



Communication and Evangelization: Context, Attitudes and Experiences

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The book *Communication and Evangelization: Context, Attitudes and Experiences*, edited by Marc Carroggio, Juan Narbona, Daniele Sebastianelli, analyses the interrelationship between the processes of institutional communication of the Catholic Church and evangelization. The 5 parts of this volume, containing a total of 53 chapters, offer a scholarly reflection on specific issues such as evangelization in cyberculture, communicating the sacred in traditional and social media, digital religion, and communication skills and evangelization. The book is a valuable tool for spokespersons of ecclesiastical institutions and those responsible for the institutional communication of churches to better understand the changes taking place in the contemporary cultural, social and religious context, which is significantly determined by the media.

The book *Communication and Evangelization: Context, Attitudes and Experiences* is part of the field of research on institutional communication of the Catholic Church and public relations in the context of the Jubilee Year 2025. The scientific editors of the volume are renowned researchers in the field of media, communication and religion (Carroggio, 2021; Narbona, 2016; 2024; Bellido, Narbona, & Sebastianelli, 2023). This monograph is the fruit of the 14th Professional Seminar for Church Communications Offices, organized by the School of Church Communications of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The publication combines a theoretical reflection on the professionalisation of the communication of ecclesiastical institutions with an idiographic approach focusing on the in-depth study of single cases and phenomena of a communicative nature in different local Churches, aiming to understand a given case in its specificity, uniqueness and specific context.

Part one of the monograph contains two rudimentary texts offering the reader directions for the volume's scholarly reflection. Gema Bellido in the article *Comunicación y evangelización: contexto, actitudes y experiencias*, notes that, under the influence of contemporary cultural and technological changes, contemporary communication processes are not so much purely institutional but, above all, more informal, immediate, multidirectional, dialogical, relational, people-oriented

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and intangible. This broadens the paradigm for understanding the communication processes of an ecclesiastical organisation, in which, in addition to the importance of creating valuable content that has a real communicative impact, factors such as sharing the values and institutional mission with every person in the organisation, embodying them in the organisational culture and communicating them in each of the activities for communicating the message of the institution internally and externally, are also particularly important. Bellido argues that the evolution of communication in organisations has also influenced professional practice in the context of ecclesial realities. The media scholar proposes that in reflecting on the interrelationship between communication and evangelization, the following ideas should be taken into account: understanding the communicative context as a necessary requirement for the transmission of the Gospel; the relevance of the credibility of the proclaimer of the message; the definitive adoption of dialogical paradigms, more appropriate to contemporary communication modalities; the promotion of attitudes based on journalistic deontology; the close link between the good of the organisation's reputation and the good of each person; the shift from a pyramidal (top-down) communication model to a network model; the acquisition of knowledge in the area of communication strategy; and the focus on the essence of the Christian message. The second text by Rino Fisichella *Evangelizzazione e contemporaneità: orientamenti per l'attività comunicativa della Chiesa* lists and explains the theological foundations of proper institutional communication within the Church, which include, among other things, the evangelizing mission, i.e., the proclamation of the message of Christ's saving mission, calling for conversion; the identity of Christian life expressed in communion and evangelization; digital culture imposing a new language and new communication behaviors; Christian hope as an integral element of the message.

The second part of the monograph focuses the reader's attention on the contemporary context of evangelization. Maria Montserrat Alvarado analyses the new digital context, including, among others, the quality of content generated by the YouTube, WhatsApp and TikTok platforms in the context of growing media consumption. EWTN News' president and global director draws attention to the recent publication *Content Creators and Journalists: Redefining News and Credibility in the Digital Age*, where "newsfluencers" - young content creators - and journalists discuss forms of collaboration. Anne Gregory sees parallels between the role of the corporate communications specialist and that of the clergy at the following levels: *exposition, topical, narrative, thematic, evangelistic, apologetic, inspirational*. Pilar Rio reflects on the role of the laity in the proclamation of the Gospel in the context of Church teaching, particularly that of Pope Francis. R.J. Snell, on the other hand, postulates the relevance of an approach that integrates evangelization and the common good. The common good takes into account the good of the person and his or her vocation, the good of the community and the peace of order under due authority. The common good is a means of evangelization because it speaks of God, creation, man and salvation. Ngozi Okpara argues that the historical practice of sermon delivery has become insufficient because information processors now emphasize interactive forms alongside visual incidents and digital access. Religious institutions that skip adapting their communication strategies will witness progressing audience disengagement since digital audiences find different spiritual outlets. Alberto Gil argues that the main keys to effective evangelization in an intercultural setting are based on the principle of truth of content and acceptance of the other. Referring to the encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, he proposes two ideas for reflection: the identification of *logos* with truth and *logos* as the principle of liberating people from subjective opinions and feelings, uniting them in a common task and creating community.

The third part of the monograph contains experiences of communicating faith in the public sphere. By way of example, Nicky Gumbel's conversation with Alessandro Sona on Alpha courses is worth mentioning here. Paul Adrien, for his part, argues for clarifying complex discourses of a dogmatic nature in the form of folk sermons, while Joost Joustra communicates faith and the sacred through art.

The fourth part of the book presents different ways of communicating faith for professionals involved in communicating the institutional church. It is worth recalling here the text *Evangelizzazione e intelligenza artificiale* on the importance of artificial intelligence for those involved in the work of evangelization. In this article, Giovanni Tridente provides an overview of the Church's approach to artificial intelligence through its official documents and guidelines, the role of the Pontifical Academies and Catholic publications, emphasising the need for ethical discernment that always puts the human being at the centre. Luca Peyron, in turn, reflects on the changes that artificial intelligence is bringing to culture and evangelization, highlighting the need for a Church able to read the signs of the times and act with foresight.

The final fifth part of the monograph contains presentations delivered by participants of the academic conference. This section features contributions from authors such as Miquel Codolar, Gerardo Ferrara, Daniele Sebastianelli, Daniel Arasa, and Filip Veber.

The book *Communication and Evangelization: Context, Attitudes and Experiences* offers an interdisciplinary perspective on the issue of institutional communication in the perspective of the Catholic Church's primary mission of evangelization. The authors draw on the achievements of theology, philosophy, social communication and media sciences, sociology and political science, among others. The monograph systematises knowledge on the contemporary social, cultural and religious contexts that influence the adoption of an appropriate communication strategy by ecclesial institutions. The communicative language and correctly applied conceptual grid will contribute to the appreciation of the book by both theoreticians of institutional communication of religious denominations and public relations practitioners, as well as students preparing for work in the press offices of ecclesiastical institutions.

As there is still a lack of comprehensive studies addressing the topic of institutional communication of the churches in the perspective of the tasks of evangelization, the work edited by Marc Carroggio, Juan Narbona, Daniele Sebastianelli fills the above research gap, enriching the literature of social communication and media sciences. Some dissatisfaction could be left for the reader by the lack of reference to the theory of mediatization of religion, i.e. "the theory seeks to analyse how changes in religion take place both at the structural level, meaning the relation between media and religion as institutional domains in society, and at the level of social interaction, as expressed within particular organisations and in the practices of individuals" (Lövheim, & Hjarvard 2019, p. 208). Besides, a reference to the issue of visual communication as an important research perspective on the communication of the sacred (Stępniać, 2023) and religious authority in the digital age (Guzek, 2024) would undoubtedly enrich the reading of the book and strengthen the theses presented in it.

In summary, the book is a successful attempt to understand the contemporary communicative challenges facing the institutional Church. At the same time, it provides valuable inspiration for those who manage the image of the ecclesial institution.

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