell on this point; rather I am pleased to look at just one class, that of young people to whom I have always striven to do good not only with the spoken but

people, to whom I have always striven to do good not only with the spoken but also with the printed word.

While I sought to instruct all the people with the Catholic Readings, its purpose was to get into the houses, let people know about the spirit in our Colleges, and attract young people to virtue, especially with the biographies of Savio, Besucco and others. With The Companion of Youth my aim was to lead them to church, instil the spirit of piety in them and get them to love going to the sacraments. With the collection of edited Italian and Latin classics and the History of Italy and the other historical or literary books I wanted to be at their side in school and preserve them from so many errors and passions that would be fatal for them now and for eternity. Like in the old days I wanted to be their companion in the hours of recreation, and I have thought about arranging a series of enjoyable books which I hope will not be long in coming.

Finally, amongst my many aims for the Salesian Bulletin I also had this one: to keep the spirit of St Francis de Sales and his sayings alive in boys who have returned to their families, and to make these boys the saviours of other young people. I will not tell you I have reached my ideal of perfection. On the contrary, I am telling you that it is up to you to co-ordinate it in such a way that it will be complete in all its parts.

I ask and beseech you then not to neglect this most important part of our mission. Work at it not only amongst the young people Providence has entrusted to you, but with your words and example make them into many other apostles who spread good books.

At the start of the year the pupils, especially the new ones, are alight with enthusiasm at the offer of our associations, even more so when it costs so little. But make sure that they join spontaneously and are not forced in anyway to belong. With well reasoned encouragement lead the young people to join, not just for the good the books will do them, but also for the good they can do to others, sending them home as soon as they are published, to their father, mother, brothers, benefactors. Besides, parents who do not practise their religion much are moved by this thoughtfulness of a son or brother who is away from home, and they are easily lead to read the book out of curiosity if for no other reason.

Let them be careful though that what they send never looks like preaching or talking at their relatives, but is always and only a thoughtful gift and an affectionate memento. When they return home, they should strive to increase the merits of their good works, by giving them as presents to their friends, lending

them to relatives, giving them as thanks for a favour done, passing them on to their parish priest, asking him to distribute them and get more members.

Be convinced, my dear sons, that such industriousness will draw the Lord's choicest blessings down on you and on our young people.

I will finish: draw the conclusion to this letter yourselves by seeing that our young people get hold of moral and Christian principles especially by means of our productions, without despising other publishers' books. I must tell you, however, that I was cut to the quick when I got to know that the books we printed were at times not known or held in no regard, in some of our houses. Do not love, nor lead others to love, the knowledge which the Apostle says inflates (pumps up, makes us proud). And remind that, even though St Augustine was an eminent teacher of fine letters and an eloquent orator, after he became a bishop he preferred the incorrect use of language and the absence of stylish elegance rather than running the risk of not being understood by the people.

May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ always be with you. Pray for me.

Yours affectionately in Jesus Christ,
Sac. Giovanni Bosco.

Chapter 2

A Comprehensive Communication Plan

Zaida Navarrete & Juan Pablo Abreu SDB

For Don Bosco communication was a personal encounter and the transmission of values, and media were channels for passing on these messages. No Salesian house can dispense with this reality, and this is why Don Bosco saw communication as a priority field of the Salesian mission.

Faced with this truth of Don Bosco's work, it is a mistake not to have a plan that strengthens communications in an organisation managed by human beings who need to relate, transmit messages, ideas, thoughts, opinions and needs. This communication must be well managed if we want to be successful in all other services of the work. Without good communicative processes we cannot educate or evangelise.

The way in which the Salesians communicate, their way of being and acting, must be done in a systematic and methodical way, starting with an analysis of what and how they want to communicate and then planning for that. An inappropriate channel or wrong message on any platform can lead to a problem.

Umberto Eco speaks of the Salesian oratory as a communicative revolution. A place where there is a new way of being together, where everything communicates in the same direction. You cannot think about communication without a plan, with person-to-person communication at its core, through effective channels that achieve a communicative ecosystem.

A communications plan that only includes advertising, marketing and communications media, without giving importance to the person, will result in cold, robotic and ineffectual communication.

Social communication in a Salesian house must be thought through and given order: clear content, precise aims to be achieved, how they are to be achieved and over what time period.

The plan should not be a list of events and explanations of how an office functions, but should be based on the guidelines of the Salesian Social

Communication System (Animation, Formation, Information, Production, Youthful art and languages) and should assist in achieving the aims of the Overall Provincial Plan (OPP) and the local Educative and Pastoral Plan (EPP). The plan should have an annual budget within the overall budget of the work.

How do we draw one up?

In the first place you need to know the environment: what Salesian house? What goals are being pursued? Who are the audiences? Then set short and long-term objectives and select the appropriate strategies to achieve those objectives with achievable projects, with targeting tools aimed at harmony, based on constant feedback.

A serious plan should take both internal and external communication into account with basic criteria for managing the image.

The importance of a communication plan is so great in a work that it should be the tool that marks out the criteria, policies and strategies for managing the work's image, always in accordance with the educative and pastoral, youthful and popular mission of the Salesian institution.

A comprehensive communications plan should be strategic, and this way results in great benefits for carrying out pastoral work in a better way. The work will have greater capacity to carry out efficient management with sections of the public it is involved with, so that it can attend to them directly, ensuring that each individual who enters a Salesian work feels taken into account. and part of the mission processes.

What should the plan contain?

A comprehensive communications plan should include: communications training/formation for staff, information and the visibility of the mission, local and international best practice, publicity, public relations, religious marketing, client services, institutional image, internal and external communication, crisis communication.

The image is built up on the basis of what the Salesian house is in fact. Corporate behaviour, meaning the way those who represent the Salesian house behave, will become the image; the internal public are the most important ambassadors: Salesians, lay mission partners, parents, young people. Hence these are the first one to form, inform and pay attention to.

This is why it is essential to know Salesian values and develop the sense of belonging and involvement of each individual who is part of the Salesian work. This is essential, so each Salesian work can be a home that welcomes, just as Don Bosco's Oratory was (C. 40).

Given this idea it is important to highlight:

- Internal behaviour: what should be felt is an oratory atmosphere.
- Institutional behaviour: this will be the way society perceives the Salesian work and the way it relates with other bodies.

When drawing up a plan you should specify:

- Communication approaches most used in the work.
- Which of these are emerging and which are planned.
- Know the impact of these and how to empower them.

By studying these aspects you will achieve consistency among all the communicative aspects of the work.

There is nothing worse than a body or organisation that sends different messages to its audiences: verbal, written, visual, behavioural, without unity or direction to them. Confusion in communication causes distrust. No one trusts someone who changes their mind or personality in each situation. We must be the same in all scenarios and our values should be implicit in each communicative action.

To sum up: Communication is a priority field of the Salesian mission; it is acting with and like Don Bosco; to do so effectively in an up-to-date fashion it needs to be planned and professional, not just acting on whim.

A plan should be based on a study of what the work needs and should communicate in harmony with the Province's vision and mission (OPP). In every time and place, every medium, each project and communicative initiative should transmit the great Salesian mission of working for the poorest and most at risk young people, offering them and others who attend a Salesian work, in any role, the possibility of being educated and evangelised in the style of Don Bosco.

A Salesian work whose communications plan has aims that are far from the popular and youthful mission of educating and evangelising will not adequately achieve the kind of communication fostered by the Congregation.

Finally, no plan on its own can build up the desired communicative environment. The plan must be developed by personnel qualified in this area: communicators

The plan must be developed by personnel qualified in this area. Communicators, journalists, professionals in public relations. The communications efforts of a Salesian work cannot be left to an individual enthusiast or group without preparation in this matter.

Example of content for a communications plan

Communication strategy.

- Strategy of content: the message we want to transmit, which will be the basis of all our communication.
- Creative strategy, strategy of approach: How will we present the message?
- Media plan: Where, when and with what frequency will messages be passed on?
- The Social Media Plan (SMP) is part of the media plan that develops the performance of the brand in digital media and social networks.

Assigning the budget.

Assigning roles.

Crisis plan.

Chapter 3

Elements

of Institutional Communication

Jean Marc Marie SDB & Rastislav Hamracek SDB

We begin with two experiences that confreres can have and that highlight the theme of Institutional Communication.

Experience 1 - Fundraising

Collecting funds, fundraising, has become a necessary activity for SDBs. It was already the case for supporters, benefactors, and is strictly bound up with transparency in managing funds and the knowledge of the reasons for such support. **Fundraising is essentially carried out through communication.** This, as just described, is seen not only at the General Administration level, and not only at the level of the Provinces, but it directly touches on all local SDB communities. What type of communication is needed? And how is it bound up with the Salesian charism?

Experience 2 – Reputation and transparency

In an oratory in an African Province. The municipality had organised an occasion for Don Bosco. In recent decades we are aware, as was the case for this occasion for gathering funds, that all fundamentalist groups were excluded, and they had even included Catholics among them! When the leader was asked if people from the Catholic Church could come, his clear response was No, and he said: Catholics No, but you Salesians, Yes. This lets us see that **Salesian Catholic identity is a very specific and clear one.** The Salesian is a Catholic and a Salesian, and it is in this sense that we perceive the reputation and transparency of the Salesian in today's culture, by succeeding in making that specific dimension of his identity seen.

Therefore, the context of action in the digital era invites every representative of an institution, in our case **every Salesian**, to be consistent in what concerns his identity, mission and the way his identity is perceived by various groups of the public. This means that **being consistent** today is no longer an option for the Salesian, but is one of the elements he must ensure is seen by all those he meets

along the way. This invites him **to be attentive to the reputation** which comes with every action and that must be visible in all its transparency. We cannot act as if there were still something to hide in today's society **given the logic of data produced by every instrument** (Data), the huge quantity of which is accessible on the Internet (Big Data) and given the possibility of access that everyone can have (Open Data).

In everything he does (Mission), he must see that who he is can be seen (Identity).

Salesian Pastoral and Institutional Communication

The mission handed down to us by our beloved founder Don Bosco – including in the SC field – keeps in mind its ultimate purpose which is the salvation of the young (Const. 21).

Speaking of the SDB mission in the communications arena, **we think first of all of the various communications media with their content, in order to defend, sustain and give growth to the faith** of the young and Christian people (Const. 43). The project which is emblematic of this type of communication is the “**Letture cattolice**” (Catholic Readings) and so many books thought up, written and published by Don Bosco for the people and for his boys. DB “did” all this as the father and teacher of the young.

In order to continue and develop his work, his mission – always with a view to the salvation of the young – **DB became the founder of an institution**: from the Home which was the Oratory came Religious Congregations and he combined a lay Association with them = meaning he created the Salesian Family. These things were made possible by extensive communication which today we call **Institutional Communication (IC): presenting your work, making yourself known, involving other bodies in society, collaborating, ensuring credibility and consistency with your proper identity**. The emblematic project of this kind of communication is the “**Salesian Bulletin**”. DB “testified” to his identity with this.

Describing IC by looking at Don Bosco:

By looking at what DB did we can explain what IC is.

The work of the Oratory of St Francis de Sales (1841) developed and was communicated within the context of Turin and Italy through a variety of social relationships (with dioceses and the Church in Rome, with the King

relationships (with dioceses and the Church in Rome, with the King, Government, various Ministers and Ministries, newspapers, businesses and companies, other institutions, parents, benefactors, members of the Oratory and the Congregation).

DB's IC activities were thought through, directed and carried out primarily by him as founder/the one responsible for the institution (DB as "spokesman") and then also by members of the Oratory and the nascent Congregation when he delegated them, but also in spontaneous and informal ways.

DB highlighted the involvement of the young, involving them in such a way that they too were the representatives of the institution and he suggested that people speak well of them and support them.

For his Salesians he indicated the content and practical motivations for communication, used the language of the heart, spoke of "we/us", was brief, insisted on the primacy of the good of people. He had a clear idea about working with common norms in order to preserve the unity of the institution.

"If you want to do a lot of good for yourself and the college speak well of it always, looking for reasons to approve what is done and what the superiors do for the smooth running of the community." (Regulations for the Houses, 1877)

In order to realise his mission for the salvation of the young, DB always needed many people. He wanted to explain himself, present the Oratory and the Congregation, in order to involve people. He worked at having quality relationships to be well and widely known and so that the public image of his work would be suited to his identity. Don Bosco had a concrete knowledge of groups of people or institutions (his public).

He showed respect, responsibility and recognition; he presented what was of common interest and involved others' opinions. One of his principles was: Love, fear, respect for others is the way to be respected by everyone and to promote the good of the institution.

"...a lover of everything that redounds to the public moral and civil good" – as he writes to the City Vicar M.B.Cavour (13 March 1846) asking for his agreement and protection for his activities.

He took great care to dedicate himself to nurturing relationships and trust internally, with members of the institution.

"You have often asked me, my dear young boys, to write something for you about your companion Dominic Savio..." (1859, Life of Dominic Savio...)

For him, the superior was the one responsible for internal communication and also consistency between identity and the communications media used between Salesians and pupils.

“Strong, elegant, expensive paper for envelopes, letters, exercise books (...) are not appropriate to our poverty. But when you think of writing to important people, use paper appropriate to the dignity of the people you are writing to.”

(Deliberations, GC 1877)

He wisely realises that other than the articles and messages he communicated by appropriate means, other newspapers and journalists were writing about him and his institution. Always wanting to be at the forefront, DB not only used “historical media” such as books, letters, appeals, reminders, but new media too like photography, always with the clear notion of communicating his values and involving others in his mission...

The messages went through channel appropriate to his public and were seen to in terms of style, form. Media and ways of communicating were realistically created and employed.

“ Speak with them often, individually or together; see that they do not have too much to do, or if they lack clothing or books, or have some physical or moral concern ...”, “Let the pupils get to know you, and you should get to know them by spending all the time possible with them, offering whatever word of affection in their ear you know best as you see the need, bit by bit .”

(Confidential reminders to Rectors, 1863)

Don Bosco saw to relationships with journalists, offered information on events at the institution.

In the first six months of 1852 – while the Church of St Francis de Sales was being built and Don Bosco was organising the first Lottery – 14 articles about this building were published in L’Unità Cattolica.

DB also created his own medium – the Salesian Bulletin – to strengthen unity and activities and the spirit of the institution including among his public.

“(...) a monthly Bulletin which in time will be made public to provide details on things done or to be done so as to attain the end we have proposed for ourselves.” (September 1877)

In serious and crisis situations, he himself as superior sought to establish consistent communication of his values, offered precise information, but also asked for corrections “to honour the truth and for the benefit of poor young people.” He insisted on the primacy of the person and thus asked to create

people. He insisted on the primacy of the person and thus asked to cease publishing certain articles when “it seems we are already dealing with personalities”.

In L’Unità Cattolica DB on 29 May 1860 published one of his texts, a news item speaking about the searches at the Oratory and quoting the statement left behind personally for him by one of the policemen. “Now, this decree is based neither on the truth of the facts nor on a correct application of the laws” DB confirmed his duty “to protect the poor youngsters whom Providence has entrusted to him, with all the means allowed by the law”. (The charitable schools of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales in Turin - before the council of state, 1879)

In conclusion we note the facts: Don Bosco developed his own IC

- through posters,
- with his newspaper L’Amico della Gioventù The Friend of Youth (1848),
- in 565 circulars (appeals),
- with so many letters to various Offices/Civil and Ecclesiastical Authorities,
- by disclosing an incident (Breve ragguaglio... 1850; Rimembranza di... 1868),
- through his Reminders to Rectors (1863, 1875),
- by publishing the Constitutions and Regulations (1875, 1877) and GC Deliberations (1878, 1882, 1887),
- by telling his own story (1874, 1879),
- with photos (1961 – DB confessor, 1875 – DB with the Book of the Constitutions given to missionaries),
- through his very many articles in L’Unità Cattolica,
- with his own Bollettino Salesiano Salesian Bulletin (1877)
- and with other kinds of writings and photos.

“IC” in the Salesian Constitutions:

In Don Bosco we find an invitation to **openness to digital culture and cultures of the geographical areas we work in:**

Art. 7: Open to the cultural values of the lands in which we work, we try to understand them and make them our own, so as to incarnate in them the message of the gospel.

and also perceiving the value of analogue and digital communication for the Salesian mission: **Art. 43:** Our Founder **had an instinctive grasp of the value of** this means of mass education, which creates culture and spreads patterns of life; **he showed great originality in the apostolic undertakings** which he initiated to defend and sustain the faith of the people.

Why Salesian IC today?

The participatory system of society in the digital age with its horizontal approach, means that there is no person or structure / institution that can act on its own, like an island lost in the ocean.

Everyone represents an institution that is located alongside other institutions like his or her own, and also alongside other radically different structures in the way they are set up, in their values and characteristics.

We are all part of a network and a Church institution must be aware of the dialogue that must take place, including with people who are radically different. A network requires dialogue and collaboration so that everyone can interact.

Hence the Church as an institution has the duty to adopt clear language with everyone to make its identity understood, to establish a fair dialogue with all dialogue partners in order to be able to propose its message.

Presenting its identity, mission and service offered only in the Church's terminology – in an online world – just does not work. It needs to translate its mission into social terminology.

The institution must make people understand what it brings to society that is specific and new.

For us, this means showing that we are forming not only good Christians but especially upright citizens.

World Youth Days do not only bring Christians together, but they allow the country and its cultures to be known, its cultural patrimony to be discovered, its needs, and they also sell that country's image. This does not erase the Christian dimension, but emphasises the Christian and social benefits of the Church.

Institutional communication shows the true identity of the institution through what it does and what makes it possible for people to experience. Therefore there is a need for consistency between an institution's identity and what it does.

Institutional communication cannot present it in colours it does not have. It

cannot lie in what it says about the institution. It is not about speaking up to make itself look good without it being truly so.

Truth, harmony and consistency must exist in real and online matters. Even any small contradiction weakens the institution's credibility.

In the digital era there is a need to seek an authentic reputation in both the analogue and digital context. The Salesian is encouraged to be formed and to try to acquire enough knowledge in order to give form and effectiveness to the institutional dimension of his communication (interest in the elements that touch on IC to be applied to his communication). There is a need to acquire professionalism and competence in this dimension on a personal level for each Salesian, as well as at the level of the provinces.

Elements of IC for the Salesians of Don Bosco

Looking at Don Bosco in his dimension as an institutional communicator, given what we have inherited from his writings and his patrimony as a communicator, we can offer some applications – based on Don Bosco's experience – for Salesian Institutional Communication:

Elements of IC which must be specifically pursued by the Superior

with regard to the community, the EPC and the Salesian Family

- priority of the internal public,
- personal approach,
- involve the internal public in the mission,
- language of the heart with confreres,
- use “we” and respect the primacy of the good of people,
- responsibility for communication consistent with identity,
- principles of the preventive system are also valid rules for IC,
- respectful relationships with journalists,
- priority of truth and good where our primary public is concerned (those to whom our work is addressed, members of the community and the ECP),
- manage the institution's ‘voice’, using appropriate media,
- constant and continuous attention to the reputation of the community in the social context and digital space: what is being said about us,

- constant commitment and concrete applications at the level of direction to implement harmony between identity, image and mission of the community,
- willingness to ensure friendly relationships with those who create opinion in society,
- particular commitment to explaining the reasons and applications of decisions to the internal public,
- recreation times as opportunities for communicating values:
- each member as a representative of the institution,
- communicating values tied up with our educative mission,
- forming laity to act together (Community, ECP) and having the same mission before the secondary public (anyone outside the ECP and those for whom we work)

Elements of IC to be pursued by each community member

together with the superiors, before the ECP and other public (Stakeholders and others, emphasis on Media Education),

- creating channels appropriate to the public, also ensuring their correct form,
- ongoing listening to the social context,
- researching and promoting common interests with the social context,
- building respectful relationships,
- responsibility and recognition,
- charity, prudence and kindness even in difficult situations,
- primacy of the person,

Elements of IC for the ECP/Salesian Family (Rector-Salesian-ECP):

- Consistency, shared responsibility and awareness of what we represent
- Transparency and sharing, horizontal, participative approach
- IC that goes beyond official communication, the entire ECP also communicates unofficially

“We will call ourselves Salesians.”

Chapter 4

The Inevitable Digital Transformation

Hilario Seo SDB

Introduction

In the Salesian communities around the world, during the evening prayer, the necrology is read to remind us of the death anniversary of the confreres. However, as you know the Salesian necrology was published in 2002 and we are looking forward to the updated edition. As a solution to this problem, the sdb.org team has been offering updated monthly PDF files, downloadable from the site, since October 2018.

Some members in the Department expressed that for those who prepare the list for the benefit of the community, such a procedure is outdated and cumbersome as the data becomes obsolete due to frequent deaths. Since each community has its own way of reading the necrology a uniform file or book may look uncreative. Instead, for the vantage of time and effort a list generated on the website according to date, province, country and region which is searchable on mobile devices would be more meaningful and practical.

Certainly it is an innovative practice in modern times: the data of the deceased confreres all over the Salesian world being organized and searched according to the needs of a local community. Digital technology can be adapted to suit our needs.

This is one of the many examples of the need for the Congregation to engage in Digital Transformation. Other areas of Salesian life and works can profit from the possibilities offered by newer digital technology starting from inter-community communication, province, regional and world level meetings, including an event like the General Chapter.

Approach to Digital Transformation

Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Twin, Quantum Computer, Interactive Platform, Immersive Experiences, Block Chain, Cyber Security - these are the latest trends in the field of information and communication

technology (ICT). Indeed, as people become accustomed to them, the technology expressed by each keyword becomes an unconscious part of modern daily lives with the speed expected to get even faster.

However, not only are new keywords emerging in digital technology, but it is also now common for well-known technologies to merge with each other. Many of the keywords mentioned above appeared some years ago or a few decades back, including similar concepts as Artificial Intelligence back in the ancient times of Greece (Talos). The difference is that, by stabilizing internet culture, and now that ITC has begun to integrate closely with human life, technologies related to the digital are pouring out with incredible speed, directly affecting human life.

Daily life in modern society is constantly changing. Even communication technology continues to be updated. All these changes or updates also have a profound impact on Salesian life and activities. In particular, the changes, or rather the conversion of the Churches and Institutes trying to locate themselves on the periphery, become very important and are often thought to be a beginning and end in themselves.

Digital Disruption

In today's world, where change has entered the field of everyday life, 'change' is not such a 'cool' term. Instead, a new concept called 'disruption' (Digital disruption is an effect that changes the fundamental expectations and behaviors in a culture, market, industry or process that is caused by, or expressed through, digital capabilities, channels or assets) is enveloping all of society and the Congregation too.

The dictionary definition of 'disrupt' is 'to cause disorder'. This word appears quite often in the writings of social phenomena, especially digital trends such as ICT technology. One can say that 'disruption' has become a common term in many areas of life today, the business community included.¹

An Essential Strategy for the Congregation

There is also the term 'digital transformation'. It refers to re-imagining, transforming and applying the digital age where individuals and groups are concerned. Today's digital influence is bringing digital transformation to everything as one of the main priorities. One study found that 96% of commercial companies say that 'digital transformation is important' and 88%

said it is ‘pushing digital transformation’. 85% said, ‘If you do not want to lag behind in your future competition, you will have to make significant progress in digital transformation within two years.’²

The Church and Religious Congregations are no exceptions to this. In particular, the Salesian Congregation, whose primary beneficiaries are the young, digital natives, needs digital transformation more desperately than any other ecclesial organization.

From its foundation in Valdocco until today, our Congregation has thought and acted in ‘analogue’ terms. This is not a mistake, rather it is very natural. However, the reality and future of the Congregation cannot remain analog, because a generation called Digital Native has already entered the life of our Society and certainly it will be they who must assume responsibility for the imminent future of the Congregation. Every day we remember in prayer we recall the growth of this generation of digital natives. Therefore, the maximum guarantee for the future depends on success in the digitalization of the behavior and the integral quality of the life of the Congregation.

Embracing Digital Transformation

So, how do we approach this urgent and desperately needed digital transformation?

According to evolutionary biology, some species often learn and apply the behavior of other successful species in order to overcome environmental changes and evolve in a stable manner. And this is because analyzing and imitating previous cases can be effective in minimizing the risk of attempting completely new approaches.

The same applies to the digital transformation of our Society. It is necessary to look at how advanced organizations or companies in the society in general are transforming themselves in order to approach the digital age and, on the basis of this indirect experience, we must find a path to adapt the Congregation to the circumstances of the digital era.

To make changes in any way, inevitably we have to think about the problem of costs, both material and personal. So it is necessary to work in a ‘smart’ way. In fact, there are lost techniques that leave no trace, though perhaps they once attracted much attention. But it is also true that there are techniques that are perfected day after day and approach the application phase for human life. In our

case, for the digital transformation of the Congregation, it is important to critically evaluate the success or failure of others who have tried before us and thus carefully select the path considering of our specific situation, through knowledge acquired.

From the point of view of common sense, digital transformation is not easy to do when: (1) the organization is huge, (2) it has a long history and (3) it is far from technology. But if you look at the success stories of some companies, like Disney, MacDonald and Marriott, you can see that these considerations are not always true. There is a ‘keyword for the success of digital transformation’ commonly applied regardless of the size of the organization or the main activity. This is summarized as ‘systematic change centred on people (beneficiaries – consumer).’

Putting the ‘Beneficiary’ at the Centre

In our pastoral activities, innovating the encounter experience with young people and raising their level of satisfaction is the goal of the Congregation for achieving digital transformation.

