



# Pontifical Council for Social Communications

## 42<sup>th</sup> WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

*The Media: At the Crossroads between Self-Promotion and Service.  
Searching for the Truth in order to Share it with Others*

May 4, 2008

### **Introductory Comments**

The communications media continue to play a central role in the phenomenon of globalization. The instruments of social communication, by their own nature, have helped create a global village and profoundly influence the choices that are made. This reality can present risks whereby media professionals or organizations for a variety of reasons may be tempted to create their own news and diffuse information which may not be accurate or which aims only to sensationalize.

The theme of the 42<sup>nd</sup> World Communications Day focuses on the social dimension of this phenomenon and its effects on the Church. It appeals to the consciences of all to work for greater awareness of what is happening and to make the search for truth a primary goal.

The communications media have various levels of responsibility in this process, ranging from producers to consumers and involving single individuals or groups of persons. The final media product is often the result of many efforts and concrete choices, which all contribute to the positive, negative or mixed outcome it may generate.

One area of special concern is the emphasis often given to violence or vulgarity. Although both are a reality of life, sometimes they are given undue prominence, which gives the idea that the media may even be promoting them. These situations call for an appeal to conscience and a respect for truth. From a pastoral point of view, consciences must be formed, enlightened and corrected, if necessary. The search for truth for the Christian is an encounter with Christ, who is the fullness of truth, the way and the life.

It is necessary to move beyond passivity in the face of media products without any respect for truth or The Truth. Media programs should not be accepted in a non-critical or neutral manner only. The values and role models which they highlight must be studied and evaluated.

With the production of any television show, film or newspaper, there are many men and women making key decisions at various levels, whether regarding the technical, production or creative aspects. This is why the desire for truth, inherent in the heart of every person, can help make an impact in awakening a critical conscience of media consumers.

To conscientise consumers in this way means to know also how to decipher the codes and languages used by the media since the images, sounds and messages presented are determined by the decisions of media professionals. This is even more true today when anyone can be a media producer with the new media.

It is up to us to call for better content in the media. As media consumers, we can make our voice heard also through the choices we make. If we are media creators or producers, the decisions we make should be in favor of bringing forward positive, true and uplifting perspectives and role models through and in our work.

This year's message traces an authentic pastoral journey, starting from knowledge and use of the media and concluding with the rediscovery of Christ, fullness of truth, the way and the life.