

PRESS RELEASE

Year of the Priest – *Workshop at the University of the Holy Cross on communication and the priesthood*

Msgr. Piacenza:

“Communication must promote communion within the Church”

Rome, November 16, 2009 – *“Communication must promote communion within the Church; otherwise, it becomes the protagonist or, worse still, it can even introduce division. It is not necessary for a priest to become a ‘showman’, like those on TV, in order to evangelize.”* This statement was made by **Msgr. Mauro Piacenza**, Secretary for the Congregation for the Clergy, who was interviewed this morning at the Workshop on the priesthood and communication at the University of the Holy Cross. *“The priest should neither improvise when he is using the media, nor should he promote himself, but rather communicate the two-thousand years of communion in the faith.”* This message – the Prelate concluded – *can be transmitted only through his own experiences and his interior life.”*

The idea of being a credible witness in the field of communication pertains to the essence of every priest, as it was explained at the workshop by Pr. **Philip Goyret**: *“A priest is essentially the same person – in that he represents in a sacramental capacity – as Jesus Christ; for this reason, he therefore must live in conformity to Christ, Whom he represents, for he is the bearer of grace and minister to the word of God.”* Moreover, *“consecration and mission are connected: the Word in the sense of testimony, and giving testimony to the credibility of the Word.”*

For his part, Prof. **Mario Maritano**, *Deacon for the Department of Christian Letters and Classics at the Salesian University*, focused on the role of the Fathers of the Church as communicators in terms of practical examples, whereas Prof. **Sergio Tapia** explained how the Sunday homily is both a tremendous opportunity and a privilege in the transmission of the Word.

During the afternoon sessions there was an analysis of what it means for a priest to be a witness within the different areas of communication: Msgr. **Giovanni D’Ercole**, recently nominated as auxiliary Bishop of Aquila, spoke on how a minister of God must present himself in the field of communication, while Rev. **John Wauck** discussed how one is to conduct oneself in situations that deal with the treatment of privileged information.

Providing the closing statements, Dr. **Alessandra Caneva**, from *Lux-Vide*, evaluated the popular impact of the television series *“Don Matteo,”* and how it is an example of how fiction can be used to communicate the beauty of the priestly vocation.

Also present at the Workshop was Msgr. **Paul Tighe**, *Secretary for the Pontifical Counsel for Social Communications*.

Presented PICTURE: analysis on the use of the Internet within the priesthood

An international scientific research project about priests and the internet has just been presented: **PICTURE** (an acronym for Priests’ ICT USE in their Religious Experience, is run by the NewMinE New Media in Education Lab of the University of Switzerland (USI – Lugano, Switzerland), was introduced today during a workshop on *“Communication and the Mission of the Priesthood,”* in an event organized by **the School of Communication** of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross on the occasion of the **Year of the Priest**.

The Congregation for the Clergy of the Holy See has endorsed this project, which may be of interest not only for the sake of better understanding how priests worldwide perceive and use this new medium, but also to design more effective online Church communications.

PICTURE was formed in collaboration with the School of Institutional Communications of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (PUSC – Rome, Italy). The analysis consists of a questionnaire, which is available in six languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish). It is designed to assess the technological competency of priests today, to determine their online activity, their understanding of modern technology, and the way they communicate in the digital world. Priests are invited to fill out this questionnaire, which is available at the following address: http://www.pictureproject.info/?page_id=278

According to **Daniel Arasa**, professor from the Department of Digital Communications of the Pontifical University, this research is a “concrete way in which the universities may offer their academic services during the Year of the Priest, as announced by Pope Benedict XVI.” The results of the research will be published towards the end of the Year of the priest.

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