The young people we meet daily are digital natives. When we encounter young people, if we are not familiar with their digital lifestyle and language, our encounter will be superficial and we will not be able to effectively accompany the journey of salvation. What is absolutely necessary for us is to resonate with youth’s ‘code’ to deepen the experience of the encounter and to increase the spiritual satisfaction of young people.

To this end, communities and confreres should become familiar with digital technologies and try to apply digital possibilities to their lives. This effort is called digital transformation. There are two different aspects in this process: that of the community as an institution and the Salesian confreres as individuals.

First as the community, it is necessary to increase the effort to prepare a flexible response to providing a personalized service through a systematic platform, improving connectivity and integrating the service that provides young people with convenient access.

Technology Integration

Communicative Information Technology (ICT) allows a faster and more systematic identification of individuals’ tastes and the provision of personalized services. For example, McDonald recently launched an Interactive kiosk that

For example, McDonald's recently launched an app that allows customers to order and customize their favorite burgers.

A 125-year-old company, McCormick & Company, launched an online platform "FlavorPrint", a sort of Netflix in the food sector, a few years ago. When consumers solve 20 quizzes on their eating habits and tastes, using this data, the company provides consumers the right recipes and recommended menu.

Disney World has invested billions of dollars to create a platform called MyMagic+, integrating websites, mobile applications (apps) and bracelets into its services. They track and analyze consumer behavior and provide personalized services to customers in real time from the booking stage onward. The bracelet distributed to customers is equipped with the following functions: Hotel Key, Disney World Entrance Ticket, Digital Wallet. Special events are offered to customers who celebrate their birthday. When a customer is waiting for the Rides and Attractions, a Mickey Mouse is sent to the place to entertain the client or to induce other rides where there is a relatively short waiting line. According to a survey conducted by Disney World itself, 90% of users of this bracelet responded 'very satisfied'.

These stories of technology integration and commercial success can be applied directly to our digital technological area, in our different presences and activities where a large number of young people meet everyday. Take for example the Salesian Day on a World Youth Day.

The Provincial "Leads" and the Core Animators "Push"

Today, the significance of digitization has already surpassed the ambiguous phase of defining objectives such as 'satisfying those we are sent to' or 'increasing pastoral ministry'. In other words, it is a step to establish and implement a strategy that brings technology-related investment.

To follow this trend, the provincial superior needs to guide the process of digital transformation. In fact, according to MIT Sloan Management Review, '41% of companies that are successful in the digital transformation process are leading by the CEO level, while only 16% are successful of those where the CIO (Chief Information Officer) or CDO (Chief Digital Officer) are leading the process.'³

If we apply this research to our situation, it would mean that the Provincial would need a strong awareness of the need for digital transformation, convincing the confreres and investment of material and personnel resources.

The process for the Provincial should guide the process of digital transformation

One reason why the Provincial should guide the process of digital transformation is because it requires the determination at provincial level in various aspects such as guaranteeing financial resources, training necessary for adapting to changes, change of organizational culture, change of mentality of confreres and collaborators, research and distribution of resources.

The practical implementation of digital transformation within the Province is definitely dependent on people. It is absolutely necessary to cooperate with the responsible confreres who animate the province life in different sectors in order to stress the digital transformation needed and to encourage the active participation of the confreres. Because 'the digital environment is characteristic of the contemporary world. Broad swathes of humanity are immersed in it in an ordinary and continuous manner. It is no longer merely a question of 'using' instruments of communication, but of living in a highly digitalized culture that has had a profound impact on ideas of time and space, on our self-understanding, our understanding of others and the world, and our ability to communicate, learn, be informed and enter into relationship with others. An approach to reality that privileges images over listening and reading has influenced the way people learn and the development of their critical sense.' (Christus vivit 86)

In addition to investing in digital technology itself, it is also important to invest in the promotion of related abilities at provincial and community levels.

The problem lies in the absolute lack of personnel with the right mentality and skills on the digital world in the Congregation. In reality, this problem could be considered one of the main obstacles to our digital transformation. To solve them it is imperative, first of all, to systematically educate confreres who are dedicated to the field. Disney, before launching the Magic Plus Service had also trained more than 70,000 employees to have the necessary awareness and minimum skills. We can see that more and more companies are pursuing a digital transformation strategy focused on organizational training and personnel training.

Integration and Compatibility

Strengthening digital capacity within the Congregation needs to be integrated with all pastoral sectors. This allows a timely response in a social environment which is rapidly evolving. In fact, digital experts say: "It is important to organize systematic digital models and to create an integrated and interactive range of functionalities in every detail, more than to have the highest level of social media apps and tools." It is difficult to achieve efficiency even if an institution

media apps and tools. It is difficult to achieve efficiency even if an institution has implemented digital transformation, unless there are procedures for accessing existing resources or the necessary data through the process integrated and compatible.

Another important aspect we have to consider in digital transformation is security and privacy. It is true that information about people or the service offered, as it is more actively used by the different individuals or groups, and when data begins to accumulate, involves the risk of security incidents such as privacy violations. This is unavoidable for this reason, block chain technology should be considered in the early planning stages to improve security and develop a model which can guarantee the appropriate level of the access to sensitive information.

First Easy and Possible Steps

It is very difficult to transform all life related to the Congregation and the Province into a single effort or period of time. From the moment planning starts, technical skills in the digital field and a deep understanding of Salesian life are needed, as well as the conversion of analogue resources currently in our archives into digital: it is also a huge task that requires a lot of time and money.

Furthermore, it will be more difficult to convince the confreres who are familiar with their analog life to understand and participate in the process of digital transformation. So we have to find a prudent solution that progresses gradually, depending on the nature and level of each subject that needs to be digitalized.

Fortunately that there are various possibilities at our disposal that can help us to easily start our digital transformation.

There are international organizations that help to improve the ICT status of NPOs (Non Profit Organizations) like ours in almost all countries,⁴ while others offer excellent solutions freely, like Greenstone which helps to easily create digital libraries.

The G-Suite for NPOs, provided by Google, is a great tool to try as a first step toward the digital transformation of the Province and the Congregation.⁵ This solution was developed originally for commercial purposes and already used by notable international companies, such as Uber, and many in the category of Fortune 500. In particular G Suite for Education is already in use freely by more than 100 million users, in universities and schools in all part of the world.

In addition to G Suite, there is also Office 365, provided for NPOs by Microsoft. The advantage of this solution will be the digital space that is available up to 1TB to the single users, while G Suite offers 30 GB. However, the number of user account is limited, and with the exception of email and MS Office, the applications available are limited.

Also Facebook offers similar solution for the NPO, called Workplace. It's designed to help teams communicate, share, and make decisions together in a secure and private space online.

Which one is more appropriate depends on the real situation of the Province or community and the main objective of digital transformation.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the authenticity of the digital transformation that produces an effect depends on how it is integrated and how much it will be compatible within the system. The synergy of digital transformation will arise when specific pastoral activities and archived resources are integrated and compatible.

There are many works in which digital transformation has already taken place or is under way, especially in the Salesian education field. If the digital environment already built into these individual works or activities are integrated, in an open framework, with the digital reality of the province, then in turn, if we can integrate all these realities spread throughout the larger framework of the Salesian world to a great framework, then a truly Salesian digital platform will no longer be a dream.

Chapter 5

Elementary Technological Skills

Samuel Job SDB

The Need for Technology Skills

In some of our contexts, it is actually surprising to discover that many educators lack the basic tools for navigating their way through the internet. Also, when we look at the traditional classroom setting, there are not enough technology tools there. Take computers, for instance. The skills that we take for granted to be prevalent among many teachers, especially in the 21st century, might actually be absent. These are actually very important skills for teachers to have because their students will need them to survive in the world of work.

A major reason for this need also stems from the fact that, as a global society, we are shifting from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy and the rising generation, brought up largely surrounded by technology, especially the internet, is very differently motivated to learn. We have to find, as educators, their proper motivation, in order to have a successful teaching experience.

Skill Requirements

In today's ideal modern classroom, and indeed in society as a whole, there are a variety of tools that could be used to make a difference in the way teaching is approached.

For students

In reconceptualising education that is more suited to present and future challenges of skills acquisition, Dr. Tony Wagner has identified what he calls a "global achievement gap," which has to be bridged so that what is obtainable today in the best schools and what students need to survive in a technology-based society can be achieved.⁶ He identified seven survival skills for careers, college and citizenship, which would be well suited to young Salesians who may well be referred to as Digital Natives. These include:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability

- Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analysing information

Wagner points out that in today's digital age, the "Net generation" is, among other things, accustomed to instant gratification and use of the web for extending friendships, and interest-driven, self-directed learning; and they are constantly connected, creating and multitasking in a multimedia world – everywhere except in school. In order to motivate and teach this generation, the school system must be reinvented to be accountable for what matters most. That means to do the work – teaching, learning, and assessing – in new ways."⁷

For teachers

In today's predominantly digital world, it is no longer acceptable for educators to be technology illiterate. Before speaking of technical skills however, there is need for a certain "professional disposition". These include

- Patience
- Adaptability
- Imagination
- Ability to work in a team
- Risk-taking
- Constant learning
- Communication
- Mentoring
- Leadership

These dispositions are necessary because they facilitate learning and convey a positive image of the educative profession.

Regarding the more practical technology skills, there is need for constant updating, because as computer and associated technologies continue to evolve, so must educators continue to strive for excellence in their work. The suggestions below are by no means exhaustive but do provide a glimpse into the very complex world of media and technology.

Searching the web⁸

In a more advanced learning environment, this may seem quite rudimentary and

elementary. It cannot be taken for granted that teachers do have a basic knowledge of how to search the web for useful information, using all the tools available for doing so. It is however necessary for them to know because it is the same skills they will need to pass on to their students.

Navigating a Website

While web navigation skills may seem like a piece of cake for many of you, some people do not know how to make their way through a website. Every teacher needs this basic skill, because before you know it, all classrooms will be paperless, which means the way parents and students will get their information will be online. Microsoft Office and Google Docs

Microsoft Office is still very much a vital tool. Knowing how to navigate your way through Word, Excel, and Outlook may seem like a thing of the past, but these programs are still very much used in today's classrooms (and in corporate offices!). PowerPoint presentations are also still used in classrooms although in many parts of Africa it is still a luxury reserved for private institutions because of challenges linked to power and the provision of computer labs. Google Docs is also widely used since it is internet based. It enables teachers and students to create, edit and share and store files with others users. Much like Microsoft office, users can create documents, spreadsheets, presentations and such, but with the added benefit of the cloud so that they are store and share everything.

Blogging

For the teachers that prefer to collaborate off-camera, blogging is another important tech skill to have. Blogging allows users to share their thoughts and ideas in an online format without having to visually see anybody. It's quite easy to learn, and teachers can create a free website if they want to blog about their lessons or connect to other teachers. Classroom websites are also becoming increasingly popular.

Social Media

Online networking is now becoming part of the job if you want to keep up with the times and be relevant to students and parents. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest are widely used among students and parents. Social media expands communication not only with your students and their parents, but with your fellow educators and administrators. It gives you access to

knowledge that you may have not had before.⁹ In an educational setting, social media provides students with the ability to get more useful information, to connect with learning groups and other educational systems that make education convenient. Social network tools afford students and institutions with multiple opportunities to improve learning methods.¹⁰

Video Conferencing and Sharing

Individuals these days seem to be more visual than in the past. This may be because of all the new technology that is at our fingertips. With that said, video learning is among the top skills that today's educators need to have. Teachers must know how to create a video and share it. Many teachers are now posting their lessons on YouTube, while others are using video conferencing to connect with other classrooms from across the globe. Video teaching and learning is gaining so much momentum that all teachers must have this skill if they want to keep up with the times.

Educators Online

Technology allows educators to collaborate with their fellow colleagues online. Educators can use several tech tools to share and receive creative ideas that can help them in the classroom. They can visit a teacher's blog to connect, or connect with educators via social media or online. Technology can make a teacher's job much easier when they have access to a few quick tools with which they can collaborate with others.

Digital Citizenship

Digital citizenship is a real term that is extremely important in this new digital world that we live in. Educators need to be prepared to serve as a model on establishing norms in the digital age. There is no doubt that this term came out of a world of cyberbullying, and educators need to understand, as well as teach, their students the skills to be successful and safe in this informational age. Cyberspace is a place where students and teachers alike participate and use technologies. While participating in this digital world, teachers need to feel, as well as provide, their students with a sense of comfort and ease.

Online Courses

These are also a very important. They have literally changed the way formal education is being carried out. With current challenges facing traditional

colleges and universities, such as higher tuition, budget cuts and shortage of relevant courses, online education offer an attractive alternative. With more and more students enrolling in various courses full time or as a partial requirement for the degree, the initial skepticism that surrounded online courses has gradually faded in the face of its proven effectiveness.

Different degrees of qualification can be obtained from several categories such as Art and Design, Business and Management, Computers and Technology, Criminal Justice and Legal, Education and Teaching, Liberal Art and Humanities, Nursing and Healthcare, Psychology and Counselings, Science and Engineering, Trades and Careers among others.

Apart from renowned Universities that give the opportunity to register for these courses on their portals, there are also several popular platforms that offer certificate courses for free or at very affordable rates. These include Udemy, edX, Open University, Google Digital skills for Africa, etc.

Media Abuse

Unlike several years ago when the only way to access the internet was through a laptop or desktop computer, nowadays, almost anyone with a cellphone can do the same. Most of payments, communications, social medias, news, registrations are online and there are thousands of social media websites that connect people together. There are many social media sites and mobile phones that have become even more important for handling social media communication than phone calls. Users submit billions of photos and comments on a daily basis. As we have seen, several good aspects of applying media to daily life, we should also be aware of some threats that should be put into consideration and lead to a more balanced approach.

The Internet can be misused in spreading misinformation, insulting, forgery, fraud, threatening, leaking protected information or fraudulent email messages. This is all grouped under "Cyber Crimes". As Pope Francis elaborated in the 52nd World communication day message,¹¹ fake news aims at misinforming with the aim of manipulating and deceiving the reader. Many at times, this is done for the benefit of financial gain, political manipulation or “drawing traffic”.

Other misuse of social media can happen in the form of Menace, harassment, cyberbullying, Child pornography, Sexual harassment and stalking, Defamation, Copyright infringements.

Conclusion

Wrong use of media is now considered a crime in some areas. One can be arrested for creating fake news. Likewise, making or posting derogatory remarks or threatening people with violence online can amount to criminal defamation which is a criminal offence. Download or distributing pirated music and videos, or copyright material without permission or authority of the copyright holder is illegal, and thus amount to an offence. In fact, these days there are many offences that come with a particular conviction. For example, a first-time convicted of child pornography could result in 15-20 years in prison plus extended time in supervised sex offender release programs. Being charged with possession of child pornography will also typically require a defendant to be registered in a sex offender database.

It is widely gesticulated that media sector needs to be strongly regulated to curb these excesses and threats that are prone to occur with its use. Many commentators are calling for government intervention to deal with problems like fake news, hate speech, and even children's apparent addiction to their smartphones. Others have argued that the government should be curbing the power of the global media monopolies, and working to support public, non-profit alternatives.¹²

However, there is also a strong conviction that most of these threats can be mitigated or surpassed generally through a well-adapted education to media. This aims at basically training the user in auto-regulation and making the right choices. In our congregation, it will be opportune to compile and make use of the many available materials that have been developed and tested in different regions over the years.

Chapter 6

Educating & Evangelising the Young in a Digital World

Pakkam Harris SDB & Joaquim Fernandes SDB

Understanding the Scenario

Digital media and social networks have brought about a new world order in which more people are leaving their physical world and entering into the virtual one. Billions of people log on everyday to the digital world and stay there for a greater part of their day. The world has become digitised and this digital world is the most powerful global workforce, re-defining our culture. Advanced web and mobile technologies have facilitated this two-way communication and as a result millions of people interact constantly and stay connected online. Pope Benedict, in his message for World Communication Day in 2013, states that Social Networks can become portals of truth and faith, and offer new spaces for evangelization.¹³

For the young people of today, the digital environment is part and parcel of their daily experience, and digital devices have become the fabric of their lives. Incredible opportunities are open to this generation, and we are all part of it. Pope Francis, says that the digital world can be an environment rich in humanity; a network not of wires but of people.¹⁴ Hence it is the need of the hour to understand the digital scenario and use it as the apt platform to share our faith and educate young people.

The prophetic words of Paul VI, “The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilise these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect” (Evangeli Nuntiandi),¹⁵ makes us realise that it is mandatory that we use these tools and skills to evangelise and educate people in this digital world. The increased availability of the new technologies demands greater responsibility on the part of those called to proclaim the Word, and also requires they become more focused, efficient and compelling in their efforts.¹⁶

Are we ready for Digital Inculturation?

According to Prensky,¹⁷ Digital natives (Younger generation) process

information quickly, enjoy multi-tasking and gaming, while digital immigrants (Older generation) process information slowly, working on one thing at a time and do not appreciate less serious approaches to learning. This divide is very much seen in the Church and in our Salesian Congregation too, and is indeed a problem to be addressed. Prensky in fact claims that the digital native is becoming the dominant global demographic, and the digital immigrant is in decline. To evangelise the digital culture, where our young people are actively present, we need to attune, form and educate our Salesians who are still to a good extent digital immigrants, with the skills appropriate to being active digital citizens.

This digital culture of innovation has to be embraced, and new technologies need to be adapted. We need to prepare digital missionaries who will reach out all over the world, use the digital tools and speak in a style that will be accessible to a generation accustomed to “15 second commercials and 140 character texts”, with content that allows them to respond and comment. A new mindset and great awareness towards these vast horizons becomes indispensable for every Salesian.

Characteristics of Digital Media

The world today is going digital and we need to perceive the advantages and unique features that this technology provides. Digital Media, in general, are ubiquitous, highly interactive, dynamic, informal, flexible, adaptable, egalitarian, encyclopaedic, connective and asynchronous.¹⁸ They are also non-linear, multi-medial, hyper-textual, portable and can be preserved, duplicated and are replete with electronic technology. They can create relationships between people, real relationships, even at a distance. Many young men and women today communicate regularly with peers crossing geographical, cultural, and even language frontiers. Digital media give universal access to information and communication, and offer immense resources.

Necessary Attitudes

“To proclaim the Gospel through the new media means not only to insert expressly religious content into different media platforms, but also to witness consistently, in one’s own digital profile and in the way one communicates choices, preferences and judgements that are fully consistent with the Gospel, even when it is not spoken of specifically”.¹⁹ Our Salesian Identity on the World

Wide Web speaks of who we are and all our communication should reflect that. Hence the type of attitudes, language, style, communication that we employ on the digital world has to reflect that.

Hence the Salesian presence, engagement and accompaniment in this digital scenario becomes very much mandatory if we need to meet and respond to the needs of youth. We need to adapt to new ways of communicating, with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology to set sail on the digital sea, with the right attitudes of a digital missionary and educator. The biggest communication shift has to take place, wherein we need to go to them, dive right into their territories and meeting places and communicate and share there. Today, the evangelization mission of the Church is not about crossing boundaries, but about reaching people and getting connected at the touch of your finger. As Erik Qualman has affirmed, “We don’t have a choice as to whether we do social media, the question is how well you do it”.²⁰ Professor John Drane in his book the McDonaldization of the Church, addresses the Church’s tendency toward pre-packaged spirituality, stating that people look out for two things – to be valued and to belong.²¹ This need to belong has spurred a hyper rise of users on social media.

Our style of educating and evangelising is not proselyting, but of humanising the digital scenario with the values of the gospel. To educate young people and take Jesus and our faith online, we need to impact them with videos, images, music and sound, the language that can have a great impact. Don Bosco’s interventions were based on a strong belief in love, reason and faith, and he aimed at the spiritual welfare and the salvation of the young, and their all-round well-being.²² For us Salesians, education and evangelisation go hand in hand, and in one way to educate is to evangelise. This choice became the criterion for his work of evangelisation for their complete liberation.²³ The time is ripe now, when we need to launch “Online Salesian missionaries” who are qualified and mature to humanise, educate and evangelise the digital world. Passion, prudence, smartness and creativity are also very much necessary to understand what is needed and what sells well. Right media strategies have to be developed to creatively, effectively and consistently strengthen our ministry online.

Educating and Evangelising in the Digital Environment?

This digital arena can make an enormously valuable contribution to human life. It can foster prosperity and peace, intellectual and aesthetic growth, mutual

understanding among peoples and nations on a global scale.²⁴ The Catholic Church, along with other religious bodies, should have a visible, active presence on the Internet and be a partner in the public dialogue about its development.²⁵ Ever since the internet first became available, the Church has always sought to promote its use in the service of the encounter between persons, and of solidarity among all.²⁶

For the Salesians of Don Bosco, the digital world is an opportunity to be present, to spread the values of the Salesian charism and institution, to make contact with many people, especially the young people and the educators who populate the social networks. Through them we can be multipliers of the message and mission of Don Bosco. Today good ideas and personal and institutional values can reach around the world with a click. Of course it's not automatic matter, it must be presented with current languages, at appropriate times and appropriate modality and technology.

Every Salesian has to become a digital missionary, plunging himself in with the right attitudes, using these digital tools, platforms and resources creatively and prudently to carry forward enthusiastically the command of Jesus. He needs to share his message to the unreached and unknown, so that all can come to know and grow in the knowledge of Christ. The real challenge is not only how we should use the new technologies to evangelise but also how we can be an authentic evangelising presence through our personal experience of God in the new world that has been brought into being by these technologies.

Engaging the Young Effectively

Active Digital Presence:

We need to be actively present on Social Networks, both at the personal level and at the institutional level, because these platforms are beneficial to the mission of the Church and for our educational and pastoral goals. Billions of users connect every day and the audience is large, global, and covers all demographics. It can be an effective platform to share information, and communicate one's life, faith experience and personality. If a family uses the Net to be more connected, to then meet at table and look into each other's eyes, then it is a resource. If a Church community coordinates its activity through the network, and then celebrates the Eucharist together, then it is a resource. If the Net becomes an opportunity to share stories and experiences of beauty or suffering that are physically distant from us, in order to pray together and

together seek out the good to rediscover what unites us, then it is a resource. Through our digital presence our social pages can become a platform for catechesis, building community, and encouraging Catholic identity.²⁷

Clear Strategy & Teamwork

We need to have a strategy and establish a team that can effectively educate and evangelise, offering assistance, promoting useful content, answering questions, engaging in debates, discussions and dialogues that are facilitated by social media and that invite direct, personal and timely responses of a type that are not so easily achieved by centralised institutions. We need to have a social media marketing plan with brand, professionalism, voice, authenticity, and trustworthiness. When there is no follow up, we become merely a mediocre and lukewarm presence.

Guidance & Directions

We need to offer guidance on the online resources available in the digital world. There are so many official websites providing the Church's teachings and news, theological studies and spiritual reflections, pastoral care and faith activities. Most of these websites are user-friendly, accessible through various digital applications and followed on numerous social media, conveniently and effectively helping the faithful to encounter the Truth of God.

Relevant content

We need to provide relevant and interesting digital content, pastoral resources that can be a great help for the young people to live their vocations in secular environments, because they are bombarded by a 24/7 non-stop cycle of all sorts of information. We need to speak out and feed resources that are dynamic, searchable and easily accessible. When young people are googling on the internet, or getting live web feeds of faith relevant information, or opening to comments about this topic, they can be better guided when we offer relevant content to them.

Media-sharing Platform

We need to offer a media-sharing platform where all our content audio, video can be uploaded and shared, along with podcasts and photos, and invite our audience to share their resources as well. Our online content, be it in blogs, websites or YouTube channels, allows online users to discover truth, comment, then share it with their circle of influence.

Online Mentoring & Counselling

Online Mentoring & Counselling

We need to provide online mentoring and counselling so that many young people can be helped. Many young people look out for help, and they look out for answers and support in search engines. We need to make ourselves available, and post our content with apt hash tags so that young people may identify and find us easily.

Video Selfies

Salesians can also offer innumerable insights and share relevant content as short video clips that can be uploaded in the media-sharing platform. It can be on themes concerning faith, salesian charism, values, culture, ecology, justice, ethics etc. Even videos concerning themes of entertainment and leisure such as art, music, dance, sports, nature, singing and culture can also be appropriate.

Live Engagement

Great good can be done when we offer live videos, engagement for our followers online. There are so many social media pages and sites that meaningfully and interestingly engage people online. The trend of 'going live', 'live streaming' is getting popular and can reach out to countless audiences, breaking all barriers of time and place. This can sustain followers and solicit good real time online participation and collaboration, which can be very easily achieved today with simple technology.

Post Stories

we need to consistently post stories crafted with deeper content that can potentially represent our brand. Each Social Media platform offers its own format of story-telling. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have emerged as the top platforms for visual marketing, and audiences are responding more than ever. With the launch of long-form, vertical videos on IGTV from Instagram and continued new options for YouTube Creators, video is evolving fast. On the other hand savvy marketers with vested interests aggressively post their stories to grab the attention of the users.

Discussion Forums

We need to engage in discussion forums to discuss opinions, share information, ask questions, and search for answers. Posting to discussion forums is one way to offer the relevant answers online. It would be a big dream if we are able to realise a forum only for our young people wherein they can find ample space to express themselves and find answers and solutions for all that they look for to grow in their faith and in their life.

grow in their faith and in their life.

