
**Message of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI
on occasion of
the World Day for Social Communications
2008**

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

Précis

- In the Message, Pope Benedict XVI expresses his great appreciation of the media, which he sees as a constitutive part of contemporary culture. The Pope underlines their role as diffusers of the primary good that is information; their role in assisting the development of democracy; as promoters of literacy, dialogue and understanding among peoples; as vehicles of the free circulation of thought for the sake of solidarity and social justice. In all these, the media respond to their high duty to serve the common good and favour “humanity’s ethical formation and the growth of the interior person.”
- In the face of such potential, the Pontiff points to the dangerous possibility of the media giving themselves over to an indiscriminate self-promotion, or finding themselves reduced to serving those who use them to manipulate consciences. It is necessary to stress the radical shift, one might even say the complete change of role, that they are currently undergoing. Today, communication seems increasingly to claim not simply to represent reality, but to “create” events. Granted The extraordinary impact of media on the lives of individuals and on society, the Holy Father reminds us, “not everything that is technically possible is also ethically permissible.”
- Thus, society finds itself at a crossroads, and must make certain decisions; society can no longer put off choosing in these matters, for, “The role that the means of social communication have acquired in society must now be considered an integral part of the

anthropological question that is emerging as the key challenge of the third millennium.” Through an “info-ethics” that brings them to defend the dignity of every person, the media are called to seek and present the truth about humanity. This is the highest vocation of social communication. In the fulfilment of their calling, the media are to use all the ever more refined and beautiful techniques at their disposal. This task does not belong only to managers and operators in the sector. It increasingly belongs to all of us, as we become operators through the new media of telecommunications and internet. We therefore have the chance to change the face of communications.

- This message considers all persons to be truth-seekers. Anyone who appreciates the “many publications, programmes or quality fiction in which the truth, beauty and greatness of the person, including the religious dimension of the person, are acknowledged and favourably presented,” is seeking the truth. Those who know that the Truth is Christ, cannot but communicate, transmit and share that knowledge. “The present age of communication is a valuable time for the quest for the truth and for developing communion between persons and peoples.”