

HOMILY HINTS

NOVEMBER 16: WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY

The theme for the 48th World Day of Communication, this year, is ‘Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter’. Such communication calls for honesty, mutual respect and a commitment to learn from each other. How can we do this and how can we attract a new generation to consider Christianity? This is a common question that is often asked and a question that Pope Francis answers in his annual message for World Day of Communications.

As Pope Francis acknowledges, it isn’t enough to distribute facts about our faith, or even arguments, as if all we needed to do was eliminate ignorance and everyone would suddenly see the light. The challenge of the New Evangelization is not a lack of information about Christianity; it is a lack of empathy.

The Pope quotes his predecessor in his message for 2014 saying “Effective Christian witness is not about bombarding people with religious messages, but about our willingness to be available to others ‘by patiently and respectfully engaging their questions and their doubts as they advance in their search for the truth and the meaning of human existence’ (Benedict XVI, 2013 Message for World Communications Day)”

Pope Francis points to the story of the Good Samaritan as a useful object lesson about communications in a digital age. He uses the word “neighbourly” to describe the Samaritan’s actions in taking care of the beaten man by the side of the road. In effect, he communicated God’s love by his actions.

“It is not enough to be passersby on the digital highways (like the Levite and the priest),” Pope Francis says. “We cannot live apart, closed in on ourselves. We need to love and to be loved.” For our communication to be at the service of an authentic encounter we must in the world of Pope Francis “Let our communication be a balm which relieves pain and a fine wine which gladdens hearts.”

*(See the full text of Pope Francis’ message at:
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20140124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html)*