Cast your Nets

Digital media is no doubt a vast ocean, and we need to cast the nets with the right attitude, for it is sure to give a good yield. It is also a great boon for mankind and should be viewed and used also as a great tool for human development. Though on one hand digital media can divide and distract, it can also unite and sustain, promote and transform and that is sufficient reason for us to be enthusiastic in using them.

While digital media offer innumerable benefits, we need to be very attentive to the risks involved. Though there are many benefits, its improper use can do much harm, and it is a matter of our choice. The Church's commitment to the dignity of the human person and her long tradition of moral wisdom makes the choice clear.²⁸

We need not conclude that we need to always occupy a space in the online media and substitute the real for the virtual. At times we see that the truths are transmitted only partially, there is technological deception, manipulation to get to a greater audience, truth and human dignity not respected. Evil can mislead and becloud the young very easily in the digital world, and it is our duty and responsibility to take care of them as online shepherds and guide them. It is the need of the hour that we go out as digital missionaries to meet that great part of humanity who are there online and evangelise and educate the young, keeping in mind the realities, challenges and opportunities presented by digital media and respond to the signs of the time.

Chapter 7

Information: Quality and Diversity

Mercedes Baxzos & José Luis Muñoz SDB

The information context offers us some unprecedented features: hyper-connection, immediacy, content transference, homogeneity of signs and virtuality as space for life. They have all resulted in a paradigmatic change both in the quality and diversity of information, and in its form, as people communicate and gain access to it. This has generated a true technological revolution that blurs the boundaries between the real and the virtual, where the web is no longer “an instrument, but an ‘environment’ in which we live.”²⁹

The first description of the area of information in the Salesian System of Social Communication says that “Salesian information fosters a sense of belonging and communion, education and evangelisation of youth, creating awareness among and mobilising people for Don Bosco’s mission; it also presents an adequate image of the Congregation.”³⁰

This statement could be split into several questions that challenge our ways of managing information, whether it be to evaluate, diagnose or envision new ways of doing things and living; the various communication spaces in which we live and through which our messages circulate.

We refer to management, because although most of the time we are emitting, receiving, interpreting, producing, sharing messages unconsciously, in institutional terms we cannot allow ourselves to unintentionally develop the messages we produce through the various media and mediations³¹ which spell out their meaning.

In fact, when we think about the elaboration and production of information, we recognise that they are part of a scenario that is profoundly altered not only by the ways in which it is done, but also by our ways of living, experiencing things and of producing messages.

This situation is both a challenge and an opportunity, because as communicators, we have complained for years about certain representations of communication associated with who writes the news, who manages the technologies, who lies

associated with who writes the news, who manages the technologies, who lies behind a web site. But we now we see our life profoundly changed with the arrival of different technologies that have served to amplify our own voice, our feelings, opinions, life.

In times past we spoke about the objectivity of information, but knowing how we are subject to a culture we are called to inhabit, intervene in and modify, that old claim no longer works and we see this from the emergence of subjects (individuals) in constant redefinition from representations built up on the very ground we tread; fake news, the lack of checking of sources given the need for instant publication, among other things.

The experience we have as adult Salesian religious and laity in these areas is a bit like foreigners who fear the unknown, ignoring some codes while needing to be literate in others (in general young people are in the same situation). Therefore this presents itself as a privileged space for encounter as we listen to them.

Since the development of social networks, we already do not have audiences where we send out one message for many people, but many of us are involved in circulating content. Communication has left its unidirectional approach behind and has developed a dialogue model, the result of a greater demand for participation and facilities for accessing technologies. Information produced in networks is a collective construction and its result is forever unfinished. The fluidity that blurs the boundaries between the real and the virtual, private and public, shifts us away from the possibility of thinking in terms of rigid communications systems through which to transmit and process information and allows us to think of nodes of meaning that allow us to build an account through which to share the experience of faith and what it means to live the gospel as Don Bosco did.

These life experiences, proposals, aesthetic, communicational and axiological models come together in a dynamic and living communicative ecosystem which we can call “Salesian culture”.

The reality that challenges us is the one that brings us together and we need to be attentive to the changing social dynamics and make a historical discernment to make a journey full of searching in order to find the ways (and not the recipes) by which the characteristics of Salesian information can accompany the signs of the times and the unfolding of our call to be signs and bearers of the love of God

for young people, especially those who are poor.³² The information we produce to bring our message closer is one more message among others, but it is not just any old message – it is the Good News.

With and for what young people?

[the young] “are doing something much more profound: they are changing the map.

*May be they have already changed it”.*³³

The young are our theological place, our place of encounter with God and Life. In order to think about which Salesian religious and laity for the young, first of all we have to have the courage to ask ourselves which young people challenge us, which young people help to unfold our Salesian vocation. John Bosco became Don Bosco with them, he did not become Don Bosco for them, he was completely for them and with them, beginning with an empathetic ear that allowed them to talk about themselves and their needs.

Juan Pablo Berra, in his book *Los siete niveles de la Comunicación*³⁴ (The Seven Levels of Communication) asks about the quality of our links and what happens when we do not achieve good communication with our closest links. To review the quality of our links, Berra offers seven levels of communication from which to register the modes of connection, registration, awareness, transparency, truth and intensity. They are information, exchange of opinion, life story accounts, feelings and emotions, needs, experience of transcendence.

The first level is information. As an exercise at this level he proposes we comment on what we do. The more information we have the more possibility there is of registering the other. Currently there are multiple ways of meeting, some of which will be more ephemeral while others will enable much deeper levels of communication, but the human desire to meet is always latent and Salesian educative passion never ceases to provoke it.

At times we think that young people “no nos registran”, (literally, ‘do not register us’, a colloquial Argentine expression meaning they pay no attention to adults), but what information are we offering personally and collectively? This includes our way of arranging spaces, places, our gestures, the moments we are present, how we celebrate, what we publish, among other things.

This is all about a conversion, because we are not talking about just a change of forms or explaining what we want to say “so they will understand”. That would

be thinking from our adult point of view, from our structures and schemes; but what about putting empathy to the test and trying to listen, read what they are saying, ask open questions not multiple choice where the answers are already provided, and when choosing “other” there is no chance for asking a question. This certainly involves us in moving, changing, letting go of it was always done this way which is the biggest excuse for why nothing changes. It is the young people who will shape what it means to be Salesians today, and who will shape our proposals.

What might think that this information is of lesser account than other forms of communication but it is what facilitates encounter:

*“The exchange of information can become true communication, links ripen into friendships, and connections facilitate communion.”
When people exchange information, they share themselves, their vision of the world, their hopes, their ideals.”³⁵*

Secondly, we can think about the link between young people and information in the digital world. “The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young”.³⁶ They produce content and information there, share, connect, mobilise themselves, commit themselves, express what they feel, are exposed to danger, etc.

This breaking in of young people means we have to bracket some of our certainties and constructs and expose ourselves to constant redefinition, so in this sense it is difficult to generalise, and it would be much more valuable to be able to share experiences of encounter, experiences of working with the young, so we can dialogue about them, circulate them, and why not even write about them.

Salesian religious and laity

*“we speak of what we know
and testify to what we have seen”.*

Jn. 3:11

At the beginning is the encounter, the encounter gives way to the bond, and for the bond to be maintained over time it needs presence.

As Salesians, being present is a way of educating by evangelising and evangelising by educating. It is not just being there but an educative presence.

Beginning with the “foundational encounter” with Don Giacomo Corbelli, the

Beginning with the "paradigmatic encounter" with Bartolomeo Garelli, the *Memoirs of the Oratory* present the range of responses Don Bosco then gave to the reality and needs of the boys.

By going deeper into them, we discover that when one had special importance for life in the Oratory, it was reflected in a regulation or a set of regulations to follow that took account of the experience and gave guidelines for development. This is how we have the Regulations of the Oratory, theatre, the band, and so on.

There is always the young person at the centre, but today, in a context where institutional mediations are in crisis, and huge amounts of information proliferate, we are invited to take on other challenges that can somehow lead us to updating the charism.

The processes of institutionalisation mean we do not need to be constantly defining situations, but at the same time social dynamics are drawing our community toward an historical discernment.

Discernment guarantees fidelity and creativity, and why not even boldness. This takes us away from prefabricated, provided and anachronistic answers. New wine has to be put into new wine skins. (cf. Mt. 9:17)

The family of those who follow the founding charism are men and women, consecrated and lay, united by passion for the Kingdom.

Our time favours the experience of a mission shared between consecrated Salesians and laity in view of evangelisation. And faced with this some questions arise: What are we sharing? How are we sharing it? Through what means?

We look at what Don Bosco did, but we cannot give the same answers, at least in the same way, since life demands this and the call is historic.

Faced with these new communication processes we can remain still and inhabit them with a feeling of being dis-empowered because our message is one among so many others, or we can open up to educating ourselves in communicating in contexts of hyper-mediation through circulation of messages and forms of expression that will allow us to empower the message and multiply it, express its true identity, build an image and a reputation that can socially and ecclesially establish a representation close to what it means to be Salesian and be Christian.

A Collective Construction

Institutional communication fulfils a strategic role: it supports decision-making, encourages processes, motivates the life Salesians lead, coordinates initiatives and consolidates charismatic identity in accordance with the values that underlie it.

Properly managed information is a factor that directly favours relationships among its members and their cooperation as well as encouraging a more decisive participation in the projects they commit to.

Proper management of processes enhances the joint interaction of institutions connected with the Salesian mission, the Salesian Family and its collective socio-ecclesial influence. A concrete example of this are the coordination meetings of Salesian Family groups where they decide together each year on the slogan or motto that the Rector Major proposes for guiding and motivating the collective mission.

Collective construction is important because it allows us to diagnose, know and correct conflict and crisis situations, look for ways to overcome them and learn from mistakes. Crises should not be looked upon as something that happens outside of institutional life and growth; they are situations that should be valued and integrated as a process in the institution's collective maturing.

All the above means that an important function of institutional communication is to encourage a common interest among members of the organisation and the willingness to participate in a collective project. This all needs to be supported by a team of people who have an overall understanding of the institution's processes and provide the necessary elements of information and animation.

A network of people in the service of communication

These days, the value of networking goes without question. The information society grows and develops in an accelerated way thanks to this model of interaction. For many years, at the level of the Congregation, a network communications model has been built up in which the figure of the Communications Delegate in each region is an activity of vital importance. Thanks to the support of the delegates, it has been possible to gain a closer and more objective understanding of the most relevant events that have taken place around the world, including events that the bigger media have often remained silent about.

As an example it would be sufficient to mention news concerning the situation

of Christian communities during the war in Syria, other armed conflicts around the world, the Church's and the Congregation's actions to help overcome the health crises during epidemics in Africa, defence of minors at risk and the poor in refugee camps, our presence in defence of the rights of immigrants on various frontiers.

This human activity must be strengthened and improved through effective and ongoing formation aimed at an increasingly efficient communication between the various sectors and levels of the Congregation.

Challenges and Guidelines

Thinking about the management of information is a complex task given the reality just described, but it is not complicated.

Communication or organisation problems?

For the public receiving information, the multiplication of existing communication channels sometimes generates the perception of information saturation or even disinformation. It is usually the understanding that "to be informed" means "everyone knowing everything", and that this would be a sign of good communication.

On the other hand, those who draw up messages through official media could perceive and complain about a lack of interest and little motivation. But to reach this conclusion, have we analysed the different reception modes that open us to the digital world?

Sometimes, the belief is that it is enough to "update" the means to improve the circulation of information, but we need to consider the mediations that are part of the construction of meanings.

When we talk about information, and particularly how it is reported, we may be highlighting other problems related to the organisation, to links and relationships in the community framework, and it may be necessary to make this explicit by dredging up the good old euphemism: "this is a communication problem".

Hence we need to establish guiding criteria regarding channels, the content of messages and the mediations that intervene in their reception, for any clear management of information.

Common and shared identity

The question of a common and shared identity is linked to communication, and

the possibilities for visibility and exchange between sectors and actors by means of various media.

The digital presences of the Congregation, Salesian Family Groups or works are valued because they favour identity, but they can also be a factor in dispersion because of the multiplicity of communications spaces, making it hard to make unity visible.

To overcome this difficulty there is a need to agree on criteria which allow for the expression of identity, not as homogeneity but as diversity articulated through a single project, the mission.

From dispersion to shared experience

There are often very rich experiences that remain unshared in a Province, the Congregation, the Church and with the public in general.

The significance of the processes we carry out is condensed in a fragment, represented today by the instant and the whole; and at the same time by recovering the experience.³⁷

This implies the need for an exercise of reflection, asking ourselves what, when and how to communicate, to whom, and who communicates.

Communication exposes us, but it is of greater benefit to express ourselves than not to do so, be it in daily life or in particular crisis situations; in view of expressing identity in order to build up institutional communication.

Prophetic communication

It is necessary to find the opportunity to make ourselves visible and to speak up about the commitments we are key players in, and be involved with other institutions by encouraging networking.

In various parts of the world the life and dignity of many young people are at risk and being violated. Our compassion for these lives leads us to get physically involved as signs and bearers of God's love for so many of them, but it also invites us to speak up. So why not think about prophetic communication in this sense. "The prophet is one who proclaims, takes the floor, intervenes in the public space and denounces injustices. The prophets did not speak to the Babylonians who held the people captive, they spoke to the Jews. They turned to and spoke to their own people."³⁸

Chapter 8

Principal Elements of Educommunication

João Carlos Ribeiro SDB
Jesús Jurado SDB & Jakeline Lira

Youth in the digital world

We are all aware that times have changed. Ours is not an era of changes, but a change of era.

In this context a new civilisation emerges marked by a new consciousness that manifests itself in different forms and simultaneously: as a planetary consciousness, a social and empathetic consciousness, an ecological consciousness, an ethical consciousness, a noological consciousness and holistic, synergistic, systematic and complete way of thinking; and as a transcendental consciousness that seeks harmony, profundity, meaning and beauty, bio-psycho-social and spiritual balance.

The development of communication and information technologies has created a new culture that affects, in the first instance, the new generations. Today's youngsters already articulate their knowledge in a way that is different to adults. Ways of learning are changing and they need to happen from the perspective of this new world consciousness.

In the so-called digital era, young people have found a vehicle of their own on the Internet and in Social Networks for communicating and establishing relationships with their surroundings, creating what is known as a “network society”.

This general access to the widespread use of technology, the Internet and social networks by adolescents means they have built up a unique universe in which new patterns of consumption, creation and dissemination of audiovisual content have been established. This new paradigm presumes, at the same time, a social challenge which is of concern to parents and educators, and a challenge for the technological industry which determines the development of the devices, and the production and diffusion of content.

Educommunication and Salesian mission

The interrelationship between education and communication is strengthening as a field of study and action, a specific field of intervention. This merger between communication and education has given rise to proposals on each continent.

In 1979 UNESCO said that Educommunication includes "all forms of studying, learning and teaching, at every level and in all circumstances, the history, creation, utilisation and evaluation of communication media as practical and technical arts, as well as the role that communication media play in society, their social repercussion, the consequences of mediatised communication, their participation, the modification they produce in the way to perceive, the role of the creative process and the access to communication media."

Education is a "set of actions inherent to the planning and evaluation of processes, programs and communication products implemented for educational purposes, aimed at creating and strengthening open and creative communication ecosystems from the perspective of a shared and democratic management of information resources" wrote one of the principal exponents of Educommunication, Ismar Soares de Oliveira. Educommunication's emphasis is especially focused on educational intention and the active role played by students.

In other parts of the world, this concern for the relationship between education and communication developed what is called "Media Education", that has a greater relationship with the technical devices integrated within the educational and communicative processes.

From these points of view, proposals from UNESCO (1979), Ismar Soares de Oliveira (1995) and Media Education (2000), distinguish four areas of intervention:

First: From education for media to education for communication

This education for communication includes programs and activities of the study and understanding of the processes of human communication and the phenomenon of Social Communication, and seeks to form responsible, critical and creative social partners, promoters of access to resources of communication and its use as a means of expression for individuals and social groups.

Second: Technological mediation for formation of the young

Information and Communication Technologies have given way to a new culture

that needs to be known and understood. These ICTs have entered the history and life of the young and they require educators to be constantly updated. Using these technologies allows the acquisition of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for communicating, interpreting and producing messages, using different languages and media, and developing a personal autonomy and critical spirit. In this way people are trained for life in a just and multicultural society.

Third: education to harmony, aesthetics, expressions and the arts as a constitutive dimension of the human person

Human beings have always needed to express their being and thinking through art in all its manifestations. Education to harmony, beauty, aesthetics is a constitutive dimensions of the person, society and coexistence; and reflection on, showing the worth of and providing accompaniment for all those expressions is proper to a new way of understanding the world, relating to self and others, and surroundings that is inherent to adolescents and older youth. The area of expression and art in educommunication opens up space for youthful protagonism whereby young people can be themselves, express themselves spontaneously, discover their own words for things.

Fourth: Communication for exercising citizenship, ethical conscience and social commitment

This area is presented as reflection on the role of communication in the formation of values, participation and responsibility, solidarity, democracy and peace. It entails a responsible commitment to transforming the environment and the place where one lives, as an exercise of citizenship. It is proposed to educators and those being educated who are immersed in this digital world, so that they become active, conscious, participative, critical and constructive citizens.

Educommunication focuses its work on five main educational areas:

- *Educating for uncertainty.* This means questioning what happens each day, locating, recognising, processing and using information; educating to resolve problems
- *Educating for life enjoyment.* This means introducing enthusiasm for life, feeling that one is important, seeing one's worth.
- *Educating for meaning.* The media and messages give meaning to events, produce meanings, create critical individuals.
- *Educating for coexistence.* An adequate education for coexistence will

help to live life in solidarity, harmony and respect.

- *Educate to value the Transcendent*. This means recognising the Other, a God who is part of people's lives.

Practical pointers for the Salesian mission

GC27 said “that the digital world is the new areopagus of modern times, it is a challenge for educators of the young: it is a ‘new playground’, ‘a new oratory’ that needs our presence and encourages new forms of education and evangelisation in us. We are in the ‘of knowledge and information’ which, however, tends to commodify human relationships and the monopolisation of human knowledge, thus becoming a ‘source of new forms of power, often anonymous’, which we must tackle with a new pastoral and educative effort.”

In view of the opportunities offered by educommunication and other areas of intervention in this context, we offer some pointers for our educative and pastoral tasks:

Supporting access for poor young people to new technological resources and contributing to their digital literacy;

Shifting from an instrumental viewpoint to a cultural concept of communication;

Training our educative and pastoral communities, seen as communication ecosystems, in educommunicative management;

Encouraging in our environments, groups along the lines of expressions, art, music, all of an educational nature, and integrated within the SYM;

Dialogue with the contemporary world to contribute to the creations of a new culture of solidarity.

As religious and lay educators, learning to inhabit the digital spaces where young people live;

Contributing to the education of educators and young people in social networks, virtual playgrounds, to prevent cyberbullying and to exercise personal responsibility;

Growing in media competencies by offering a proposal for formation of individuals so that they may be able to interpret and analyse from the perspective of critical reflection on images, audiovisual messages, and be able to express themselves in the communicative arena

Chapter 9

Being in Social Networking

Santos Mendes Dos Gildásio & Filipetto Moreno SDB

Communication through social media is essentially human communication. Digital communication is essentially human communication. An integral part of what constitutes the human being, it is also integral to human life and relationships today.

For this reason, it is open to dialogue with anthropology and human psychology. The social media are, in the first instance, a form of networking, a particular development of virtual technology. The technological basis and all the structures of social media are also organised along the lines of other means of communication: radio, television, news and other media.

The internet, in all its development and convergence of various technologies – image, sound, text – allows for a new paradigm of communication, different from the conventional³⁹ (subject-medium-message).

The velocity and sophistication of technology make ubiquitous ways of communication possible.⁴⁰ However, it is still technology.

The technological basis of the virtual world results in a new way of communicating. Given access, interactivity, speed, convergence, instantaneous communication, the human being is now able to live in a kind of non-place, cyberspace, the fluid, communicative, fast and instantaneous world of global interaction.

On the other hand, it is always the human being who sets out to establish a relationship, to communicate and interact according to the technological base at his or her disposal. Technological sophistication has the human being and human relationships as its subject, involving feelings, imagination, social relationships, rites, artefacts, values and institutions.

Unlike mass communication devices (radio, television, news) and mass media studies, communications in social media require a wider interpretation, involving not only the social dimension of the functional dialects of the web but also and especially anthropological, biological, systemic and cultural ones.

Is the internet a medium of communication? Is it within the category of mass media communication? Or is it just a tool of information technology and data organisation? Are the social media tools for communication or are they instruments of human contact?⁴¹

Technological innovation and life in the online universe

Technological innovation, the speed of access, the new apps, entertainment platforms, shopping, research, news, the speed of WhatsApp, the ease and transitory nature of Snapchat and numerous other innovations are still a regular presence in the media. Smartphones, will continue as the medium for interaction and guiding the lives of billions of people.

The concept of the virtual habitat – being in the virtual world – immersion in the virtual world, requires a more profound view of the human being and what it means to be in a place, any place.

The view of the social media as a non-place, another universe, a new place, is like it were two different things, and does not correspond to the complexities of human communication. Even if we spent the whole day connected, studying, working, interacting in the virtual universe, it doesn't mean we are outside the reality of our traditional habitat.

The codes of the culture of human communication

The overlapping nature of interpretation concerning the phenomenology of the communicator in social media is essential for a systemic and broader view of the contemporary media phenomenon. An analysis of social media requires new paradigms to understand the generations who live and grow up with the new cultural codes of the virtual world and social media.

Attempts to provide a dual analysis of the person and technology can lead to a categorical ethics of how to use the social media, how to be in or out, how to establish limits and dichotomies between real and virtual.

Many studies of the virtual communication cultural phenomenon have been done, based on a critical view of media such as television, radio and news. The fact that the paradigm of how to communicate has changed does not mean that the human being who communicates has also changed.

Access to information, interactivity and connectivity are aspects of virtual communication, but these elements do not define the subject who communicates

virtually.

To communicate inside this universe of cultural codes requires rethinking and a change of place by the communicator. Ubiquity and immediacy require a new way to communicate, where the traditional place of the person who communicates and the message sent have changed radically.

The place of the nature of the communication of social networks is in human nature, in our way of elaborating, responding and being communication. Sociological, dialectical analysis, or mass communication approaches to the virtual universe and social networks are very limited. What is needed is to look at the very nature of the virtual world of communicating, to gain a greater understanding of its origins from which the great appeal of the desire to communicate arises.

For this I propose a systematic look at the topic, seeing it in terms of a more in-depth study of affective, cognitive and neuro-scientific psychology to arrive at a new way of analysing social networks.

This implies a greater knowledge of the human brain associated with its affective, cognitive, neuroscientific dimensions, bringing these three dimensions into dialogue with anthropology and spirituality.

This dialogue means being open to a pedagogy of mind (brain), education and a spirituality as a path of transcendence and ethics for communication in social networks and symbiotic communication with the virtual universe.

New interpretations of social media subjects

Some more recent authors have written, expressing great concern about the psychodynamics of virtual communication and communication in networks.

Zygmund Bauman, in his vision of liquid society, analyses very well the fragmentation of information and relationships without points of reference. The communicator is alone, with all possible and desired information, but without knowing how to guide his or her life within a computerised society and culture and networks. Communicating in a liquid society means creating fleeting relationships, where everything sifts through the fingers, leaving the human being before his or her own emptiness. This ephemeral, fleeting reality creates liquid fear and love. Social networks reveal the human person in their constant search for something insatiable, where the search for something inside the person is a form of liquid anxiety. in a continuous cycle. that does not fill or

satisfy the human being.

Byung-Chul Han goes further, trying to demonstrate with his pretentious virtual metaphysics that the human brain has its limits faced with the stimuli of the virtual world that make people dependent on their technological imagination. He tries to decipher the psychogenesis of tired social policy and has sought to demonstrate that the digital world and social networks are creating a new scenario of dependence, control, health and social problems.⁴² In his view, the information society has generated an imbalance of positivity and negativity (a form of dialectic necessary for healthy human survival). The acceleration of communication in social networks does violence to positivity, is over-performance of the person, who, in responding to this lack of control of positivity and negativity, becomes the victim of the control of the positivity of the brain, losing its immune defence.

According to the author, the performance society is regulated by the social unconscious, where the human being exaggerates his performance to the max, generating productivity, food for society and people are always dependent on a stimulus to produce more, generating power and search for pleasure. But in fact, according to Byung, human beings experience the psychological and social exacerbation of positivity, falling into exhaustion and social burnout. The duality of positivity and negativity is the engine of a liquid and virtualised society. And egocentrism, selfishness, manifests itself as a syndrome of a tired and automated society.⁴³

Psychopolitics is the result of the social and cultural relations of this system, where the freedom of the human being is seduced by neoliberalism that stimulates a parody of freedom, but always stimulated by the objective of placing the person as the protagonist in this system, striving to give his or her utmost for production and the result of his or her work, always rewarded by control which is negotiated and rewarded by human freedom. This way of living generates an ethic, a society of transparency, where the imbalance of negativity and positivity requires of the individuals a constant vigilance for the transparency of people, habits, policy, where each person is the guardian of good habits, against all corruption.⁴⁴

This view of Bauman and Byung is being studied from various perspectives. There are other authors who analyse the phenomenon of social networks from other perspectives, stressing, for example, that social networks are new means of expression of human freedom, communicative creativity, interaction between

expression of human freedom, communicative creativity, interaction between peoples and cultures, access to information and a new democracy.

