



Pontifical Council for Social Communications

43rd World Day of Communications

Theme: *"New Technologies, New Relationships:
Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship"*

May 24, 2009

Highlights of the 2009 Message for World Communications Day

The Holy Father is addressing young people especially with his message since they are very much at home in the world of digital communication. He highlights the extraordinary potential of new technologies and networks when used to promote understanding and solidarity. He writes: *These technologies are truly a gift to humanity and we must endeavour to ensure that the benefits they offer are put at the service of all human individuals and communities, especially those who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable.*

Looking at the topic more closely, the Pope notes how *the popularity of these new technologies responds to a fundamental desire of people to communicate and to relate to each other...rooted in our very nature as human beings.* This phenomenon should be seen primarily as *a reflection of our participation in the communicative and unifying Love of God, who desires to make of all humanity one family.*

Pope Benedict calls on those producing or disseminating new media content to *strive to respect the dignity and worth of the human person and to avoid the sharing of words and images that are degrading of human beings, that promote hatred and intolerance, that debase the goodness and intimacy of human sexuality or that exploit the weak and vulnerable.*

At the same time, the Pope expresses his hope that *cyberspace can promote dialogue between people from different countries, cultures and religions, which requires honest and appropriate forms of expression together with attentive and respectful listening.*

Given that *friendship has enjoyed a renewed prominence in the vocabulary of the new digital social networks that have emerged in the last few years, the Pope suggests that it is in and through our friendships that we grow and develop as humans.* For this reason, *true friendship has always been seen as one of the greatest goods any human person can experience. We should be careful, therefore, never to trivialize the concept or the experience of friendship.*

In conclusion, the Pope calls on young Catholics *to introduce into the culture of this new environment of communications and information technology the values on which you have built your lives.* He recalls how the great Apostles and their disciples preached the Good News of Jesus to the Greek and Roman world. *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. The Pope notes how faith can respond to the deepest aspirations of the human heart and he concludes his message with a strong appeal to young members of the Church: *May you become its heralds! The Pope accompanies you with his prayers and his blessing.*