The question that the critical approach to social networks and prosperity and new human freedoms from the virtual world offers us, is a new interpretation, where the systematic relationship of communication can allow us to elaborate an anthropology of social networks, and openness to a humanisation of relationships in the virtual world, and, consequently, greater possibilities for education and a ministry of communication.

A student of the phenomenon of digital communication such as Don Tapscott⁴⁵ presents the awakening of a new era, with no return, where the new generations, from an early age, grow and live immersed in the digital universe, where the net generation has such a DNA and virtual mind that social networks become a true experiential and relational culture.

The interaction of neuroscience with affective, cognitive and cultural psychology

The most recent studies on the virtual world suggest that a human, relational, cultural change is taking place that generates behaviour changes and new attitudes. According to recent studies by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the internet generation, through continuous computer use and immersion in virtual environments, may be expanding their mental capabilities, suggesting that the brain of the internet generation processes information differently from the generation that grew up listening to the radio and watching television.

In fact, cyberculture presents new characteristics in the communicative process that challenge current paradigms of communication, presents new questions that need to be further explored and opens up new questions about how to understand the phenomenon of communication in the era of globalisation. For example, the use of the media and subjectivity; the search and expression of aesthetics and cyberculture; the intersection between cultural expressions such as music, dance, cuisine, religiosity and language of the media; the language and codes of adolescents and young people regarding how to communicate online; the seduction and language of children's video games.

One of the areas of greatest concentration of studies on human behaviour in social networks is neuroscience. All the complexity of the relation of the nervous system with the brain and other human organs are studied by neuroscience.

Other areas of neuroscientific ramifications seek to understand, for example, how our intelligence is formed, what is the relationship of emotions to intelligence, what is the relationship between language and decision-making abilities. In the field of sciences called artificial intelligence, neuroscience has been a reference for the understanding between the relationship of the human being with computers and virtual reality.

Currently, the Neuroscience Society seeks to study the fundamental principles and fundamental concepts of Neuroscience which refer to the human mind as the most complex of organs. For example, how neurons communicate, using both electrical and chemical signals, how the genetically determined circuits are the basis of the formation of the nervous system for the way in which life experience can change the nervous system; how intelligence manifests itself when the mind rationalises, plans, and solves problems relating to human curiosity of understanding and interpreting the world around us.

Neuroscience is a science of the present and the future. It uses the modern means of technology and biomedicine to carry out its experiments and do its analysis. It gives us parameters for analysis from references that are directly related to how the human mind works.

For example, from the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, it is possible to analyse various aspects of his personality, his feelings, his artistic intuitions, his intelligence. An analysis of Shakespeare's literary texts allows us to make an analysis of how to create the characters, establish the emotional impact of the language of their characters, or delineate the psychological space of the characters.

The need for a humanistic and pastoral approach in dialogue with affective, cognitive and neuroscientific psychology

Communication, in any dimension, and in any format, is humanistic. The human being carries in his individual and relational psychodynamics the intrinsic need to humanise. The ethics of communication needs to explore this aspect more deeply, from the human brain itself, which has a dynamics of organising information. Some critics like⁴⁶ Byung believe that the acceleration of virtual communication has generated anxiety and aggressive and alienating behaviors. Some speak of digital dependence, others of dependence on stimulus, generating irrationality in human behaviour due to the lack of an education for the experience of the virtual world.

There are no simple answers to the complex phenomenon of communication in social networks. I have argued in this text that a sociological or dialectical view of human interaction and relationship in social networks is limited and requires greater dialogue with affective, cognitive and neurological psychology.

Historically, when we interpret communication from the point of view of pastoral care, evangelization, we have some elements that can serve in any dialogue with the system of virtual communication.

The Jewish and Christian traditions for hundreds of years have used the psalms as a means of communicating, praying, expressing faith in God. The psalms carry within them a great systematic wisdom of the movement of the human heart, soul, and brain (mind). Psalms are texts of understanding and education of the movement of human and spiritual interiority.

From the Middle Ages, through Gregorian chant, reciting the psalms, the monks understood in their time that the human brain (the mind) has a rhythm, a compass, an internal structure that must be educated from its own nature. The prayed / sung psalms reveal an internal dynamics of the affective / cognitive and neurological dimensions that can contribute to pastoral education and communication today, especially in the inner dynamics of the relationship between voice, imagination, feelings and social relations.

Saint Benedict had an intelligent understanding, interpreted the systematic dynamics of human interiority, and organised his communicative system from the strength of the psalms and liturgy aligned with human organisation which was disciplined and catalogued. In his time, he was able to organise information, real files of living expressions of the dynamics of the heart, soul and human brain.

St. Augustine, the first to write an autobiography (Confessions), was able to capture the internal dynamics of the affective / cognitive and neurological relationship from the expression of his subjectivity, expressed in narrative forms about his own life. The narrative of Augustine's own history is a true system of images, sounds, emotions, thoughts that express a holistic understanding of the person who believes in God.

St. John Bosco, who knew how to develop multiple intelligence, both emotional and social, knew how to use the arts, games, prayers, education as a formative ecosystem, understanding the inner dynamics of the human being.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, from his viewpoint of spatial imagery, elaborated a basis for systematic communication very well through psalms, prayers, poetry, his writings and paintings.

Chapter 10

Our Presence in Social Networks⁴⁷

Filiberto González SDB

Introduction

Social networks⁴⁸ are a new style of communication. It is primarily used to exchange experiences and opinions, to meet friends and stay in touch with acquaintances, in a society increasingly Internet-connected.

Their role becomes essential in the reality of many people and institutions, as they facilitate knowing new persons and places, and learning of events immediately, entering into dialogue and create groups with various intents and functions.

Via Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, MySpace, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Snapchat, and many other social media, one can make connections with people from so many places in the world that would have been impossible to even imagine a few years ago. With a single click you can find out instantly what happens thousands of kilometers away.

Thus, online platforms bring great advantages for users to become consumers rather than producers of information, because both ways of using them are potentially available to everyone. In social networks all users are also creators, actors, simultaneously and permanently visible.

We need to reflect on our presence and participation on cultural and relational changes that have been made⁴⁹ on our use of social networks. The networks bring great benefits, but also carry risks for people and for the institution if we do not live in them, if not handled properly. Technology is not good or bad, is part of the culture, so we have to understand and learn their languages, their advantages and limitations.⁵⁰

These directives are for all Salesians and lay collaborators in our works and institutions that are part of the Province or Delegation of the Salesians of Don Bosco.⁵¹

The Salesians and social networks⁵²

Today it is said that Web 2.0 basically means two things: "First, the user of the network goes from being a consumer of content to a participant in the construction and development of the same. Second, Web 2.0 is the web as a platform, not the social network itself. "However it possible to create a space for collaborative and participatory work that breaks with previous hierarchical and unidirectional models of learning, production and creation of knowledge, communication and information.

For the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and his closest collaborators, Web 2.0 is an opportunity to be present, to spread the values of the Salesian charism and institution, to make contact with many people, especially the young people and the educators who populate the social networks. Through them we can be multipliers of the message and mission of Don Bosco.⁵³ Today good ideas and personal and institutional values can reach around the world with a click. Of course it's not an automatic matter, it must be presented with current languages, at appropriate times and appropriate modality and technology. Not all means or any pattern are suitable for all content for any information or for any communication. If this basic principle is not known, you can waste time and trivialize the message.

Many people who see the profiles of the Salesians and their collaborators in social networks, are at a loss to establish the boundaries between their identity, their work and their private lives, they are seen not only as individuals, but as representatives of Don Bosco, the Salesian Congregation. Therefore it is very important to be aware that there is a fine line between the fundamental right of freedom of expression and the duty of loyalty to the Salesian Congregation.

Any comment, expression or individual image can be interpreted as a sign of what the Salesians in the world believe, what they think or do. Hence the great responsibility when one is present in the social networks. In this situation the value of discretion and of privacy is very different from that which we practice in physical social relations, real time and physical spaces. It is very important to use well the time and the digital space, because it is here that we live and become visible to everyone, especially to those adolescents and young adults, for whom we are an important reference point in their life.

In this new digital reality, which creates its own concepts of presence, respect, information and work, the Salesian Congregation enters and uses these means of communication:

COMMUNICATION.

- To collaborate in the evangelizing mission⁵⁴ of the Church by offering information about the important events and messages of the Pope.
- to position the Salesians as a religious community founded by Don Bosco dedicated to the mission of evangelizing and educating in favor of children and young people of the working classes.⁵⁵
- to report on the activities of the Province, its sectors and their works (schools, parishes, oratories, missions, social action centers, companies and communication products, etc).⁵⁶
- to convey a positive image of our mission in a transparent, authentic, modern way.
- to maintain an attitude of constant learning exchanging knowledge and experiences of daily work, according to the goals and values of the institution.
- to encourage knowing about Don Bosco, the Congregation and the Salesian Family, to participate in their projects, spread over 130 countries.⁵⁷
- to put the teenager, youth, educators and parents in touch with our ideas, proposals and actions, giving them the opportunity to participate and collaborate in concrete way according to their status.
- to accompany, as Don Bosco did, being "assistants" of adolescents and youth⁵⁸ in the virtual world.
- provide pastoral, spiritual, social and cultural benefits that favor the formation of the Salesian Family and all interested persons.⁵⁹
- Be a benchmark and exchange for many people interested in youth, educational and social issues from the perspective of Don Bosco.

Some Guidelines

The following guidelines⁶⁰ are intended to provide some recommendations for the safe and conscious use of social networks to learn and know how to share and interact ethically in the Internet.

1. Presence in social networks: Identifiability and Accountability

New technologies and social networks of the 21st century is blurring the boundaries between professional and private communication. It certainly is a personal decision to be identified in the user profile as a member of the Salesian Congregation or as a worker in a work of the Salesians of Don Bosco. However,

Congregation or as a worker in a work of the Salesians of Don Bosco. However his identity as Salesian consecrated worker or employee, must be recognized by their friends, acquaintances and colleagues, as well as outside those circles, for its transparency, authenticity, and individual responsibility.

Therefore the SDB, the employees, and the collaborators who are in social networks:

- must have an identifiable profile with its functions, tasks and mission entrusted to him in some work.
- must ask permission from authorized persons if they need to use the logo or emblem of the institution in their profile or other publications.
- agree to be responsible for the information shared, the comments generated, photographs and videos that are posted. The network world does not erase any information, image or video broadcast.
- are careful with their statements and interventions so as not to encourage rumors, half-truths or spread suspicion, among others.
- commit to correct misstatements or contradictory indications including dates, places and sources where necessary. It is a mark of a mature person to admit one's faults.

2. Presence in social networks: Communication of Content

Social networks are public spaces of communication. Therefore, to published it is potentially making it visible to everyone and involves risks such as the inadvertent distribution of information, but also offer the possibility of direct and rapid exchange.

Therefore Salesians, employees and partners are invited to:

- Support the work of the Salesians, sharing the content that is distributed by official channels, making room for the viewpoints and criticism that are objective and constructive.
- Take part in the discussions held in the official channels of the Salesians of Don Bosco, where one can contribute his/her experience, knowledge and opinion.
- Offer pastoral help or give advice, and be open to dialogue and exchange of information. If the request is beyond one's experience and ability, he/she should indicate another more competent person, bearing in mind that if the information provided is inadequate, it may damage

the image and educational pastoral work of the Institution.

- Accept friendship and connections with other social institutions or individuals who can contribute or generate a spirit of solidarity, but do not be too quick in clicking the buttons "I like" or "I do not like" or enter into relations with other people before observing first their profile and viewpoints, as they may go against the beliefs or values of the Institution.
- Share content (messages, pictures or videos) that are consistent with one's vocation and function within the institution, which are a good example for children and young people for whom they work. They, like their parents and colleagues can view our profile and shared contents. For this reason avoid images that are inconsistent with one's vocation or function that may lend themselves to misunderstanding.
- Before you share and disseminate content in social networks, it is important to check the sources and accuracy of the information. It is not ethical or educational to share false content. People trust us and consider us as reliable sources. We have a duty to be responsible.
- Preserve the author's right: to share or disclose contents other than his own, it is necessary to mention who the author or at least the source from which it was copied.
- Overcome the temptation to post personal discussions (especially on the Facebook wall or similar).
- Know and proceed in accordance with the legal provisions of one's country when exchanging files, especially with children and adolescents.
- Keep in mind that pornographic content is morally unacceptable in the Congregation and may be illegal, for these reasons any publication of this material is prohibited.
- Avoid that readers can draw the wrong conclusions, it is advisable to avoid political statements.

3. Presence in social networks: Respectful Relationships with Others

As part of the Catholic Church, the SDB and all workers who collaborate with the Salesians, should express personal belief in a polite, truthful and respectful manner even though they may have different beliefs from the others. The "Preventive Salesian style"⁶¹ must be present in the messages and in the means

chosen to publicize them, ensuring that they contain the following features: proactive and prudent, optimism and realism, innovation and interdisciplinary, ethics and professionalism. For us it is important that in both the physical and the virtual reality, while remaining clear in our position, we respect those who think differently.

Therefore:

- Be tolerant in the face of other beliefs and open to other opinions.
- Use, in the case of controversial debates, a balanced and serene language that expresses esteem.
- Remain calm and be objective, even if the arguments presented is not convincing.
- Observe what is sacred for us or for other religions.
- Be aware that online platforms is not a place for defamation, violation of human rights, intolerance, contempt of skin color or origin of birth or anything else which might lead to misunderstandings in this sense.
- Do not provoke heated debates or get into discussions where they exist; if you are involved in any, remain calm, be objective and open to dialogue. Be the first to apologize when wrong.
- Stay away from ironic language and messages, which can easily ignite passions and create controversy.

4. Presence in social networks: Problems and Confidentiality

The obligation towards confidentiality and discretion also applies to social networks. Therefore:

- All internal information, which is part of the confidential institutional data can not be published.
- Confidential information and personal data, should not be part of public discussion on social networks.
- Respect the privacy of every person, so do not make public their defects, errors or their problems in the family or work.
- If you discover or witness a crime, go to the relevant authorities.
- In case of uncertainty, before publishing anything, please contact your supervisor, Delegate for Social Communication and, if necessary, the Provincial.

5. Presence in social networks: Security. Rights and Obligations

You should learn and be updated on the use of social networks. Do not forget that content such as images, videos, profile information and comments are potentially visible to everyone and that some Internet applications have access to your data and can provide all of them to others. It is a fact that any type of publication you make becomes an element of your virtual personality.

Therefore:

- Pay careful attention to your personal and professional network.
- Do not spread too many personal details in public.
- Check the settings of security and privacy.
- Before you set up a profile, please read the terms and conditions of their social network. If there is any problem with the application, contact the Delegate of Social Communication.
- Respect copyrights, always applying the following rule: use files, images, graphics, music or videos that have permissions and always cite the author.
- If you post pictures, you must obtain permission from the ones who appear in the photo. If there are children and adolescents, this may also require written authorization from their guardians. Application forms can be obtained from the Delegate of Social Communications.
- If you want to use social networks as an employee in order to establish networking, include the logo of the Congregation, talk first to your superior.
- The provinces and the respective works of the SDB should follow corporate design manuals and rules for using the logo of the Province and of the Salesians of Don Bosco.
- People belonging to any degree to the institution, who make improper use of the social networks and media, are morally and legally responsible, personally, for their actions.

The activities of the Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco in the field of social communication are directed and coordinated by the Social Communications Delegate under the supervision of the Provincial in charge.

Chapter 11

Video as a Medium to Evangelise

Jacob Iruppakkaattu SDB & Lukasz Nawrat SDB

Evangelisation and Communication

In simple words, Evangelisation means bringing Jesus to all the world, which implies sharing the Gospel truth everywhere. It can be in schools, among youth groups, in the store, in the conference room, while sitting at dinner with your friends or family, with your best friends or strangers or even your enemies.

New evangelisation is a term coined by Saint Pope John Paul II in his first address to the bishops of Latin America. The document on New Evangelisation from the Synod of Bishops held in 2012,⁶² speaks about the need to find the energy and means to ground oneself solidly in the presence of the Risen Christ, who animates us from within. It is the Church's ability to renew her communal experience of faith and to proclaim it within the new situations which have arisen in cultures in recent decades.

The Church's mission has been the same over the centuries. "In the early life of the Church, the great Apostles and their disciples brought the Good News of Jesus to the Greek and Roman world. Just as, at that time, a fruitful evangelisation required that careful attention be given to understanding the culture and customs of those pagan peoples so that the truth of the gospel would touch their hearts and minds, so also today, the proclamation of Christ in the world of new technologies requires a profound knowledge of this world if the technologies are to serve our mission adequately."⁶³ In the context of the modern digital reality we must use a language the people can understand and relate to, particularly the young. It is about rediscovering a new style. We live in a multicultural society. So we need to spell out what type of actors we need to be on the digital stage.

Communication is not simply one dimension of evangelisation. Without communication there can be no evangelisation. Proposition 38 from the recent Synod on the Word of God echoes this insight: The mission to announce the Word of God is the responsibility of all the disciples of Jesus Christ by virtue of

their baptism. The awareness must be deepened in every parish, and in every Catholic community and organisation: They must find ways to bring the Word of God to all, especially to those who have been baptised but who have not been adequately evangelised.

Throughout history, the Church has been the first to use the tools available at the time to communicate as far and as wide as possible. Saint Paul used the technology of his time: pen and messages. The first book ever printed was the Bible. Before the advent of film, stained glass windows, architecture, dramas were the media that were used to evangelise and catechise. The people learned the stories of faith with the vivid pictures or the dramas that were enacted. Today, we have come a long way from the first printing press to encompass technologies that were unheard of as little as 20 years ago.

Today, young people all over the world are on the virtual arena playing, listening, reading and engaging themselves with the modern tools of communication. Besides film or video, music is a powerful way they engage. Some of the present day video sharing platforms include YouTube Channel, Vimeo, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and a host of other platforms.

As also said by Saint John Paul II, essential to new evangelisation is the use of the media. The role of Mass Media was recognised again at the recent Synod—in their Message, the Synod members reminded us: The voice of the divine word must echo even through the radio, the information highway of the internet, the 24x7 channels of "online" virtual circulation, CDs, DVDs, podcasts, etc. It must appear on all television and movie screens, in the press, and in cultural and social events.

So as we evangelise, unpack the faith in a modern setting, we have many tools available to do it effectively. “In particular, it falls to young people, who have an almost spontaneous affinity for the new means of communication, to take on the responsibility for the evangelisation of this digital continent. Be sure to announce the Gospel to your contemporaries with enthusiasm.”⁶⁴

The Communication Tools for evangelisation

Once upon a time, “media” simply meant the mass media of radio, television, newspapers, and film. We now talk about “new media,” a term usually associated with interactive media technology, such as the Internet and video games. The defining aspects of the new media are that they are digital, interactive, social, asynchronous, multimedia, and narrow casted. These

particular characteristics are important for distinguishing a new, audience-focused concept of the media from the older SMCR model, which emphasised the one-way transmission of messages.

In the past, where we tended to see the reader, listener or watcher of media as a passive spectator of centrally generated content, it is clear that today we must understand the audience as more selectively and interactively engaging with a wider range of media. The logic of communications has been radically changed—the focus on the media has been replaced by a concentration on the audience which is increasingly autonomous and deliberative in its consumption of media.

Stepping aside from the aspect of efficacy alone, today as Christian communicators we also need to give much attention to our role as content creators in order to be true educators and evangelisers of the young.

Video & Film

Videography is film cinematography's younger brother. The cultural impact of movies is extraordinary as it is being consumed through an increasingly variety of media, opening new opportunities in the field. One of the biggest barriers to aspiring filmmakers has always been the cost of producing a film. Now it has become a breeze with the help of mobile phones. Film more than any other medium other than perhaps printed novels, is centred around storytelling, the creation of striking and memorable narratives that draw people in to spend fairly high amounts of money to see them, often repeatedly.

Compared to the other communication tools, video has a special power as moving images have a great impression on the mind even after a show. Since there is an overflow of video content from the internet pool, it is important that we take to heart the interests of the youngsters. Taking into account the drifting mind of the young, it is important that the initial part of the video has an attention grabbing power.

Episodic Video Shows

Whether you call them vidcasts, video podcasts, vlogs or something else, episodic video shows are quickly becoming an important form of content delivery. And while they are not quite as ubiquitous as personal websites, individuals and small businesses have found that a vidcast can help them to develop a dedicated community of viewers by providing specialised content.

If one has special skills, products or information that would be best delivered in

small chunks over the course of many weeks, months or even years, then maybe a vidcast is just what is required. It is useful for an educator who would like to share the knowledge with a wider audience in a certain span of time.

Video Blogging

A podcast, or vidcast, is audio or video that you can deliver or receive automatically via a special kind of web-code. The code is RSS (Really Simple Syndication) 2.0 that supports enclosures and can publish a work to multiple people all around the world. It's the same technology blogs use to inform readers that new content is available. This is great for forming a community of video-loving people and the demand for such a medium is high.

Video blogs can serve videographers in gaining valuable audiences they would not be able to reach otherwise. Unlike a journal, blogs are live and public. By reading the comments left by viewers, one can gauge how well the video project engages the audience. One can share everyday stories on video blog.

Promoting social initiatives particularly care of the poor, the marginalised, education to love, to service etc... could also be the content of the vidcast.

YouTube

YouTube started out on 23 April 2005 and grew rapidly.⁶⁵ Today it has “over 1.9 Billion logged-in users visit YouTube each month, and every day, people watch over a billion hours of video and generate billions of views.”⁶⁶ It is obviously a valuable means of income generation, which is here to stay.

With free access and posting to YouTube, you have your own channel page to view your own videos you've uploaded and those you subscribe to or list as your favourites. Aside from rating your videos online and leaving comments about them, your followers, friends and family can subscribe to your videos and receive a notification every time you update your collection.

As a means of evangelisation, you can create a playlist of short videos which could serve as catechesis, instruction or education.

Electronic Displays and Overhead/Portable Projectors

Electronic displays/projectors can be a useful tool to engage the parishioners at the church's entryways. It can be used effectively to display the Word of God, Hymns, Church announcements etc... There are ample resource materials on the web. Many worship services now incorporate video elements. Besides church premises the same technology can be used in universities, colleges, youth centres

etc...

Photo Galleries

Considering the use of photo for evangelisation, we can say that photographs are an effective way to add to the visual appeal of a publication or a presentation. Good photos communicate a silent story. They can save many words of text, project positive images, and capture reader interest. On the internet, photos are great and quick attention grabbers and you can use the description area as an opportunity to not only highlight the event but also highlight the program and link out to it.

They are powerful means of catechesis and evangelisation. A still image has a power which in certain situations can be more effective than a moving image or video. To educate an illiterate audience, a still picture can be much more effective than a moving image.

Other Tools

Like instagram, twitter, flicker, etc. there are many other apps with video-sharing facilities which are easy to use. Recording a video or message within the app is as easy as holding down a button, and then removing it to stop. You hit publish, and your message is shared with your followers, or wherever you post. The “feed” of the pictures and videos can be easily embedded on a website home page.

Priests in a parish could record welcome messages and updates, volunteers and staff could record a “tour” of your church, anything to engage your website visitors and followers. With millions of users, you can include a hashtag with your post, and make your video searchable. These growing social media platforms aren't going away any time soon.

Other Venues and Opportunities

Film Festivals

Religious film festival is an opportunity to give visibility to the faith with the idea that art is a "weapon of evangelisation." Festivals can attract lot of youth as viewers and educators and content creators. The theme in question can be further discussed in an educational environment as schools, parishes and oratories.

Parish Ministry

Videos can be incorporated on a parish website. It can be a great way of demonstrating what a parish has to offer as video is becoming a very common

demonstrating what a parish has to offer as video is becoming a very common way for people on the Internet to learn and explore.

Video can be used to help engage and reconnect with the parishioners especially the youth. Video in this context can be used as an engagement or event marketing tool. It can be a powerful way to help urge potential parishioners or former parishioners to come to Mass. It can be an effective way of communicating your mission. Naturally, the goal of these short videos should be to communicate how your parish is and urge the viewers to come to Mass; to be part of your faith community.

Video testimonials on a parish website can be extremely powerful. Recordings of parishioners talking about their faith community, how it has affected their family life and strengthened their relationship with God.

Video is a powerful communication tool, and it can be used to accent sermons or Bible studies. This can take several forms. May be there's a clip from a movie or TV show that reinforces a main point. Alternatively, you may choose to produce a short segment for that purpose. Humorous clips are always winners that get the people smiling and more receptive to the message.

Image Magnification (IMAG) is the technique of displaying a close shot of your speaker on a large screen for everyone to see. Common in large churches, this technique offers a simple way to get up close and personal with your priest or other ministers.

Sermon and reflection videos, advertising and other promotional pieces give your Web audience a closer connection to the church. Members can email links to friends offering them a peek inside. If your church Website doesn't support streaming video, create a YouTube channel and link to it. Everyone loves Internet video, and the church is no exception.

The content thus generated could be an invitation to attune to the Good News as well as being publicity about the church.

In a parish or school context, the relevance of animated videos for a faith lesson or catechesis for the youth needs no elaboration.

Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages are a universal phenomenon. It is a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith often seeking a renewal experience.

Short videos that could be prepared for such an occasion could prove immensely useful. It could be something to motivate the pilgrims to undertake a journey of that sort or some guidelines on the pilgrimage. It could also include a catechesis centred around the pilgrim spot.

Tourism

It is not uncommon to find video guides in places related to tourism. It could be a kiosk that is programmed with a video documenting the story of a historical site, catacombs, giving explanation about the important spots. Besides generating a content that is touristically rich one could wrap the package with some points related to catechesis and moral instruction.

University, colleges, schools, education and youth centres

Online education materials and courses could contain catechetical or moral elements wrapped in a video and interactive format.

Virtual World

In view of the growing use and awareness of Virtual Reality, we as Salesians are preparing to use this technology as educational and evangelisational tool.⁶⁷ Not only as a video game, but a world where we can meet many people. As Pope Francis invites us to create the community of people through the network. He says: “The present context calls on all of us to invest in relationships, and to affirm the interpersonal nature of our humanity, including in and through the network. All the more so, we Christians are called to manifest that communion which marks our identity as believers. Faith itself, in fact, is a relationship, an encounter; and under the impetus of God’s love, we can communicate, welcome and understand the gift of the other and respond to it.”⁶⁸

At the same time, Pope Francis underlines his concerns regarding the virtual world. “It worries me that they communicate and live in the virtual world... When I arrived they made a din, as young people do. I approached them to greet them and few shook my hand. The majority were with their mobile phone taking photos, photos, photos . . . selfies... We must make young people “land” in the real world, touch the reality, without destroying the good things that there can be in the virtual world, because they are useful.”

Conclusion

Electronic media is one of the most powerful communication tools created to date. It has the potential to become a major force in evangelisation. As Bill

Moyers said, "That little screen is the largest challenge God has given us in a long, long time. It can be the largest classroom and the largest Cathedral."

Examples from the real virtual world

- www.dynamiccatholic.com
- <http://www.salesiansireland.ie/sundayreflection/>
- www.formed.org
- www.catholic-link.org

Chapter 12

Communication in Crisis Situations

Javier Valiente SDB & Carolina Triana

“So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another” (Eph 4:25). This quote from the Message of the Holy Father Pope Francis for the 53rd World Communications Day captures our attention by pointing to two elements in managing communication in crisis situations. First, speaking the truth will always make us credible before the public or those attached to the Salesian charism. And secondly, we are part of the Church, the Salesian Congregation, a Province or local community, and hence we are responsible for ensuring its image and reputation, both of which are intangible assets in organisations.

Salesians and laity who hold office and have direct responsibility in different settings, need to understand the basic principles of communication in crisis situations, given that communication is already inherent to our educative and pastoral activity, whenever the welfare of other people (if there are victims or people affected in any way), or the reputation and credibility of our Congregation and the Church are at stake.

Crisis situations

Here are some of the crisis situations that can end up affecting our educative and pastoral activity and institutional image: work-related crises (harassment, dismissals, conflicts due to closure of the institution, re-orientation processes, redesigning and restructuring Provinces, unions: strikes and demonstrations); crises among young people (bullying, violence and grooming); crises related to accidents and death; natural disasters (earthquake, flood, avalanche, hurricane, tsunami, epidemic, fire); crises relating to information and communication (rumours, discrimination, accusations, allegations of sexual abuse, allegations of mistreatment, negative exposure of name, sabotage in social networks); crises which are criminally related (sabotage, attacks, kidnapping, vandalism, fraud, theft); security crises (infrastructure, food, water, unsafe actions); financial and legal crises (bankruptcy, legal action).

When these crisis situations arise there are two fronts we have to deal with at the same time and in a coordinated way: management of the crisis (the practical management problem) and management of communication. In these situations, communication cannot just become an additional problem. Hence it is necessary to prepare, foresee how we will act in these situations.

Management of communication in crisis situations must be a strategy of our institutional communication which helps us to unify our way of acting according to the handbook provided within each Province. This will be done by the multidisciplinary crisis management team, where each one will contribute from their experience to carry out the three possible stages of the crisis: preparation - response - recovery.

Crisis communication is one part of crisis management whose aim is to achieve, by means of communication:

- a reduction of damage done to possible victims,
- support for repair of damage caused to the institution, and
- contribution to restoring confidence, so we can continue with the mission the institution is carrying out in the Church and society.

Communication in these situations is of vital importance. It will always be characterised by transparency and truth, attending to the public which is affected, helping to minimise the negative consequences of the crisis, without forgetting that in situations in which people are affected (e.g. abuse cases), the most important thing is to attend to them and consider our communication from the point of view of their needs and expectations. Equally, we must bear in mind that crisis situations go well beyond our Provinces and it is appropriate to treat the Congregation and other Provinces (especially the nearest ones) as a priority public to offer information about the crisis to.

Crises do not always go straight to traditional media. It should be noted that many communications crises involve social networks, an internal or local network, so we also need to prepare a management and response protocol for these situations.

General principles

If a specific communication plan is not available in crisis situations, it is advisable to devote a section to this aspect in the local or provincial communication plan.

It is important to draw up a map of likely crisis situations. It is true that crises are unexpected, but we can foresee what kind of crises can happen to our institution. Some will be low level, others more significant. It is especially in these latter cases that we need to take care of everything relating to communication.

In these situations in which the image of the centre or entire institution is seriously compromised, we are committed to an active communication policy, since the public of a Salesian work will ask to be informed. There is a need to take the initiative, even more so in a context where the media will echo what is happening (this will certainly happen) and social networks will act as speakers for any individual or group connected with the work or who feel affected by the crisis, etc.

Hence, at least in the communication plan, it helps to note some general guidelines for action when faced with these situations:

- Define the Crisis Management Team. This is a group of individuals that centralises information and analyses the scope and consequences of the situation; it indicates the steps to take and centralises decision-making, indicating lines of communication.
- Pay attention to different sections of the public; those affected; internal public, communications media, institutions.
- Indicate fundamental criteria for any communication: be proactive in communication; agile communication; see to information and data offered; respect for individuals affected and their rights; concern for privacy; transparency.
- After the crisis assess the situation, measures to take so it doesn't happen again, evaluate how it happened, how communication functioned.

Keep ahead of the crisis

Institutional communication comes before crisis communication. To resolve a crisis, 95% of the work is done before the crisis erupts. This work belongs to prior institutional communication which consists of **establishing quality relationships with interested sections of the public** in the particular activity (the social context in which one is working, families, members of the institution and the educative community, workers, communications media, among others).

These relationships cannot be established when the crisis erupts, but need to be there much earlier when everything is going well and constant, fluid contact is maintained constantly.

Good relationships with communications media (personal quality dealings with editors, directors, area chiefs, etc.) on the one hand, help with knowing what will be published before it happens and help put prepared institutional protocols and communication measures in place. On the other hand, when the crisis eventuates, it allows access to the media for offering a point of view. This constant effort at institutional communication is very important in helping to resolve the crisis from within the communications context.

Crisis management team

This is a multidisciplinary team with absolute authority, credibility and it should not hold back in telling members of the Provincial/local Council what it must do to resolve the crisis. It is suggested that it be made up of a coordinator/person responsible, a legal adviser, an official spokesperson, the delegate for communications, and a psychologist.

Once in place, the Crisis management team should always:

- Identify additional experts (internal and external) who may be needed to cooperate with the team in specific circumstances.
- Identify support groups needed to carry out the crisis management team's agreed upon actions.
- Agree to and assign responsibilities to each team member, additional experts and agree on the mechanism to be followed.
- Pre-preparation, to know how to act in any crisis situation (carry out drills).

When a crisis situation presents itself the team should initially respond to the following questions: What is the situation? What are its internal and external implications? What areas are involved? It will also follow what is laid down in the following handbook.

Crisis Management Handbook

Each Province should prepare a document of this kind for the crisis management team, detailing responsibilities, procedures, actions and considerations to be taken for adequate management of a crisis in such a way that it minimises the

impact on public opinion.

The attention given to different sections of the public is most important. At times it seems that the only public is the communications media. However, we need to think, in these situations, how the crisis management team can get the facts it needs to tell other interested public bodies what is being done and what is the position. For example, Church institutions, public administration, support groups, related institutions, civil authorities... who can be contacted by the media to ask their assessment and be “allies” when it comes to talking about the Congregation.

As a working plan to follow in a crisis situation, we propose:

Communication in crisis situations

Investigation

- Indicate the kind of crisis according to situations foreseen.
- Objective description of events that have triggered it.
- Indicate what consequences and scope it has, the repercussions it has for the institution and people affected.
- Analyse the level of understanding held by the media, public opinion, people around.
- Measures taken to deal with the crisis.
- How the crisis could develop; consider worst case scenario.
- What direct or indirect responsibility the institution has.
- What plans, protocols or documents there are related to the concrete situation that has triggered the crisis.

Relationships with the institution

- See to internal communication at local, Provincial, Congregational level.
- If it happens at local level, establish coordination with the Provincial Communications office

Affected members of the public

- Indicate how different groups in the public will be affected and indicate how to reach them.
- Parents, Public administration, Congregation, related institutions, public opinion.

Spokesperson

- Identify the person who, depending on the seriousness of the crisis, will be the visible face of the institution at this time, the contact person.
- In certain cases it could be a journalist, the person in charge of communications or the centre's lawyer.

Information to be passed on

- What fundamental messages need to be passed on to the public (and indicate which sections of the public)
- What systems the institution already has in place at local or provincial level to prevent crisis situations: quality and control systems, protocols for action in cases of harassment, protocol for the protection of children, complaint forms.

Media and channels

- Which media and channels are to be used for which sections of the public (communique, sms messages, web page, press conference)
- Special control/monitoring of the institution's social networks and connected individual social networks.

- Crisis Team**
- Person in charge/coordinator (at local/Province level).
 - Spokesperson, when this is not the same as the person responsible.
 - Technician or expert according to the situation.
 - Lawyer if needed, depending on the type of crisis.
 - Person responsible for communications.
 - Depending on convenience and the kind of crisis, a representative of the educative community, sector most affected.

Spokesperson

It is of vital importance for any organisation to take special care in handling communications and the information that must be provided both internally and externally. Therefore, the Department for Social Communication calls for the identification of an individual who will be the official local informant and who has been given the position of official spokesperson of the Province to interact with the Church, the media and the Congregation; under no circumstances should the Provincial be appointed spokesperson.

The spokesman is responsible within the organisation for addressing the media, dealing with the press on behalf of the Province, never speaking in a personal capacity but on behalf of the Province. It is usually a person who has the authority to represent a group or a community and speak on their behalf because he or she has been chosen for the task. The spokesperson receives the support of the communications office in this task specifically with a view to improving his or her performance in dealing with journalists; in planning long and short term strategies, that is, proactive actions involving initiatives such as planning, persuasion, execution and realisation, and reactive actions such as responding to requests for information and crisis situations (as mentioned above, this individual should be part of the crisis management team).

The official spokesperson will also be the contact person for Rectors of works (the local spokespersons for their work) in cases where this is necessary, for statements regarding particular situations which will be addressed by the Provincial communications office, depending on the needs or situations that arise.

Chapter 13

Resilience in the Digital Age: Some Considerations

Lijo Vadakkan SDB & Fidel Orendain SDB

Introduction

If challenges and adversities are facts of life, resilience is that ineffable quality that allows one to be knocked down by life but at the same time come back to life at least as strong as before. Rather than letting difficulties or failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes. Modern psychologists identify several factors like positive attitude, optimism, self-control etc as ways to gain resilience. Resilience is not some magical quality; it takes real mental work to transcend hardship. But even after a misfortune, the resilient people are able to change course and move towards achieving their goals.

Well, this presentation has been entitled as “Resilience in the digital age; some considerations”. The word Resilience has not been chosen just by chance, but has been put there by choice. It goes to say that the digital age, while offering several challenges and setbacks can also become occasions for resilient people who even after misfortune or moments of crisis, are able to change the course and move towards achieving their goal.

Constitutions Article no.43

We begin with an article from our Constitutions. “We work in the social communication sector. This is a significant field of activity which constitutes one of the apostolic priorities of the Salesian mission. Our Founder had an instinctive grasp of the value of this means of mass education, which creates culture and spreads patterns of life; he showed great originality in the apostolic undertakings which he initiated to defend and sustain the faith of the people. Following his example we utilise as God's gift the great possibilities which social communication offers us for education and evangelisation”. R 31 34, 41; (1). cf. IM 1.

Reading closely this article, one might find a discomfort when the article views communication merely as an instrument or technique to be UTILISED. As if to

back up this view, it is enough to look at the formation materials until a few years ago which saw more precautions and warnings on media-use than real explanations of this article's relevance. And of course there were some who tried to justify it by a terminology that has become an overused phrase – “a paradigm shift” of the times. Of the many explanations of what communication is, we can start from John Dewey, who uses communication in two different senses: The Transmission view of Communication and the Ritual view of Communication.

The Transmission view of communication is the commonest view in most cultures and dominates contemporary definitions. It is defined by terms such as “imparting,” “sending,” “transmitting,” or “giving information to others.” It is formed from a metaphor of geography or transportation. The concentration is in the process of sending and what happens to the message.

The Ritual view of communication is considered more an “archaic” view. It is linked to terms such as “sharing,” “participation,” “fellowship,” and “the possession of a common belief and faith.” In contrast to the transmission view, the ritual view of communication concentrates on the shared culture of those who create and maintain the message, their shared beliefs, the ceremonies that draw them together in fellowship and commonality.

Social scientists explain to us that models and views of communication are not merely representations OF communication but representations FOR communication. They are templates that guide, concrete processes of human interaction. But they also establish repeated rituals for groups of people. The discussion of communication cannot be detached from the idea of culture – seen as a set of practices, a mode of human activity whereby reality is created, maintained and transformed by and for a group of individuals.

However, we need to understand and agree on a meaning of communication in order to:

- Give us a way to rebuild a model OF and FOR communication
- Reclaim or reshape our Salesian communication to effectively continue doing ministry for the young.

The discussion of communication is deeply and disastrously deformed when we simply consider communication as technologies and focus on the proper use of gadgets; or how we can use modern means to communicate our teachings, our values, our message or the Gospel. Our choice of model of communication therefore is informed by our Salesian culture. And in the same breath, our

Salesian culture is influenced, hopefully enriched, by the ever-evolving culture of communication. Put differently, when we choose our media for communication we also open the chance for technologies to influence our behaviours and the manner we do communication. There is a form of mutuality there, because one is cautious with haste and the other lives to hustle. Given this relationship dynamic, the Salesians, while encouraged to be reflective, must do so with calculated urgency.

What does this mean for us Salesians?

Understanding the cultural contexts

Without trying to be repetitive, today's times present new situations and challenges (Instrumentum Laboris, 2012, #42) that people have never encountered. This requires from us new analysis, new methods and expression, new ardour. Our common strategy has been rather simplistic. We responded by juxtaposing New Evangelisation and New Media. It is not all bad, because there is in fact an obvious connection. The use of new media can greatly enhance our efforts to communicate, educate and evangelise. Unfortunately, many of us have not progressed from such a paradigm. We remained and have become used to the technical or instrumental level in relation to new media. Our discussions have focused on "how can we efficiently use new gadgets to evangelise?" This allowed us to substitute old tech with new tech; to jump from the classroom chalkboard to digital platforms; from the church pulpit to the digital forum.

However, there were fewer discussions on:

- How radically has our religious life changed because of this new realities?
- How conscious are we of the reachability of things that we post, publish in the web-world?
- How has ministry been transformed due to the new technologies?
- Are the changes good or bad?
- What changes can we predict and prepare for?

Digital Revolution: more than just instrumental terms

We must realise that people are changing because of new technology. More and more people use these technologies to communicate, learn, interact and relate. What would be the implications of how we relate with each other; how we do

ministry together, considering that we belong to different generations have a different take on communication and technology? Pope Benedict reminds us: The new technologies are not only changing the way we communicate, but communication itself, so much so that it could be said that we are living through a period of vast cultural transformation (Message, WCD, 2012).

Transformation in religious life and mission

Dr. George Kaitholil, in his book “Communion in the Community” explains religious community life. He mentions how simple and ordinary things are very useful for keeping the community united, and in building up participation and fraternal spirit. His list synchronises with our Constitutions which tells us to practice and preserve: community prayers, community meals, community recreation, community celebrations, community apostolate, community meetings, community projects, community evaluation, community outings, community gathering, community recollection, community planning and community discernment.

The question that follows now is: “Are we still able to build up communities through these encounters?” If yes, what realities are challenging these aspects that build our community communion? We can’t put all the blame on technologies. But certainly they have become wedges that have divided us, 3rd parties that have made others jealous, paramours that have stolen our hearts from essential spiritual matters. No one wants to talk at length about the elephant in the room. The fact is, our interpersonal relationships are being challenged by technology. Nowadays, with members having their own smartphones, tablets, laptops and television, we can miss out being together, or when together we can get interrupted or separated by our technology.

The “new media” : More than a means - A “Place”.

These new “loci” (this media platform, public network, the new areopagus - a School, Church, Playground, and Home) are no less important than the real world. Therefore, we need to be present in this space – if not all of us, at least those prepared to enter into this new world -- otherwise we risk neglecting, if not abandoning, many people for whom this is where they ‘live’. Yes, we do underline the word “those prepared.” This is because the digital world will never be familiar to everyone, especially to digital immigrants. But it is where the Millennial confreres go to, today’s young people go to, the forum in which they get their news and information, form and express their opinions, ask

questions and discuss all matters: faith, family, school, society, culture. Most have developed a presence in this new place, this new world. But we have not collectively responded well to this challenge of being there together. Maybe like establishing settings and houses -- that we fill with confreres designated to do specific ministries, legitimately registered in the official directory as a community – we need to appoint full-time confreres for the world of new media or digital world, or the cyberspace, whatever name we choose to refer to it as.

The hesitation is due to a combination of these reasons:

- we do not know exactly how to go about this
- we are overly comfortable with our old paradigms
- we cannot afford to put full-time Salesians there and literally sit them for most part of their day and night to do screen-based media ministry.
- we are still not convinced that this is a legitimate Salesian apostolate (and not simply leisure)

A new message & approach

Even in the early life of the Church, a fruitful evangelisation required that careful attention be given to understanding the culture and customs of the Greeks and Romans, so that the truth of the gospel would touch their hearts and minds. We cannot simply do what we have always done, albeit with new technologies.

- We used to preach with the overhead projector, we then moved to the slide projector and now we are into LCDs and interactive boards. But the same message.
- We used to play music for mood setting or song interpretation using records, then cassette tapes, then MP4s, But the same message.
- We invested or rented films on reels, then Beta and VHS tapes, the short-lived big Disc era... to DVDs, to hard drive collections, But the same message.

The challenge now is producing new content for a newer presentation using new means.

Towards a Church that is transparent

At this point we must admit that the Church, which we are a part of, has many critics who are keen to reveal its/ her negative aspects in order to shame or wound her. We have to learn how to talk about our mistakes and failures, our

sins of abuse, with the intention of explaining how we intend to become better and challenging the community of believers to continue on the path of living the faith. Speaking to journalists during the Jubilee of Redemption, Pope John Paul II made a bold statement that we still need to fulfil: The Church tries and will try more and more to be a 'glasshouse' where all may see what is happening, and how she accomplishes her mission in fidelity to Christ and the evangelical message.

Strengthening the Salesian mission

One might say that this has already been discussed. We have rolled out documents and lines of actions on this issue. It may be true. But we have to say that our reflections and actions remain insufficient. The proof is:

- we still lack serious courses on communication
- we still have older confreres mistrusting millennial confreres who are into new media
- we still have digitally addicted confreres
- we still have confreres using social media simply as public diaries or reality booths where they allow others to know and see their every activity.
- we still have confreres who keep posting pictures and videos without ever censoring the content or thinking of its implications.

A particular task that our Social Communications and Youth ministry teams must look into is that of helping the confreres understand the new media environment created by the technologies and the social networks. This is especially important if we are to be faithful to our mandate to speak the language of our recipients but also the language of those who are not Christians and those who are now distant from the life of faith and have parted from the Church for various reasons. By language here we do not only refer to semantics or the local vernacular or vocabulary. We also mean other forms of communication and discourse. We have to keep in mind that the style of discourse of the social media forum is conversational, interactive and participative, even for serious and solemn messages. By language here we also think of the convergence of text, sound and images.

Non hierarchical New Media

Another feature of the new media landscape that can pose a particular challenge

to the Church's communication efforts is the fact that the new media is not hierarchical. In this environment, authority has to be earned, it is not an entitlement. This means that Church leaders, superiors of religious orders, like other established political and societal leaders, are required to:

- find new forms of framing their communications
- expect feedback that will not follow the customary grapevine flow
- anticipate the demand of the lower ranks for their immediate response
- move beyond the paradigm of the pulpit and the passive congregation (which listens out of respect for our position.)

Our new audience expect us to express ourselves in ways that engage and convince them that meeting with us is worth sharing to their friends and followers online.

Topics of Interest

Today's generation would love to dialogue with us on topics we are not comfortable listening to or discussing outside our environment:

Sexual scandals, Celibacy, Birth Control, Homosexuality, Female priests, Role of women, Premarital sex, Euthanasia, Divorce, Church bureaucracy, Boring liturgy, Diminishing membership, Same sex marriage. The truth is, because we do not often talk about these topics, our young recipients have probably only heard what popular media has opined. They have probably never heard the church explain it attractively to an audience with a 10-minute listening span or 140 character limit.

A Change of Style

As a Church, we are more used to preaching, teaching and issuing statements. These are important activities. But today's popular digital discourse engage people individually and respond to specific questions immediately. For our part, we should realise that respectful dialogue does not mean that we will always reach agreement. We engage in respectful discussion and debate not to score points against each other, but in order to grow in mutual insight. Pope Benedict, reminded us that: "The Church, in her adherence to the eternal character of truth, is in the process of learning how to live with respect for other "truths" and for the truth of others. Through this respect, open to dialogue, new doors can be opened to the transmission of truth (Lisbon May 12, 2010)." Jun Lai is a

Catholic “Life Teen Blogger” who has a good following. She recommends that to engage young people on difficult topics, teachers and preachers should:

Use good sources

We live in a culture where everything posted online is taken as “truth.” Not exclusively Catholic sources will help. There are academic journals and youthful blogs that are truthful and at the same time very appealing.

Meet your audience where they are

This means knowing who you are dealing with, including their common misconceptions when it comes to the topics you are discussing. Answering these questions are key to addressing your audience.

Avoid “pontificating” or saying “because the Church says so”

Saying “Birth control is not just a religious issue.” will open up the conversation and debunk the misconception that the debate is solely a Catholic problem.

Saying, “Pornography is especially damaging to women because....” will address the people who care about women issues in the class.

Be charitable

It’s better to not speak at all than to speak uncharitably. Because we are older or in a position of authority, we can sometimes sound condescending or belittling. Young people will immediately close off and become defensive. We need to learn how to acknowledge other sides and demonstrate that we get where they’re coming from. Since 2016 we have seen how verbal attacks have escalated among people of different opinions in politics and religion, including among SDBs. This challenges us to acquire the skill of ‘disagreeing without being disagreeable’.

Such a competence allows us not to hesitate to express ourselves or remain quiet when we need to speak out or to correct error and condemn injustices. St. Francis de Sales reminds us to speak the truth in charity without appearing to be undesirable. As an institute, our Salesian way of dealing with the young has given us the tradition of rapport. And we are not strangers to letting the young speak their minds, engaging them using their lingo, asking questions and getting feedback. But we must, at this time, also learn to listen more attentively to our recipients, or the multiple audiences we address, and understand their concerns and questions. Listening also means reading young people’s post or watching their videos. Not only is this a big challenge to our resources, but to our personal and community time which, as they stand, are already very limited.

and community time which, as they stand, are already very limited. Communicating with them will also mean being available when they want us to. They expect us to be actively replying to every correspondence in social media, commenting on their articles and posts even during moments we need for ourselves.

Conclusion

All these things would bring about a change of mentality and mindset. This is exactly what we have tried to develop in this topic here where the accent has not been so much to hammer the negative aspects of the wrong use of technology or media. But our concern in this presentation has been to develop a set of attitudes and dispositions that will make the Salesian not scared of the technology but able to transform it for an effective evangelisation and a credible presence in the digital world.⁶⁹

Chapter 14

Growing to be Salesians through the Smartphone Years

(An exploratory study of initial formation processes in a digital world)

Peter Gonsalves SDB

Communication experts acknowledge that the internet is arguably the greatest technological revolution in human history. It has not merely created a new technology, but has refined previous versions of the media. The internet has created “an unprecedented and unparalleled” revolution that consists of an “open platform for boundary-less innovation, linking diverse and diffusive players in the quest for business success, community development, and social and political progress.”⁷⁰

At first, the platform supported static websites where people were limited to viewing content in a passive manner. Users were simply acting as consumers of content available on their computers screens.⁷¹ Since the coming of Web 2.0 around 2005, the internet has offered users greater possibilities for interaction that has led to the creation of powerful social networking sites, blogs, wikis, podcasts, video sharing and web applications. Today, these are all accessible through a range of devices like the computer screen, the TV set, the car dashboard, the wristwatch, the credit card and the ubiquitous and all-important, smartphone.⁷²

To get a realistic perspective of the scale and speed of change that has occurred, it is worth looking at the statistics. In 1995, the year the domain name ‘sdb.org’ of the Salesian website was registered, the total number of Internet users compared to the population of the world was just 1%.⁷³ Today, the Global Digital Report, published in January 2019, states that 57% of the world’s population is connected to the Internet, which in terms of numbers is 4388 billion internet users out of a population of 7676 billion people.⁷⁴ Forty-nine percent of these are found in Asia, the next highest being Europe at a mere 16%.⁷⁵ Regarding the use of Social Media, Asia tops the list again, with Eastern Asia at 1,158 million users, Southern Asia 449 million and South East Asia 402 million, leaving Southern America (285 million) and North America (255

million) trailing.⁷⁶

Here are further details. The world's most visited websites in hierarchical order are Google.com, YouTube.com, Facebook.com, Baidu.com, Wikipedia.org, Yahoo.com, Twitter, followed by others including pornographic sites.⁷⁷ Based on the content of the world's top 10 million websites, the most common language for web content is English (54%), followed by Russian (6.1%), German (6.0%), Spanish (4.9%) and others.⁷⁸ The daily time spent on the Internet using any device in 2018 was 6 hours 49 minutes.⁷⁹ The daily time spent on the internet via mobile phones has increased from 1 hour 38 minutes in 2014 to 3 hours 14 minutes in January 2019.⁸⁰ The highest social platforms used are Facebook (2271 millions), YouTube (1900 m.), WhatsApp, (1500 m.), FB messenger (1300 m.), Instagram (1000 n.), Twitter (326 m.).⁸¹ The average percentage of internet users who believe that their data is being misused online is 42%.⁸²

Certainly, there is no turning back. Whether we are ready or not, the footprint of the digital age is securely upon us, and is getting larger by the minute.⁸³ Young people are the protagonists at the forefront of the digital revolution, thanks to the fact that many of them have grown up using technology like computers, the internet, and mobile devices, thereby aptly earning them the term, 'Digital Natives'.⁸⁴

As Salesians of Don Bosco, we can neither stand back and watch the revolution unfold, nor can we simply go-with-the-flow as naïve and uncritical participants. Don Bosco goads us on to do much better. When speaking of his enthusiasm to spread good literature by using the printing press (the standard mass communication technology of his time), he exclaimed: "In the things that are of advantage to young people in danger or which serve to win souls for God I run ahead even to the point of temerity."⁸⁵ He proved this spirit of adaptability to the signs of the times on various occasions. Three examples may suffice. He was open to the new educational method of 'preventing' youngsters from harm and from the age-old method of 'controlling' them through corporal punishments.⁸⁶ He was quick to grasp the value of the decimal system of measurement and even publicized it through an 80-page explanatory booklet.⁸⁷ He took pride in owning a "peerless" printing press that had all the processes of book production from "pulp-to-paper-to-print" under one roof.⁸⁸ His very practical approach to spirituality coupled with his pastoral zeal, especially in the face of disapproval and criticism, led him to say,

Our times call for action. The world has become materialistic, and so we have to go out of our way to make known the good we are doing. Even if we were to work miracles by praying day and night in solitude, the world would neither notice it nor believe it. The world has to see for itself. [...] This is the only way to make them [our good works] known and enlist support for them. Today the world wants to see things being done; it wants to see priests working, teaching and helping poor, destitute youths in hospices, schools, workshops and so on. The only way to save underprivileged youngsters is to instruct them in the faith; it is also the only way to Christianize society.⁸⁹

Were he with us today, we can well imagine him “going out of his way” to use digital technology and social networking creatively in order to attract as many young people as possible and to accompany them on their journey towards the Light.

Indeed, the type of Salesians for the digital age are those who get themselves equipped with the knowledge, skills and basic digital tools to become interactive senders and publishers of ‘messages’ of hope and happiness to the youth, and especially to those in need. As educators and promoters of the Gospel and its values, all young Salesians need to seize this unique opportunity to spread goodness beyond borders of space and time, and, consequently, to facilitate the maturing of the young wherever and whenever they are.⁹⁰

The question underpinning our paper, however, is to what extent can Salesians in the phase of initial formation be allowed to have smartphone-access? In what follows, we will first situate the question in the context of initial formation. Next, we will look at the resources available that may give us a clue to a possible way forward. We will then ‘listen’ to the opinion of young religious and priests accustomed to smartphone-use, as well as the opinion of the Councillor Generals of Formation and Communication of the Salesian Society. The paper will conclude by indicating areas that need attention in the formation of candidates in the digital environment to a healthy growth in Salesian life.

The question and the challenge

The question about smartphone access in the period of initial formation is pertinent. The smartphone is in many ways a paragon of the digital culture. Some of its characteristics are connectivity, immediacy, global reach, interactivity, portability and networking. The facilities it offers are chatting (via SMS, phone and video), information fluency, online shopping (booking, banking, entertainment), accessibility to the world of apps and much more. All these opportunities are available at our fingertips and can be creatively used for

these opportunities are available at our fingertips and can be creatively used for the apostolate as Don Bosco would surely want us to. Yet these benefits come at a heavy price.

Research studies have shown that habitual use of the smartphone undermines face-to-face interpersonal contact and social interaction.⁹¹ Positive association between time spent with friends and satisfaction with friends decreases – which has a negative impact on general well-being and sociability.⁹² Internet addiction, fear of missing out, and lack of self-control is a precursor to smartphone addiction, which in turn makes phubbing behaviour the norm.⁹³ Those persons with high urgency or high level of difficulty controlling their impulses may be unable to moderate their smartphone use.⁹⁴ The boundaries between work and family life become permeable resulting in a round-the-clock work-home interference.⁹⁵

Given these risks, would not the use of smartphones during the initial stages of Salesian formation be challenging to formators and formees alike? Is there a general orientation that we can trace in the official documents of Communication and Formation of the Salesian Society?

Documents from the Departments of Communication and Formation

The Salesian Society has no dearth of documents on the importance of our social communications mission,⁹⁶ however, most of these predate the digital era. The first official reference to the digital culture appears in the letter of the then Rector Major, Fr. Pascual Chávez in 2005.⁹⁷ In it, he singled out the development of technology, the features of the internet, the innovations at technical and structural levels and the characteristics of the digital culture. He recognized the need for a change in strategy by translating the rich documentation of the Society in the area of communications into a concrete plan of action to be promoted across the entire congregation. He announced that the Departments of Social Communication and Formation would produce such a plan.

The document was released a year later, in the booklet, Salesian Social Communication System, Guidelines for the formation of Salesians in social communication.⁹⁸ It focuses on formation and not on “training”, because the aim is not merely to achieve technical competency but to transform the candidate into a person with the right attitudes and the critical sense required for being a ‘good communicator’, essentially, within the broader framework of the Salesian

mission to youth.⁹⁹

This document has much to say on formation to social communication in the three phases of initial formation, the prenovitiate, the novitiate and postnovitiate. A brief chapter explains the scope of each phase by using a common pattern. First, the phase of formation is introduced with references from the *Ratio Fundamentalis*.¹⁰⁰ Next, the communication requirements proper to each phase are identified. This is followed by a list of themes that constitute the content to be learned along with a list of skills to be acquired during the phase. The outcome of the three chapters combined is to progressively form knowledgeable and competent Salesian communicators for the future.¹⁰¹

Regarding the digital culture, the prenovitiate phase engages the candidate in “learning to make good use of the computer and the internet, if [he is] not already able to do so”¹⁰² In the novitiate, the candidate develops “appropriate attitudes for communication [with regard to] photos, video, theatre, music, news sheets, internet, drawing.” In the postnovitiate the candidate “achieves a certain competence in the techniques of various kinds of social communication” which, we presume, would include the computer and the internet as well. It also encourages “involvement in producing information services whether they be at local or province level.”¹⁰³

In 2014, the Department of Communications at the Salesian Headquarters published another important document on digital culture. It was titled, *Recommendations for the use of Social Media*.¹⁰⁴ It provided guidelines to use the internet and social networks with prudence at the individual, community and institutional levels.¹⁰⁵ However, it did not deal explicitly with early formation processes for Salesian consecrated life in a digital culture.

It is also worth glancing at what the book of principles and norms of the formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco has to say. According to the 2016 edition of the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, the initial stages of formation that comprise the prenovitiate, the novitiate and the post novitiate constitute a period that is “pedagogically geared” to the process of “vocation discernment”. This is why it “enjoys a decisive importance”¹⁰⁶ for the candidate, as well as for the formators who have the responsibility of judging his suitability for the Salesian way of life. The *Ratio* elaborates:

The candidate must be prepared from the beginning of the process to take an active responsibility for his discernment, whether done by himself alone or in

conjunction with others, as a necessary component of his attitude of formation. The candidate is the first person concerned to discover God's plan in his regard, and that is why he cultivates a continual openness to the voice of God and to the action of those responsible for his formation; he directs his life within a faith-perspective, and examines himself according to the criteria of a Salesian vocation. He seeks to know himself in all sincerity, to make himself known and to accept himself; he makes use of all the means and instruments that his formation offers him, in particular, formative guidance and a fraternal exchange of views, the friendly talk with the Rector, spiritual direction, the sacrament of Reconciliation, the assessments, and community discernment.¹⁰⁷

Although discernment is considered the “key point of the methodology of formation”,¹⁰⁸ the Ratio, nevertheless provides useful guidelines for communication and the use of the media during the three phases of initial formation. In what follows, we will focus our attention only on these guidelines without prejudice to other aspects of the candidate's formation mentioned in the document.

In the prenovitiate, the candidate “learns to utilize his time well, makes responsible use of the mass media and personal media, turns to account the qualities he has received from God, and makes motivated decisions every day that lead him towards a gratuitous gift of himself.”¹⁰⁹ The reference to ‘personal media’ is significant, as it could include the smartphone, if permitted, since it is essentially a personal and private medium.

In the novitiate, “the beginning of the Salesian religious experience in following Christ”¹¹⁰ there is no explicit reference to communication or the use of media. However, with regard to ‘human formation’ the novice is expected to deepen his self-knowledge and his self-acceptance. He has to grow in self-control and temperance. He has to strengthen his ability to make motivated decisions and be ready for work. He is to take an active part in community life through healthy interpersonal relations and to put his talents at the service of the community.¹¹¹ Moreover, “it is important for the director of novices and the formation team to give some ‘space’ for the exercise of freedom and responsibility so that the novice can assess himself, his personal autonomy and capacity for collaboration and have the possibility of reflecting on the choices he makes.”¹¹² On reading these statements, one could conclude that the way of life in the novitiate, if practised with assiduity and perseverance, is the perfect antidote to smartphone dependency, or for that matter, any addiction. On the contrary, introducing the smartphone in the novitiate could perhaps be a way of putting the suitability of

the candidate to the severest test. Keeping it for later could imply: giving him time to concentrate on his spiritual self-mastery first, in order to meet the many challenges awaiting him, including the responsible use of the smartphone.

In the post novitiate, the humanistic and philosophical studies undertaken are meant to lead the confrere “to progressively integrate faith, culture and life.”¹¹³ The curriculum of basic studies dedicates an entire section to the study of social communication.¹¹⁴ Another section deals with artistic formation that highlights the merits of education to music, theatre and sacred music.¹¹⁵ The Ratio also places importance on the knowledge of the use of media and communication for education,¹¹⁶ and the psychology of communication as interaction, group dynamics and language.¹¹⁷ This phase in the life of a Salesian is indeed a *kairos*, a truly favourable moment for developing one’s creative and critical understanding of digital media and, if appropriate, for putting the fair use of the smartphone to the test.

A mini-survey of the practice of early stages of formation and the smartphone

Notwithstanding the documentation available, the concrete question about smartphones in initial formation remains vague. Moreover, our attempts at ‘googling’ research studies on the use of the smartphones in early formation to religious life or the priesthood have been in vain. Living at the international Salesian University in Rome, however, presented a unique opportunity for a mini-research on what students from different parts of the world thought about the issue. We decided to limit our study on the use of the smartphone only to the novitiate (or propaedeutic stage for diocesan seminaries), rather than include all three phases of initial formation. Being the most ‘sacred’ and ‘crucial’ stage of the initial formation, we considered it apt to stir up a robust debate. Our aim was to have a sounding board to gauge the variety of opinions expressed on the issue rather than an in-depth analytical scientific research. Students who were invited to participate were between the ages of 25 and 35. They were priests as well as consecrated religious, and hailed from different continents. Out of the fifty requests sent out, thirty-two accepted the invitation. These consisted of 10 diocesan priests, 4 female religious and 18 male religious (of which 15 were Salesians). Of the total, 13 hailed from Africa, 3 from South America, 7 from Asia and 9 from Eastern Europe.

Two questions were put to each of them through personal interviews. The first question was “Should smartphones be used in the novitiate or propaedeutic stage

question was “Should smartphones be used in the novitiate or propaedeutic stage of seminaries?” The participants had to choose from points on a scale of 1 to 6, where point 1 meant an absolute ‘no’ to smartphones in the novitiate or minor seminaries, and point 6 an absolute ‘yes’. The replies of the participants (p) appear in the second row of the table below.

NO	1	2	3	4	5	6	YES
	9p	4p	3p	5p	8p	3p	

To simplify our presentation, we shall call those who chose point 1 the first group, those who chose point 6 the second group, and those who chose points 2 to 5 the third group.

The rationale that was offered by the participants for their choices are as follows: The first group comprising nine participants, sought a ban on the use of smartphones in the novitiate. According to them, it was important to dedicate the entire year of the novitiate to a life focused on prayer, discernment, self-awareness and study. The smartphone, they believed, would be a “terrible distraction” that would vitiate the very purpose for which novices had chosen to ‘leave the world behind’ and enter the novitiate. The second group consisting of three participants chose point 6 to state their wholehearted agreement in the use of smartphones in the novitiate. They believed that contemplatives in action (like the Salesians), ought to discover holiness in the circumstances of daily life in the world from which they had come, and in which some had already experienced the use of smartphones. To restrict the use of the device would seem artificial. One ventured to say, “Banning novices accustomed to using the smartphone is like cutting off their hands.” The third group, consisting of 23 participants, were those between the two extremes. They chose options 2 to 5 because they felt that a more balanced approach was needed. They believed that novitiate life could be organized in a way that blended both, discipline and relaxation, prayer as well as contact with families and friends. All were in favour of a ‘regulated use’ of smartphones, although the regulation varied from severe (points 2 and 3) to lenient (4 and 5).

Since the majority were open to the possibility of using smartphones, the second question put to the thirty-two participants was “If smartphones were allowed in

the novitiate or the propaedeutic stage of seminaries, how would you suggest they be used?” Each of the 32 participants was free to put forth multiple suggestions, which we have categorized along with the cumulative results as follows:

If smartphones are allowed, they should be used

- with critical awareness of who we are and who benefits from our smartphone use - 7
- with information and education on smartphone characteristics and etiquette -30
- with precise rules about where and when they may be used -29
- with consignment to the formator responsible when not being used -9
- with solicitation rather than imposition by the formator responsible to either deny all smartphone use or limit its use -5
- Smartphones should not be allowed at all. -4

Regarding the implementation of disciplinary measures to limit the use of smartphones, five participants suggested that these measures ought not to be imposed, but rather solicited from the novices themselves. One went on to explain how an imposition can create hypocrisy: he referred to the dismissal of a novice who secretly used the smartphone despite the ban imposed by the formator responsible.

Four participants insisted that smartphones should not be used at all. Novices could revert to the community landline or cell phone whenever needed. Besides the reasons stated by the first group above, these participants also drew attention to the fact that not all novices had smartphones. Allowing those who had them to use them, would introduce inequality and envy in community life. Three saw the use of the smartphone as a violation of the vow of poverty. One observed that even the use of different brands of smartphones could trigger discontent.

The above remarks demonstrate that cultural and economic factors played an important part in the opinions shared. We therefore present in tabular form the answers to the two questions along with details of the continents from which the participants originate.¹¹⁸

Although nine participants voted against the use of the smartphone in their reply to the first question, four stood

Should smartphones be used in the novitiate or the propaedeutic stage of seminaries?

(Single response per participant)

Scale	Africa	America	Asia	Europe	Total options
1 No	5	-	3	1	9
2 -	1	-	2	1	4
3 -	1	1	-	1	3
4 -	3	1	-	1	5
5 -	2	1	-	5	8
6 Yes	1	-	2	-	3
Total participants	13	3	7	9	32

"If smartphones were allowed, how would you suggest they be used?"

(Multiple responses per participant)

Suggestions	Africa	America	Asia	Europe	Total tips
a. Critical awareness	1	2	2	2	7
b. Be informed, educated	11	3	7	9	30
c. Limitations on use	11	3	7	8	29
d. Consign to authority	7	-	2	-	9
e. Solicit fair use	-	2	1	2	5
f. Not to be used at all	2	-	2	-	4

their ground in their replies to the second. Others conceded that it ought to be used within certain limits and with prior educational input. On the other hand, of the three who voted for a decisive 'yes' to the pro-smartphone use in the first question, two were in favour of placing limits to smartphone use in the second. One of the two added that the Novice Master should solicit the terms of use after explaining the purpose of the novitiate at the beginning of the year (rather than having them imposed on the novices).

The tables above also reveal that participants from Asia and Africa felt that not all have the same opportunities to own smartphones before entering the novitiate. They admitted that the choice to own or not to own a smartphone could become a cause of dissension and affect transparency in their relations with the Novice Master.

In general, the outcome of this study reveals that nearly all participants (30/32) felt the need of being educated to the use of the smartphone and the concern for introducing some limits (29/32) to its use.

Opinion of Two Salesian General Councillors

Independent of the mini-survey conducted, we also asked the opinion of two members of the General Council,¹¹⁹ the Councillor for Communication Fr. Filiberto Gonzalez and the Councillor for Formation Fr. Ivo Coelho. They are responsible in their respective areas of competence for leading the Salesians of Don Bosco spread over 132 countries.

On early formation and the digital culture, Fr. Gonzalez reminisces over the lively discussion on the theme of the internet and smartphone at the meeting of the World Advisory Council for Communication in 2015.

As far as I can recall, the diverse ideas that emerged at the Council reminded us about a formation to responsible freedom and not to narrow-mindedness and to our absence in the world of young people today. The love for one's vocation and mission, and fidelity to the Congregation must guide the accompaniment of the formees and the presence of the Salesians in the use of the net and smartphones for the development of culture and not for merely using technology. I think that we can be enlightened so much in this because there still are strange ideas, too closed, or too naive.¹²⁰

Fr. Coelho has this to say on the present situation of the use of smartphones in the novitiates:

Some regions did not permit the use of smartphones at all during initial formation, while in others it was taken for granted that they could be used. However, in some novitiates, an 'abstinence' of a year was proposed. At the present moment, to the best of my knowledge, all regions permit use of smartphones or at least of cellphones. The South Asia region has a policy regarding this use.¹²¹

On being asked his personal opinion on the use of smartphones in the novitiate, he says:

I do not think it is helpful to make "worldwide policies" on this matter, given the enormous differences in context between the regions. However, I believe that the right option is always education and not control. I do not see what we achieve by control, which is not only temporary but also porous, leading to all kinds of odd situations. (In regions where cellphones were not permitted, many did have cellphones anyway – with all the implications for personal growth and for formation.) The right way would be education, which does not mean "do what you want." It means talking about the issue in community moments, groups, and with individuals. It means encouraging transparency about use. It means creating an atmosphere in which formees take the courage to be transparent about their use of the net and of phones. It means patience.¹²²

He quotes Pope Francis who said that in educating a people for peace, justice

and fraternity, one of the principles is “time is greater than space”.

Obsession, however, is not education. We cannot control every situation that a child may experience. Here it remains true that ‘time is greater than space.’¹²³ In other words, it is more important to start processes than to dominate spaces.... The real question, then, is not where our children are physically, or whom they are with at any given time, but rather where they are existentially, where they stand in terms of their convictions, goals, desires and dreams. The questions I would put to parents are these: ‘Do we seek to understand where our children really are in their journey? Where is their soul, do we really know? And above all, do we want to know?’¹²⁴

Fr. Coelho continues:

However, the situation is probably quite complex. Once one has a smartphone, one feels the need for a credit or debit card, so as to make purchases online. Will the community provide this? If it does not, there is the temptation to acquire it anyhow – from family or friends. And so on. However, once again, the only way is patient education.... Sometimes we will have to adopt guidelines. These again can either be imposed from above, or else generated in dialogue with formees. Which is the way? I believe it is the way of synodality: together.¹²⁵

Habits to be reinforced in a digital world

Irrespective of the decisions that will be taken on the use of smartphones in the initial years of formation in various parts of the world, it is our hope that all formators will make attempts to preserve and cultivate in their formees the following salutary practices¹²⁶ that seem to be on the brink of extinction in a digital culture.

Candidates to the Salesian way of life need to strengthen their capacity:

- To give all people respect by prioritising their presence over smartphone interruptions.
- To maintain eye contact through interpersonal and group communications.
- To exercise one’s talents and creativity rather than maintain the ‘copy, paste and forward’ culture of social networking.
- To be educated in the discerning use of digital media and to respect psychological, moral and legal boundaries. (more on this below)
- To be engaged in producing quality media – that edify, educate and evangelize young people; that uplift the marginalised; that eulogize the good wherever it is found.

- To focus on duty first, without allowing digital distractions to interfere.
- To cultivate self-restraint in navigating the net by opting for personal integrity.
- To enthusiastically participate in community living at the service of the Salesian mission.
- To value sacred times and spaces (away from the 'noise' of real or virtual distractions) in order to examine one's conscience to evaluate the quality and orientation of one's choices.
- To consolidate one's faith in the Risen Christ, in the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, in devotion to Mary Help of Christians, Don Bosco, Mary Mazzarello and the saints.¹²⁷

Educational, psychological and legal aspects linked to the use of digital media

Taking a cue from the mini-survey and the concerns expressed by the two General Councillors, we will conclude this paper by indicating three main areas for educating Salesians in initial formation. They are the educational, psychological and legal aspects of digital culture and particularly the use of the internet and the smartphone. Ironically, the same digital culture that has risks, also provides formators with an abundance of information with which they can research and raise awareness on all the three aspects mentioned.

Education is an indisputable priority. The more candidates are informed, the better they are equipped to use media rather than allow the media to use them. Formators therefore have the onus of preparing their lessons well, by making the best use of the many digital resources available. However, sifting through the abundance of information on the digital world can be taxing. This is why manuals and ready lesson plans are a boon to those who are busy or unprepared. The good news is that, as far as educating Salesians in social communication is concerned, an aid is already available. It is called The Boscom Project, a private website¹²⁸ that was set up by Salesian Delegates of social communication of South Asia to enable formators who can understand English to educate young Salesians in the content and skills of social communication from the prenovitiate up to the third year of theology. The Councillor for Social Communications, Fr. Gonzalez had inaugurated the website at the Salesian Headquarters, Rome in 2010. Since then, it has been sporadically updated, thanks to the collaboration of many Salesian educators and communicators. Today the website is a

compendium of more than 130 lesson plans and the numbers of lessons are on the increase.¹²⁹

There is one *method* underpinning most of the lessons of *The Boscom Project* that make it attractive for those who use it. Most are based on the participatory model of educating. Although traditional teaching methods are usually unidirectional from teachers to students, educating to the media moves in the opposite direction, from the students to the teachers who are facilitators and friends. The amicable climate in the classroom has the potential of provoking healthy curiosity and lively participation through discussion, dialogue and debate. Young people are usually far ahead of adults in their versatility with digital media. They also like working in groups. Interestingly, the auto-didactic and group approach to education is extremely adapted to the digital context in which information is available in various formats for anyone to download and learn. Thus, students can become teachers and managers of their own competencies and not merely recipients of chunks of data to be memorized for an exam. The process of researching and learning in groups, combined with the accessibility of multimedia resources can be creatively combined to prepare enlightening presentations that can be shared and discussed in class and beyond.

Having established the sources and the method of educating, we now present the list of topics that are pertinent to the complexities of a digital culture. The list is by no means exhaustive. It is divided into two parts. Themes for providing Content and ideas for developing Skills.¹³⁰

Themes for Content

- History of digital media, the internet, and the smartphone.
- Statistics on digital media, how digital media work.
- Key personalities of the digital age and their stories.
- Characteristics of the digital age in general, or new platforms, or individual media.
- Comparative studies of the characteristics of two or more digital media
- Etiquette in the use of email, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Benefits and risks of different social media.
- Bibliography for further information

Ideas for Skill-development

- Capacity building in the use of computers, programmes
- Producing and publishing material using new media.
- Creating flyers, posters and newsletters using new media.
- Participating in online debates, giving feedback to articles on the net, writing for Wikipedia.
- Special courses for learning graphics, animations, computer programmes from the basic to the sophisticated.

Psychology is the second area that we need to be concerned about when dealing with digital media and social networking. Interaction between websites and users does come at a price. People cannot stay anonymous as in the days of Web 1.0. Today the internet can offer each of us a detailed profile of ourselves that we may not even be aware of. This is because our net navigation is transmuted into bytes of storable data about our location, names, birthdays, gender, sexual orientation, friends, families, bank accounts, shopping choices, businesses, associations, interests, intelligence, needs, concerns, beliefs, phobias, political leanings, time spent on netsurfing, health preoccupations and much more. We are ‘profiled’ to the hilt!

How does excessive net navigation and social media use affect our lives? In a rather comprehensive article titled “Is social media bad for you? The evidence and the unknowns”, the BBC brings together the effects on users. The issues it deals with are stress, mood, anxiety, depression, sleep, addiction, self-esteem, well-being, relationships, envy and loneliness.¹³¹

Psychologists think it better to avoid overindulging in digital media by training people to recognise the warning signals of addiction. As early as 1996, psychologist Kimberly Young developed a brief eight-item questionnaire, which modified criteria for pathological gambling to provide a screening instrument for addictive Internet use.¹³² We include them here as a preliminary guide that formators can use with formees.

- Do you feel preoccupied with the Internet (think about previous on-line activity or anticipate next on-line session)?
- Do you feel the need to use the Internet with increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction?
- Have you repeatedly made unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use?

- Do you feel restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop Internet use?
- Do you stay on-line longer than originally intended?
- Have you jeopardised or risked the loss of a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of the Internet?
- Have you lied to family members, therapists, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet?
- Do you use the Internet as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety and depression)?

Regarding symptoms of nomophobia (no-mobile) or signs of smartphone addiction, Dr Dale Archer, in Psychology Today has this list.

- Feeling anxious whenever you do not have your phone in your physical possession.
- Constantly checking the phone for new texts, coupled with the compulsion to respond immediately.
- Did you feel that your phone just vibrated... Yet looking at the phone, you realized it was a false alarm?
- You're not listening. In fact, you have no idea what the person in front of you is talking about. Why? Because you keep checking your WhatsApp tweets and texts.
- Failing in School. Poor grades can often be blamed on using the smartphone in classes. There are apps that block social media, which may help.
- Running to the store for 30 minutes and halfway there you realise you forgot your phone and you MUST turn around to get it.¹³³

The above are merely two samples that highlight the hazards of exaggerated net-surfing and smartphone use. Formators interested in probing further are encouraged to continue their research.

The web also has rules of engagement. These consist of national and international legal implications that every digital citizen needs to be aware of, much more so, those who belong to an international religious organization. While moral responsibility in the use of digital media is highly recommended, there are certain irresponsible behaviours that are punishable by law. Some of

these crimes are: hacking, copyright infringement, unwarranted mass-surveillance, sextortion, child pornography, and child grooming, phishing, identify theft, software piracy, posting illegal obscene or offensive content, virus dissemination, credit card fraud, cyber-harassment, stalking, threats and defamation.¹³⁴ It is highly unlikely that people who enter religious life have a proclivity for cyber criminality. Nevertheless, keeping them informed will only redound to their advantage and the good reputation of the institution. In this regard, the document Recommendations for the use of Social Media¹³⁵ mentioned above, will prove extremely valuable.

Conclusion

We hope the expository nature of this paper has thrown light on Salesians initial formation processes in a global digital culture. We began by presenting the problem and examining the relative documentation available in the Salesian Society. The novitiate was singled out as a critical phase in which the idea of conceding the possession of smartphones to novices is highly contentious. A mini-survey conducted at the Salesian University, Rome, has demonstrated this through the spectrum of options proposed by the participants who were priests and religious exposed to the use of the smartphone. The majority opinion of the participants of the survey, as well as the views of the Salesian General Councillors of Communication and Formation seem to point to a focus on education and the possibility of permitting the smartphone in the period of initial formation under certain conditions. The data also reveal that a unified policy for the whole Congregation is not feasible due to cultural and contextual differences that need to be respected. Recommendations suggested to candidates in a digital culture are to make a ten-point plan to preserve traditional human values and Catholic spirituality as a personal commitment. Recommendations suggested to formators are to place greater emphasis on the content and method of education in a digital media; on psychological awareness and assistance to avoid smartphone dependency; and on informing candidates about legal implications of digital media abuse.

It is our hope that this work will contribute to the holistic growth of candidates aspiring to become Salesians of Don Bosco that they may persevere with confidence and integrity towards the challenging task of educating and evangelising digital natives of the future someday.

Chapter 15

The Inner World within the Digital World

(Holiness for You too)

Julian Benedict Fox SDB

Introduction

1. Possibly the best way to begin the kind of discussion indicated by the title of this paper is to begin from experience, from the concerns that this experience has given rise to, and then to be very clear about what this paper is intended to achieve and what it is not attempting to do. This can be done quite simply.

1.1. An experience triggering reflection

2. It was after a lengthy period of involvement with the unchurched, the peripheral, the 'least' in society, but by no means the least intelligent, or the unreflective, that I wrote to Fr Filiberto along the following lines: 'Something has struck me forcefully over these years of discussion and conversations with people who belong to a world that is somewhat different from our "ecclesial" world. These people are intelligent, have often been involved in the digital world for good or for ill. What has struck me most is that there seems to exist an apparently unbridgeable, or almost unbridgeable void between the interior world and the digital world, meaning that the essential interiority of the human being becomes even more inaccessible given the circumstances of a life swamped in the morass of messages, devices, stimuli that are coming from outside.'

3. I hastened to add that although this is the reality, I believe in another reality too, that all of creation has been redeemed (including the secondary creation which results from human intelligence ... the digital world etc.), and that our task is to promote how it is that we can discover the interior world within the digital world. Note – not discover the interior world and how it can be applied to the digital world, but to discover the interior world within the digital world or, as one of my intelligent but unchurched friends put it: 'People are looking for something within the digital world and they are immersed in it regardless of wanting to be there or not. We have to find the encryption key which releases its meaning for what they are seeking.' That's not a bad way of putting it!

4. Of course, it is not something simple which admits of simplistic solutions. In my opinion, it is a path we have yet to discover. We can urge our Salesians, our 'formandi', our lay mission partners, our students, our parishioners ... to enter the 'digital playground', but there is the risk that in doing so we are really reinforcing this lack of access to the interior world! I want us to go further than the encouragement to join the digital playground. And it is not enough to offer certain spiritual platitudes which do not in fact respond to the situation because they are dressed in tired old categories or even the wrong ones. So we are talking, really, about the spiritual life, aren't we? Indeed, we are talking about a spiritual theology, or a theology of spirituality which hopefully can discover fresh categories to tackle this situation or possibly even rediscover ancient categories (I am thinking for example of the symbolic language that was so important for the Fathers like Basil, Gregory, Augustine, et al.) that we can freshen up for our world that includes the digital.

1.2. The concern in negative and positive terms

5. That is the fundamental concern: put negatively, the digital world, technology, tend to make it increasingly difficult to pursue spiritual life, and this is an issue we are not tackling adequately, be it in our own spiritual life as Christians and consecrated ones at that, or in our formation of others to Christian or consecrated life. In very contemporary terms, it could be the problem of an analogue God in a digital world, or an analogue faith too, for that matter: as human beings we have a deep longing for real, tangible connection – to see, taste, smell and touch the world around us, to physically connect with other human beings, to look into people's eyes, to put our arms around a loved one or even a stranger, to feel the warmth of a fire, to hear the autumn leaves crunch under our feet, to splash cold water on our faces ... None of this can happen – at least in the same way – in the virtual world. Or, put in similarly contemporary terms, it could be the problem that we have not offered a theological course correction to the path modern technology is taking us down. At the core of Christian faith is the Incarnation, while the path of modern technology leads increasingly in the direction of disembodiment. It is interesting that the two words which make up 'technology', *tektōn* and *logos*, are used to describe Jesus in the Greek New Testament (cf. Mt 13:55 and Jn 1:1 respectively)!

6. Put positively, the interior life, the spiritual life for the Christian, means finding God in all things (and that must now include the computerised device, the internet, the digital), leading to a life of contemplation in action. There are many models of the interior life that we can strive to imitate. The most important

many models of the interior life that we can strive to imitate. The most important one, of course, is the God-Man, Jesus Christ. He is a divine person and, therefore, incomprehensible to any created intellect, such as a human or angelic intellect. Therefore, the imitation of Christ can never be perfect. After Jesus, we have the example of his Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. The interior life of Mary is the important fact about her; in the lives of the saints of the Church, we also encounter models of the interior life, and St John Bosco is one of those. Yet the question remains – how? ‘Holiness for you too!’ is a fine slogan. It presents us with the challenge I wish to take up below.

1.3. The aim of this paper and what it is not about

7. This paper is about responding to that challenge in the area I have indicated. This paper is not about our pastoral approach. If anything, there is already abundant material on the pastoral dimension – e.g. the internet as an instrument of evangelisation. Nor is it about ethics and the internet. There is already a Vatican document on that, and there is an active Italian layman constantly plugging away at this too. I refer to Marco Fioretti, co-founder of Eleutheros, who would like us to realise that not even Church material, documents, etc., should be produced or downloaded in ways that are less than ethical – his direction of course is free, open source software. All important enough these things, but really not touching the heart of the matter. What is lacking is systematic, theological reflection on this all-pervasive and no longer so new reality of the digital world.

8. What I intend to achieve is to open some pathways and explore some theological categories. It is not so difficult to frame a few questions; it is enormously difficult to come up with answers, and it is not ‘answers’ as such I would want to offer, but some directions to take that might take us forward, some more directly, others with various twists and turns, and maybe some even leading into blind alleys. Only in prayer, reflection, discussion, more prayer, will we be able to discern which is which.

1.4. Three helpful stimuli

9. This paper cannot be a book! It needs to quickly get to the point. I have three stimuli in mind which I think clear the ground a little to reveal some paths we could follow. One is a Pope, the second a well-known Jesuit who has begun to do some of the more systematic theological thinking I have referred to. The third is also a Jesuit, artist and theologian. Come to think of it, then, all three are Jesuits!

A. What are the challenges that the so-called ‘digital thought’ puts on the faith and on theology?... Digital culture puts new tasks on our ability to speak and to listen to a symbolic language that speaks of the transcendent ... Jesus ... knew how to use elements of the culture and ambience of his time ... Today we are called to discover, in digital culture also, the symbols and metaphors that are significant to the people and that can be helpful in speaking about the Kingdom of God to contemporary man (Benedict XVI to Plenary Session of Pontifical Council for Social Communications February 28 2011)

10. Just note the reference here to symbolic language and the transcendent, to symbols and metaphors that will speak to human beings about the Kingdom of God within digital culture.

B. Marshall McLuhan, who faced the new media with an innovative way of looking at them both from a critical literary point of view and as a Catholic thinker, has been a comfort and inspiration to me. The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins helped me understand the role of technological innovation; jazz helped me understand the role of social networks; and the theologians – from Thomas Aquinas to Teilhard de Chardin – shed light on the forces that drive us in the world, participating in Creation, and that lift us toward a goal that exceeds it, well beyond any cognitive surplus ... Flannery O’Connor helped me to understand the importance of ‘the action of grace in territory largely held by the devil’ ... it is the poetry of Karol Wojtyla which tried to explain electrical metaphors used in the Sacrament of Confirmation that draws my astonishment. (Antonio Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet*, Paperback – September 19, 2014 Maria Way (Translator) Fordham Uni Press, pp.x,xi.)

11. Note here the range of real-life people and experiences he is drawing on to come to grips with how technologies redefine not only the ways in which we do things but also our being and therefore the way we perceive reality, the world, others, and God. “Does the digital revolution affect faith in any sense?” Spadaro asks. His answer is an emphatic Yes. But how, then, are we to live well in the age of the Internet?

C. In recent decades, where the dominant approach was generally a socio-psychological one, the breakthrough to faith did not happen because there continued to be misunderstandings no less harmful than the metaphysical and moralistic spiritualisms of the past. In fact we cannot deal in a truthful and effective way with things of the Spirit using scientific or philosophical language

creative way with things of the Spirit using scientific or philosophical language and ways of thinking, given that the sciences themselves warn us that the action of the Holy Spirit and divine-human synergy are not the object of their study. So it is not possible to interpret the human phenomenon on the basis of the sciences, idealism, philosophical ethics, whatever school of psychology, and then put a spiritual-theological cover over it later (Marko Rupnik, *According to the Spirit: Spiritual theology on the move with Pope Francis' Church*, Coventry Press, Melbourne 2019, pp. 57-58).

12. The digital world is part of the human phenomenon. Note Rupnik's comment that we need to avoid just putting a spiritual-theological cover over things. The invitation is to investigate how the Holy Spirit is at work in the human phenomenon (in our case the digital world) and to speak of that in spiritual terms: 1 Cor 2:13 ('interpreting spiritual things in spiritual language').

2. Finding Paths

2.1. Path no. 1: the theological route

13. If it is the spiritual life we are talking about, we need to be clear what we mean by 'spiritual'. Marko Rupnik cited above, well-known for his work on spiritual and liturgical art (many would have seen his *Redemptoris Mater* chapel in Vatican City), also happens to be a fine theologian (cf. *According to the Spirit – the original Italian, Secondo lo Spirito*, is published by LEV, 2017). He looks at the history of words like 'spiritual', 'spirituality' and 'spiritual theology', making the point that the Latin *spiritualis* entered the language to translate the Greek *pneumatikos* in Paul's Letters and that it is tied to the *Pneuma* of God. You can't talk about *spiritualis* without meaning the Holy Spirit. Spirituality on the other hand is quite a late entry, very rare prior to the 13th century and only really spread across European languages in the 17th century. And spiritual theology is practically a 20th century discovery! But he insists that it has to be a way of theologising which proceeds from life in the Spirit, the gift of the Spirit which is life in Christ, sharing in Trinitarian life. Straight to the heart of theology! He also makes the point that so much of theology today, whatever branch we consider, whatever manual of theology we pick up, draws heavily on sociology, anthropology, psychology, you name it – but much less on theology itself!

14. For us, this insight means that we are looking at how new life, life in Christ, Spirit, person, communion ... can be enhanced in the digital world, and not seeking this through the myriad of sociological, anthropological, psychological,

technological studies of the digital world, but through Trinity, the life and experience of the ekklesia, sacrament, liturgy and so on.

15. Path number one is to take the theological route and not get sidetracked.

2.2. Path no. 2: "I believe in the Holy Spirit"

16. The world is a stage, but it is not so much men and women who are the principal actors. Theologically we would talk about the action of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in this world. The less well-known action is that of the Holy Spirit! Back in 2013, in one of his first General Audiences (May 15, 2013), Pope Francis said 'Today I would like to reflect on the Holy Spirit's action in guiding the Church and each one of us to the Truth.' Among other things he also said: 'The truth is not grasped as a thing, the truth is encountered. It is not a possession, it is an encounter with a Person'; ... Jesus describes him as the "Paraclete", namely, "the one who comes to our aid", who is beside us to sustain us on this journey of knowledge'; 'Let us try asking ourselves: am I open to the action of the Holy Spirit? Do I pray him to give me illumination, to make me more sensitive to God's things? This is a prayer we must pray every day: "Holy Spirit, make my heart open to the word of God, make my heart open to goodness, make my heart open to the beauty of God every day" ... And finally: 'Let us ask ourselves at the same time what steps we are taking to ensure that faith governs the whole of our existence. We are not Christian "part-time", only at certain moments, in certain circumstances, in certain decisions; no one can be Christian in this way, we are Christian all the time.'

17. It would seem to me that we need to bring reflection on the Holy Spirit and his action into our reflections on the digital world. When it is all said and done, Google and Siri pale in their significance beside this Helper to the truth! Reflection on the Holy Spirit and the digital world is a path that few theologians have explored. In Jn 14:26 Jesus says: 'But the Advocate [or Helper], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.' In modern language that is kind of search-engine like! But the function of memory is not just about the past; rather it is the past brought into the present for the shaping of a future known only to God. The Holy Spirit does this work personally and 'corporately' among us, through Scripture, liturgy, the 'great cloud of witnesses' through the ages, through life in communion, through manifestation of spiritual gifts. Here is a huge field to explore for its possible openings to theologising about the digital world. We could also look at the internet and the Holy Spirit in a more

functional way: how the internet helps us to see what the Spirit of God is up to in the world today.

18. There is little doubt in my mind that a second path to follow is the Holy Spirit within the digital world.

2.3. Path no. 3: Theology of place

19. The biblical narratives in both the Old and New Testaments put significant emphasis on God's work in specific places. Abraham was called by God to leave his home to go to a new land. His descendants lived there for only a few generations before being enslaved in Egypt for several centuries. The Exodus from Egypt involved a generation spent in the wilderness, a place where God worked mightily with the people of Israel. Jesus became flesh in a particular place; the Gospel began spreading from Jerusalem, reached Rome ... as a result of the Holy Spirit (here He is again!) coming down on a specific group of believers in a specific place to be witnesses 'in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

20. One of the challenges for a theology of place today comes from the postmodern reality that people no longer have a single location, ('my place', as aboriginal or indigenous people might phrase it), but may have several places. Identity is formed in a grid of places that might include home, work, the coffee shop or supermarket – and online. But the important thing about place is that it is relational, and even undifferentiated space (internet?) becomes a place for us when we become familiar with it and it shapes our perception of reality, what we do and think. So, can the internet be a 'place' in this sense? People today talk about meeting someone 'on' Facebook. If someone spends time 'on' a site, 'meets' people there, develops relationships, who are we to say that God does not include this as yet another place for his saving activity, where we can theologise as we do about God's presence in other human places. If the internet is a place, then we need to spend time considering how to bring out the best human activity, creativity there, as we would with any other place. There will be grace and sin in that place as there is in any other human place, and God will be at work there, redeeming it and asking us to cooperate in its redemption.

21. Place is a third path to take in exploring spiritual life in the digital world.

2.4. Path no. 4: Trinity, communion, personal relationships

22. There is a key insight that Marko Rupnik refers to in the work I have already cited, and while it is theologically a little complex, let us not hold back from

contemplating it because of that. Essentially he turns to Orthodox theology with its roots in the Cappadocians (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, but others too) and quotes liberally from an Orthodox Metropolitan today who is regarded as the greatest Orthodox theologian of our time – John Zizioulas. The central point Zizioulas makes is that the image of God in humans does not relate to our nature because we natural beings cannot become God. Instead it relates to our personhood. This personhood is best understood as mirroring the relationships between the persons of the Trinity: ‘True personhood arises not from one’s individualistic isolation from others but from love and relationship with others, from communion’ (J.D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, London 2006, T&T Clark, p. 168). The baptised individual who has been introduced into this trinitarian life of intimate love and relationship has to be able to view the digital world, then, from such a perspective, which has nothing to do necessarily with insights from sociology or anthropology or psychology, though it must ultimately inform them. My point here is our starting point – theology, not human sciences, and the other point might be to ask the question: is my activity regarding technology and the digital world something that enhances personhood?

23. The longing for deep, loving connection was wired into human beings at creation because we were created in the image of a ‘social’ God. We know that sin marred that, and we reverted to the ‘natural’, not the ‘supernatural’ striving for relationship. Our natural striving is doomed to failure, and thus, so is connection in the digital world doomed to failure. But we have been redeemed, brought into the life of the Trinity through baptism, so the task is to bring that supernatural life to the digital world: holiness for it too! The longing, the ‘remembrance’ of the prelapsarian union with God and our ‘other’ (Adam and Eve before the Fall) is still there, and the Holy Spirit (here He is back yet again!) is the Helper who reminds us of what was there initially and which was revealed through Jesus. This longing manifests itself in the relentless efforts to connect personally with others who are visible in daily life, including on the internet.

24. Here is yet another, a fourth path to explore: communion and personal relationships viewed from the perspective of the Trinity.

25. We know that the digital world, social media, really are trying to ‘connect’ but the human being according to nature will always fail in this. The human being according to God, assisted by grace, will not fail if grace is allowed to reign. It is then that we realise that our identity comes not from the fact that we

are individuals, thus different, isolated from the other, but from God through our original creation which was lost but then redeemed and re-appropriated in baptism, and which makes us dependent on communion. The internet as a 'natural' tool or environment ends up turning others into objects; we ourselves are objects in that view of things. We try to connect with others but do so as autonomous individuals, not persons who are constituted by relationships. So in practical terms, this fourth path means exploring a route whereby we exercise intentional practices to nurture healthy, life-giving connections. We 'listen' to what people say online, respond with loving words, pray and invite others to pray about issues raised, worry less about 'information' on others and more about their and our loving relationships with God and others.

2.5. Path no. 5: Sin and creativity

26. We can note that Spadaro found Flannery O'Connor helpful as he began to theologise about the digital world, since she reminded him of the importance of 'the action of grace in territory largely held by the devil.' We have to bring reflection on sin to any consideration of holiness, the spiritual life, the digital world, not because we hold that the internet, a computer, or whatever other aspect we take of this world is in itself either 'temptation' or 'sinful', but because we know that at the Fall, human beings ruptured communion with God-as-communion and thus with other human beings. That is sin. Loving relationships were compromised at every level. At that point we ceased to be free – and lack of freedom is addiction. We tend to limit the term 'addiction' to very obvious situations, but the reality is that in natural terms, we all suffer lack of freedom and therefore addiction, in the digital world and every other kind of world we inhabit. A sobering thought!

27. It can easily start from personal experience of where we find addictive, compulsive, destructive behaviour in ourselves or others in the context of the digital world, but not with any view to denouncing the internet! After all it is us, not the internet, who are the problem. As redeemed humanity, we can tackle this. Just as we explore God's love in face-to-face settings, so do we need to explore God's love in virtual, online settings. We can be clear about what sin looks like in the digital world and we can also think creatively, as people with the new life of grace can, about what to do in this situation. The spiritual life leads human beings to a creative existence where all that is typically human, everything the human being does, is experienced in freedom from ourselves, because we are created in the breath of the Spirit, in communal freedom.

28. So here is our fifth path: mentioning ‘sin’ and ‘Spirit-inspired creativity’ to overcome it in the same breath! Only someone who is free creates. The true Christian, freed from sin, is truly creative. That sort of language fits well with the digital world.

2.6. Path no. 6: Symbol, symbolic language

29. The language of the digital world is a language we normally think of as ‘technological’, and that kind of language seems to be quite impervious to the spiritual. But the fundamental point I have been making in this paper is that the spiritual life is discovered when we start to talk about relationships, communion, persons, Trinity-as-communion. So the language we need to be using in any spiritual and theological reflection on the digital world is relational language, and that can be spiritual language. Can it be done?

30. As Benedict XVI pointed out in his address to the Pontifical Council on Social Communication quoted at the beginning of this paper, Jesus found elements of his culture and ambience to talk about the Kingdom of God to his contemporaries. And we know how he did it. It should not be impossible for us to find symbolic language that speaks of the transcendent and the relational in our very technological world today. The digital world will offer us abundant symbols and metaphors.

31. But our problem is more nuanced. The moment we begin to theologise about these things, we realise we have spent many centuries where theology largely abandoned the language of symbol which was so prominent for the Cappodocians, for example, and we turned instead to the language of the Summa (L.F. Ladaria, *Introduzione alla Antropologia Teologica*, Piemme Casale Monferrato, 1992, 16). We have been too influenced by the language of clear and distinct ideas, but the spiritual life, based on Christ, Christ in us and us in Christ, is multi-faceted, calling on all kinds of symbols, sacraments, liturgical moments, seeing one reality through another.

32. Our sixth path is about symbolic language, but it involves asking in what sense the digital world can be or can lead us to liturgy? Sacrament? It also invites contemplation, a word we do not readily associate with the digital world, but to quote Marko Rupnik one final time, ‘Contemplation is not just before a spectacle that makes us exclaim spontaneously “How beautiful it is”. The spiritual art of contemplation succeeds in bringing out the connection between any human situation and Christ’ (According to the Spirit, cit., 187).

2.7. Path no. 7: Incarnation

33. The Incarnation, God in flesh in the person of Jesus, is our true humanity. To grasp the mystery of our own humanity is to grasp the person of Jesus. This means we are called to an “analogue” faith, a faith that sees, tastes, smells, hears, and touches. By virtue of God-in-flesh, we know that God does not hover in space over us. God is not an abstract theory. God is not merely living in the recesses of our mind or the sentiment of our hearts. God has shown up in our midst to touch lepers, feast with sinners, embrace his neighbours, and even write in the dirt. Emmanuel. God is with us, dwelling among us. Putting it that way, we can already see that the digital world maybe something of a problem for faith in Jesus and hence for the spiritual life.

34. If the Incarnation of Christ is the essential paradigm for Christian living, then it must also be a paradigm for the many ways throughout Christian history that Christians have lived – and a prominent way Christians do that today is online and with technology! So to cut through a lengthy christological discourse, I would like to suggest that we need to look at ways that the Incarnation can be a paradigm for online existence and communication.

35. The Incarnation tells us that God put a priority on face-to-face, bodily communication, and hence we are easily led to say that the proximity of bodily presence is preferable over disembodied communication via social media, for example. But there are times when human communication partners cannot speak in person. This was no less true in the New Testament world than it is today — hence the ancient form of social media we know as the epistle or letter (‘Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete’ 2 Jn 12). Perhaps this can remind us that even in online communication, it is important for us to affirm that face-to-face is better, ‘so that our joy may be complete’.

36. That said, the Incarnation also encourages our presence on the Internet. This is because the Incarnation is about God, who is relationship (Trinity) reaching to the furthest extent possible, reaching into unsuspecting places by surprising means to establish and sustain relationships. There is no sphere — physical, social, cosmic, or virtual — safe from the relational intrusion of the Triune God! It follows, then, that we as Church should infiltrate the highly relational social sphere of the Internet. ‘The greater miracle of language lies not in the fact that the Word becomes flesh and emerges in external being, but that that which

emerges and externalizes itself in utterance is always already a word' (Gadamer, Truth and Method, 419). As Gadamer points out, the incarnation is not just about bodily existence; it is an expression of divine communication. What became incarnate is precisely the media-related concept of God's so-called Word, and as such, the incarnation is about divine communication. It is also about participation, very much a patristic view (Jesus participates in our flesh that we might participate in his divine life) and very appropriate language for today too.

37. Pope Francis' constant insistence on 'personal encounter with Christ' ('I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ' EG no. 3, but there are multiple other examples) is one reminder among others of the core belief which is the Incarnation, and a way we can keep our feet on the ground, including in the digital world. Maybe we need to do at least two things: (1) Pick up Don Bosco's 'core practice' once more of catechism (the Congregation began with a catechism lesson) which ensures that the Christian knows how the truths of faith hold together, and also gains a sense of the 'hierarchy' of truths. This is the theological course correction I hinted at in the beginning of this paper; (2) Ask questions like 'do these activities (online, social media ...) help us to flourish as the human beings God wants us to be as revealed in Jesus?' 'Is this activity enabling me to be more present to others?' (which is what incarnation is about, really).

38. The Incarnation is an immense theological topic, obviously, but it has to be a central path for us to take if we are to take the theological route for exploring spiritual life in an online context.

39. Hopefully, taking one or more of these paths and exploring them for ourselves, will benefit us, our Salesian Congregation, the Church at large. While no one, Pope or otherwise, has as yet claimed that the digital world is a 'theological category', there is no harm in exploring it as if it were, in other words, attempting to discover if the digital world can allow us to know God, see the face of Christ and understand the Gospel message. One indirect approach to this, suggested by Pope Francis, is to take something that is considered to be a 'theological category' and see how it might be explored through the digital world: 'Without the preferential option for the poor, "the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today's society of mass communications"' (Evangelii Gaudium, no. 199, quoting Novo Millennio

Ineunte, no. 50 by JP II). That is how I began this paper, quoting from personal experience and from someone who might well be considered to belong to the poor and the least.

3. Application to Gaudete et Exsultate

40. While each of the seven paths offers enough material, I believe, for extensive reflection, perhaps a good way to conclude might be to take some key points from Gaudete et Exsultate, which is about holiness in today's world, and ask how they might be applied in the light of the above. I will simply offer some starting points:

* 'For you too' is the header for paragraphs 14-18 of Gaudete et Exsultate. How might we apply, in the light of the theological reflections in this paper, the following comments: 'We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves' (14); 'Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life' (15); 'This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures' (16)?

* Para 30: 'The same distractions that are omnipresent in today's world also make us tend to absolutise our free time, so that we can give ourselves over completely to the devices that provide us with entertainment or ephemeral pleasures. As a result, we come to resent our mission, our commitment grows slack, and our generous and ready spirit of service begins to flag. This denatures our spiritual experience. Can any spiritual fervour be sound when it dwells alongside sloth in evangelization or in service to others?'

While it is an apparently negative comment about distraction in the digital world from our true mission, in the context of the entire Exhortation might it also be a positive impetus to make our digital involvement one of constant evangelization and service to others? Actually, Francis hints at this anyway in para 31: "We need a spirit of holiness capable of filling both our solitude and our service, our personal life and our evangelising efforts, so that every moment can be an expression of self-sacrificing love in the Lord's eyes"

* In some respects, Google is gnostic, and probably pelagian as well! "When somebody has an answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not on the right road" (41). Quoting St Bonaventure, Francis suggests: "The greatest possible wisdom is to share fruitfully what we have to give... Even as mercy is

the companion of wisdom, avarice is its enemy.” “There are activities that, united to contemplation, do not prevent the latter, but rather facilitate it, such as works of mercy and devotion.” Google took ‘Don’t be evil’ as its motto (inspired by 1 Thess 5:22? Probably not! But we can be inspired by it). Alphabet rephrased that to ‘Do the right thing’ (inspired by 1 Thess 5:21? Probably not! But we can be inspired by it). Perhaps ‘Holiness for you too’ is better than both?

* In Chapter 3 (63-109), Pope Francis begins to apply the Beatitudes, e.g. ‘... Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness ... Keeping a heart free of all that tarnishes love: that is holiness.’ Could we rephrase the Beatitudes for holiness in the digital world?

* In Chapter 4, Pope Francis discusses five “great expressions of love for God and neighbour” that he takes to be “of particular importance in the light of certain dangers and limitations present in today’s culture.” Those “signs or spiritual attitudes” will help us “understand the way of life to which the Lord calls us.” Pope Francis first states these five attitudes negatively:

There we see a sense of anxiety, sometimes violent, that distracts and debilitates; negativity and sullenness; the self-content bred by consumerism; individualism and all those forms of ersatz spirituality – having nothing to do with God – that dominate the current religious marketplace. (111)

Stated positively, the Christian should rather be patient and meek (112-121); joyful (122-128); bold and passionate (129-139); communal (140-146); and constantly prayerful (147-157). Pope Francis casts this chapter in terms of following and becoming more like Jesus. While the negatives apply quite easily to the digital world, so must the positives!

* Community (140-146): just to pick up one of the above, community, we can immediately see possible applications to the digital world. ‘Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others. We see this in some holy communities. From time to time, the Church has canonised entire communities that lived the Gospel heroically or offered to God the lives of all their members.’ As far as I know, there is not yet a canonisation directly connected with the digital world! Food for thought?

* If Flannery O’Connor was able to remind Spadaro of ‘the action of grace in territory largely held by the devil’, so might Chapter 5 of GE! ‘Spiritual combat’ sounds a bit old-fashioned, but the Pope does mention the devil 15

times in GE and he gets prominent mention in this chapter. Combat, Vigilance, Discernment. These are three quite provocative terms when it comes to the digital world. The discussion on discernment offers indirect mention of the digital world (167) though there is one other very direct mention at 115: 'Christians too can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication.' We are in devil territory! But it is to be met by holiness expressed through perseverance, patience and meekness – on the internet? In social media? Quite some challenge.

¹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12599-018-0550-4>

² <https://apiumhub.com/tech-blog-barcelona/digital-business-transformation/>

³ <https://apiumhub.com/tech-blog-barcelona/digital-business-transformation/>

⁴ <https://www.techsoup.global/>

⁵ <https://support.google.com/nonprofits#topic=3247288>

⁶ <https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/media/why.html>

⁷ Cf. From *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach The New Survival Skills Our Children Need – And What We Can Do About It* (Basic Books, 2008).

⁸ <https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/advice-teachers/digital-literacy-skills-finding-information/>;
<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/science-maths-technology/computing-and-ict/information-and-communication-technologies/information-on-the-web/content-section-1.2.3>;
http://www.googleguide.com/print/adv_op_ref.pdf

⁹ <https://www.teachhub.com/10-necessary-technology-classroom-skills>

¹⁰ <https://www.lcibs.co.uk/the-role-of-social-media-in-education/>

¹¹ *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for World Communications Day*,
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20180124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html

¹² <https://davidbuckingham.net/2018/10/03/taking-charge-media-regulation-digital-democracy-and-education/>

¹³ Cf. BENEDICT XIV, *Message for the 47th World Communication Day* (2013)

¹⁴ Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for the 48th World Communication Day* (2014)

¹⁵ Cf. PAUL VI, “*Apostolic Exhortation*” *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975, N.45

¹⁶ Cf. BENEDICT XIV, *Message for the 44th World Communication Day* (2010)

¹⁷ Cf. Marc PRENSKY, *Teaching Digital Natives: Partnering for Real Learning*,

¹⁸ Cf. BENEDICT, *The Church and Internet*, Vatican City, Feb 22, 2002, N.7

¹⁹ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Message for 45th World Communication Day*, 2011

²⁰ Erik QUALMAN,
<https://twitter.com/equalman/status/533090727081689088?lang=en>, accessed on 23rd February, 2019.

²¹ Cf. John DRANE, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Consumer Culture and the Church's Future*, Paperpack, 2010, p.185.

²² Cf. Fabio ATTARD, SDB Youth Ministry Department, *Salesian Youth Ministry – Frame of Reference*, Paperpack 3rd Edition, Rome, 2014, p.72.

²³ Cf. Fabio ATTARD, SDB Youth Ministry Department, *Salesian Youth Ministry – Frame of Reference*, Paperpack 3rd Edition, Rome, 2014, p.88.

²⁴ Cf. BENEDICT, *The Church and Internet*, Vatican City, Feb 22, 2002, N.18

²⁵ Cf. BENEDICT, *The Church and Internet*, Vatican City, Feb 22, 2002, N.18

²⁶ Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for 53rd World Communications Day* (2019)

²⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for 53rd World Communication Day* (2019)

²⁸ Cf. BENEDICT, *The Church and Internet*, Vatican City, Feb 22, 2002, N. 2

²⁹ SPADARO, A. *Ciberteología. Pensar el cristianismo en tiempos de la red*. Biblioteca Herder, 2014, Barcelona.

³⁰ *Salesian System of Social communication* (no. 54). 2011.

³¹ Cf. BARBERO, J. *De los medios a las mediaciones. Comunicación Cultura y Hegemonía*. Convenio Andrés Bello, Bogotá, 1987.

³² *Salesian Const.* 2.

³³ BARICCO, A. *Los bárbaros. Essay on change*. Anagrama, Argentina, 2008.

³⁴ BERRA J.P. *Los siete niveles de la comunicación. El arte de aprender a escuchar y escucharse*. Agape libros. Buenos Aires.

³⁵ BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 47th World Social Communications Day, 2013*.

³⁶ BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 47th World Social Communications Day, 2013*.

³⁷ "...contemporary man's day almost never contains anything that can still be translated into experience: neither the reading of a newspaper...nor the minutes spent at the wheel of a car during a traffic jam... nor a demonstration blocking the street, nor clouds of tear gas slowly dispersing among the buildings in the centre, not even brief shots from a revolver going off somewhere, nor the queue lining up in front of a kiosk ... Modern man returns home at night exhausted by a grab-bag of events – amusing or tedious, unusual or common, atrocious or pleasant - without any of them having become an experience". Agamben, Giorgio, *Infancia e historia*, Buenos Aires, 2004, p. 8.

³⁸ Cf. Intervention of Cuda, E., at the meeting on *La vida se vive en el pueblo* organised by the Centro Nueva Tierra. Argentina, 20 August 2018.

³⁹ Dos Santos, Gildásio M. *A realidade do virtual*. Campo Grande, MS: UCDB, 2002.

⁴⁰ Biocca, F.; Delaney, B. 'Immersive virtual reality technology' in: BIOCCA, F. LEVY, R. M. (Ed.). *Communication in the age of virtual reality*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995. pp. 57-124.

⁴¹ Woldon, D.. *Internet, y dspués? Una teoria critica de los nuevos medios de comunicacion*. Barcelona: Gedisa Editorial, 2000.

⁴² Han B Chul. *Sociedade Cansada (The burnout society)* Petropolis, RJ, Vozes: 2015

⁴³ Han B Chul . *Psicopolitica*. Barcelona, Herder Editorial S. L: 2014

⁴⁴ Han B Chul. *La sociedad de la transparencia*. Barcelona, Herder Editorial S. L. 2013.

⁴⁵ Tapscott, D. *A Hora da Geração Digital*. São Paulo: Agir, 2010.

⁴⁶ Gershmehl, P. J.; Gershmehl, C. A. *Spatial thinking by young children: neurology evidence for early development and “educability”*. *Journal of Geography*, New York, v. 106, n. 5, p. 181-91, 2007.

⁴⁷ Letter of Pope Francis to Fr Angel Fernandez Artime, SDB Rector Major of the Salesians, during the Bicentenary of the Birth of St John Bosco: *Like Don Bosco, with the Young and for the Young*, June 24, 2015: “In particular, I want to point out two tasks that arise today from a discernment of the youth reality: the first is that of educating, in accordance with a Christian anthropology, to the language of the new means of social communication and of the social networks, that deeply shape the cultural and value systems of the young, and therefore their outlook on the reality of man and religion...”

⁴⁸ With social networks we refer to all content and Internet platforms that allow users to exchange information and content such as photos, videos, stories, experiences and opinions.

⁴⁹ Salesian Social Communication System, *Guidelines for the Salesian Congregation*, SDB Publishers, 2nd Edition, Rome, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Cf General Chapter XXVI Salesians of Don Bosco, N° 99, 109; Cf. The Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Studiorum*, 3rd Edition, Rome, 2000, N° 141.

⁵¹ This document, in its structure and content, is inspired by the guidelines adapted in the Salesian Province of Germany (GER), and was revised and enriched by all the Delegates for Social Communication and the General Council.

⁵² Cf. Fr. Pascual CHAVEZ VILLANUEVA, *With the Courage of Don Bosco on the New Frontiers of Social Communication*, Acts of the General Council, 390.

⁵³ Cf. General Chapter XXVII Salesians of Don Bosco, N° 25.

⁵⁴ Cf. Constitutions of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, art. 6.

⁵⁵ Ibid, art 2, 43.

⁵⁶ Cf. The Formation of the Salesians of Don Bosco, *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Studiorum*, 3rd Edition, Rome, 2000, N° 71.

⁵⁷ Cf. General Chapter XXVI Salesians of Don Bosco, N° 11.

⁵⁸ Cf. Constitutions of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales, art. 39.

⁵⁹ Cf. Department for Formation and Department for Social Communication, “*Elements for the Formation of Salesians in Communication*”, Salesians of Don Bosco, Rome, 2015.

⁶⁰ The present version are inspired from the documents of the German Bishops Conference, the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious Orders, the rules for using social media in the German Caritas Association, in the "Social Media Guidelines" of the city of Berlin Commission and in the Austrian Red Cross.

⁶¹ Cf. *Constitutions of the Society of Saint Francis of Sales*, arts. 20, 38.

⁶² Cf. XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *The New evangelisation for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, 2012.

⁶³ Benedict XI, Message for the 43rd World Communication Day, Vatican, 2009.

⁶⁴ Ditto, Benedict XI...

⁶⁵ Me at the zoo, very first video uploaded to YouTube,
<https://youtu.be/jNQXAC9IVRw>

⁶⁶ YouTube for Press,
<https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/yt/about/press/?noapp=1>

⁶⁷ The Catholic Leader, *New church a virtual reality*, 2014,
<http://catholicleader.com.au/news/new-church-a-virtual-reality>

⁶⁸ Pope Francis, Message for the 53rd World Communication Day, Vatican, 2019, http://m.vatican.va/content/francescomobile/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20190124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html

⁶⁹ Carey, J. W. (1988). *Communication as culture: Essays in media and society*. New York, NY: Routledge. Challenges of technology in religious community life: <http://asec-sldi.org/news/reflections/community-life/>

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⁷⁰ Lynn ST. AMOUR, “The Internet: An unprecedented and unparalleled platform for innovation and change” in *The Global Innovation Index 2012*, 157-162.

⁷¹ Graham CORMODE - Balachander KRISHNAMURTHY, “Key differences between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0”, in *First Monday*, 13/2 (2008) in <https://firstmonday.org/article/view/2125/1972> (12-03-2019)

⁷² Darcy DINUCCI, “Fragmented Future”, in *Print*, 53/4 (1999) 32.

⁷³ In 1995 the number of Internet users compared to the total population of the world was 1%. INTERNET WORLD STATS, “Internet Usage Statistics”, Miniwatts Marketing Group, June 30, 2018, in <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> (16-02-2019)

⁷⁴ *Global Digital Report*, January, 2019 by *We are Social*, <https://wearesocial.com/global-digital-report-2019> (16-02-2019)

⁷⁵ INTERNET WORLD STATS, “Internet Usage Statistics”. A glimpse of the leading regions of internet use are: Eastern Asia 1000 million, Southern Asia 803 million, Southeast Asia 415 million, Northern America 346 million, Eastern Europe 233 million, Western Europe 183

million, Western Asia 182 million, Western Africa 158 million, Eastern Africa 140 million, etc. Cf. *Global Digital Report*, January, 2019.

⁷⁶ Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 65.

⁷⁷ Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 52.

⁷⁸ Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 54.

⁷⁹ Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 41.

⁸⁰ Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 43.

⁸¹ Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 81.

⁸² Global Digital Report, January, 2019, 57.

⁸³ To view the ticker of Internet users increasing by about 500 points per minute see: *Internet Live Stats*, by the World Wide Web Foundation, in <https://www.internetlivestats.com> (18-02-2019)

⁸⁴ Marc PRENSKY, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants”, in *On the Horizon*, MCB University Press, 9/5 (2001), <https://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf> (20-03-2019)

⁸⁵ The original quotation in Italian is: “Nelle cose che tornano a vantaggio della pericolante gioventù o servono a guadagnare anime a Dio, io corro avanti fino alla temerità.” Eugenio CERIA (Ed.), *Memorie Biografiche di Don Giovanni Bosco*, XIV (1933) 662. The above translation is more faithful to the original than the translation in the English version: “I do not hesitate to take a risk in projects which may benefit endangered youth or help lead souls to God” in Eugenio CERIA (Ed.), *The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco*, New Rochelle, Salesiana Publishers, 14 (1983) 536.

⁸⁶ John BOSCO, “The Preventive System in the Education of the Young”, in *Regulations for the Houses of the Society of St Francis of Sales*, 1877.

⁸⁷ John BOSCO, “Arithmetic and the metric decimal system” in Giovanni RAINERI, “Don

Bosco's communication as a paradigm" AGC 302 (1981) 32-51.

⁸⁸ Natale CERRATO – Michael RIBOTTA, "Expo '84 and Don Bosco's peerless pulp-to-paper-to-print presentation", in *Journal of Salesian Studies*, 4/1 (1993) 87-98.

⁸⁹ Eugenio CERIA (Ed.), *The Biographical Memoirs of Saint John Bosco*, New Rochelle, Salesiana Publishers, 13 (1983) 96.

⁹⁰ The digital world has helped us transcend space and time: 'space', because distances are no more a hindrance to keeping in touch; 'time', because the materials we post on social networks can continue to be seen long after we have posted them. (Facebook has a special facility to entitle someone to keep posting on your page after your death.)

⁹¹ Ryan DWYER, et al., "Smartphone use undermines enjoyment of face-to-face social interactions", in Dwyer, R., *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 78 (2018) 233-239, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.10.007> (14-03-2019)

⁹² Valentina ROTONDI, "Connecting Alone: Smartphone Use, Quality of Social Interactions and Well-being", in *Dems Working Paper Series*, University of Milan, 357 (2016) 1-21

⁹³ Varoth CHOTPITAYASUNONDH - Karen M. DOUGLAS, "How 'phubbing' becomes the norm: The antecedents and consequences of snubbing via smartphone", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63 (2016) 9-18.

⁹⁴ J. Billieux, et al., "The role of impulsivity in actual and problematic use of the mobile phone", in *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 22/9 (2008) 1195-1210.

⁹⁵ Daantje DERKS, et al. "Smartphone use and work – home interference: The moderating role of social norms and employee work engagement, in *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, The British Psychological Society, 88 (2015) 155–177, https://www.isonderhouden.nl/doc/pdf/arnoldbakker/articles/articles_arnold_bakker_379.pdf (14-03-2019).

⁹⁶ Some official publications on social communications and media are: Luigi RICCERI "Family News" on the centenary of the Salesian Bulletin, AGC 287 (1977) 3-33. Egidio VIGANÒ "The challenge of the media" AGC 302 (1981) 25-28. Giovanni RAINERI, "Don Bosco's communication as a paradigm" AGC 302 (1981) 32-51. Juan E. VECCHI, "To the Directors of the Salesian Bulletin" AGC 366 (1998) 98-117, and "Communication in the Salesian mission" AGC 370 (1999) 37-41. Antonio MARTINELLI, *Book of the provincial delegate for Social Communications*, Rome, Department for Social Communications, SDB

Publishers, 2001. Tarcisio SCARAMUSSA, *Salesian Social Communication System*, Department for Social Communications, SDB Publishers, 2005. Pascual CHÁVEZ, “With the courage of Don Bosco on the New Frontiers of Social Communication”, *ACG 390* (2005) 3-46. Tarcisio SCARAMUSSA, “Guidelines for Salesian Publishing”, *ACG 390* (2005) 47-56.

⁹⁷ Pascual Chávez, “With the courage of Don Bosco on the new frontiers of social communication” in *Acts of the General Council*, 390 (2005) 3-46.

⁹⁸ *Salesian Social Communication System, Guidelines for the Salesian Congregation*, Second Edition, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome, 2011, 53-61. (Henceforth *SSCS - Guidelines*)

⁹⁹ *SSCS - Guidelines*, 53-61.

¹⁰⁰ *Formation of Salesians of Don Bosco, Principles and Norms, Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum*, 4th Edition, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Roma, 2016. (Henceforth *Ratio Fundamentalis*)

¹⁰¹ *SSCS - Guidelines*, 56-58.

¹⁰² *SSCS - Guidelines*, 56-58.

¹⁰³ *SSCS - Guidelines*, 56-58.

¹⁰⁴ *Recommendations for the use of social media*, *ACG 423*, 2016, Department of Communications, Salesian Headquarters, Rome, (2019-02-27)

¹⁰⁵ The *Recommendations* was inspired by guidelines adopted and put into force on June 2, 2014 by the Provincial of the Salesians of Germany (GER); the documents of the German Bishops Conference the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious Orders, the rules for using social media in the German Caritas Association; in the “Social Media Guidelines” of the city of Berlin Commission and in the Austrian Red Cross. The document was the result of two years of work that involved the participation of the Delegates of Social communications scattered throughout the provinces and the World Advisory Council of 2015.

¹⁰⁶ *Ratio Fundamentalis*, art. 269.

¹⁰⁷ *Ratio Fundamentalis*, art. 270.

¹⁰⁸ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 270.

¹⁰⁹ La Formazione dei Salesiani di Don Bosco, Principi e Norme: Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis et Studiorum. (henceforth Ratio) Roma: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, IV Edition, 2016, art. 337.

¹¹⁰ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 357.

¹¹¹ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 359.

¹¹² Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 359.

¹¹³ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 589.

¹¹⁴ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 594F

¹¹⁵ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 594G

¹¹⁶ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 593C

¹¹⁷ Ratio Fundamentalis, art. 593D

¹¹⁸ We have intentionally withheld the names of the countries of the participants.

¹¹⁹ The General Council cooperates with the Rector Major in animating and governing the Salesian Congregation consisting of 14659 members spread across 1771 institutions in 132 countries. (Statistics as of December 2017, from www.sdb.org)

¹²⁰ Excerpt from a Letter of Fr. Filiberto Gonzalez to the author via email on February 15, 2019. The original follows: “Per quanto mi ricordo che richiamavano la formazione alla libertà responsabile e non alla chiusura e assenza della realtà dei giovani odierni; l'amore per la propria vocazione e missione, così come alla Congregazione deve guidare l'accompagnamento dei formandi e la presenza dei salesiani nella rete e nell'uso degli smartphones per trattarsi di una cultura da sviluppare e non solo di una tecnologia da usare. Penso che in questo possiamo illuminare tanto perchè ancora ci sono idee strane, troppo chiuse, o pure troppo ingenue.”

¹²¹ This is the reply of Fr. Ivo Coelho to questions put by the author via email on February 19, 2019.

¹²² Reply of Fr. Ivo Coelho continued.

¹²³ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 2013, art. 222.

¹²⁴ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, March, 2016, art. 261.

¹²⁵ Reply of Fr. Ivo Coelho continued.

¹²⁶ This list is the result of reflection based on insights culled from research studies quoted earlier, and from readings on the Salesian charism.

¹²⁷ In the digital age, when the world is at one's fingertips and individual rights take centre stage, the sacrament of reconciliation is a secure foundation for progress in authenticity to one's religious consecration.

¹²⁸ Those interested in accessing *The Boscom Project* website may contact the author <gonsalves.p@gmail.com>.

¹²⁹ *The Boscom Project* is a digital web-copy of the manual, *Shepherds for an Information Age* (Tej-prasarini, Mumbai, 2000). Its structure was based on the objectives of Salesian Formation put forth in the *Ratio Fundamentalis*, 1985. The Salesians of South Asia created the manual primarily to equip formators with a sustained and all-embracing communication curriculum that spanned 9 years of formation – from the pre-novitiate to the third year of theology. The updating of the lessons is in progress.

¹³⁰ The pattern of Content and Method/Skills is the same as found in the *SSCS - Guidelines*, Second Edition, 2011, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Rome, 53-61.

¹³¹ Jessica BROWN, "Is social media bad for you? The evidence and the unknowns", in *BBC*, 05-01-2018, in <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180104-is-social-media-bad-for-you-the-evidence-and-the-unknowns> (17-03-2019)

¹³² Kimberly. S. YOUNG, "Internet addiction: The emergence of a new clinical disorder." Paper presented at the 104th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association,

August 11, Toronto, 1996,

https://www.academia.edu/11640544/Internet_Addiction_The_Emergence_of_a_New_Clinical_AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1550674458&Signature=n%2Bcontent-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DInternet_Addiction_Symptoms_Evaluation_A.pdf (17-02-2019). See also CARR Nicholas G., *Is Google Making Us Stupid?* in *The Atlantic*, July 1, 2008.

¹³³ Archer DALE, “Smartphone Addiction” in *Psychology Today* in <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/reading-between-the-headlines/201307/smartphone-addiction> (19-02-2019)

¹³⁴ For Cybercrime in general see:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybercrime>, (23-02-2019).

For copyright laws see: WIPO (World intellectual property organization),

<https://www.wipo.int/portal/en/index.html> (23-02-2019).

Cybercrimes are “Offences that are committed against individuals or groups of individuals with a criminal motive to intentionally harm the reputation of the victim or cause physical or mental harm, or loss, to the victim directly or indirectly, using modern telecommunication networks such as Internet and mobile phones.” Debarati HALDER - K. JAISHANKAR, *Cyber crime and the Victimization of Women: Laws, Rights, and Regulations*, IGI Global, 2011.

¹³⁵ *Recommendations for the use of social media*, ACG 423, 2016, Department of Communications, Salesian Headquarters, Rome, (2019-02-27)