

WCD Media Manual Introduction and Contents



*Sponsored by the
Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. Media Apostolate*

"...we encourage the pastors
and people of the Church
to deepen their understanding
of issues relating to
communications and media,
and to translate their understanding
into practical policies
and workable programs."

– Pastoral Instruction, *Aetatis Novae*, 3
Pontifical Council on Social Communications

Introduction

The Father John A. Hardon, S.J. Media Apostolate has prepared a World Communications Day Media Manual as a guide to be used by parishes and organizations to help them plan, organize and implement their own World Communications Day Media Information Fair. Sections have been created to define specific functions whose components present a flexible model that may be used to accommodate the various needs of each user. The subject matter is sometimes presented in a checklist format and at other times in an explanatory context. In addition, various examples of forms that may be used are also included. It is our sincere hope that this manual will serve the needs of those people who have accepted the Church's call to catechize and evangelize mankind through the use of the modern means of social communications.

World Communications Day, as outlined in the document *Inter Mirifica*, is the only worldwide celebration called for by the Second Vatican Council.

On May 7, 1967, Pope Paul VI issued the 1st World Communications Message, "Church and Social Communication: First World Communications Day." In that message, he set forth the basic underlying principal of World Communications Day: that through modern means of social communication we see "the unfolding and realization of a wonderful plan of God's providence, which opens to man's genius ever new ways of achieving His perfection and of attaining to His final end..." That end is not only to the enrichment of culture and to the mutual knowledge and understanding among peoples, but also to the spread of the Gospel message.

Paul VI goes on to warn of the danger and damage that the means of social communication can inflict upon society when these means are not used with a sense of responsibility, an honest intent, or a respect for human dignity.

He also emphasized that the means of social communication have a particularly profound effect on the impressionable minds of the young and have the ability to shape their present and future lives.

In his message, Pope Paul VI pleads with the members of the professional world of social communications, asking them to bear witness to the truth and the Word of God and to use their talents as a means to a higher end.

He also reaches out to the general public to use discernment in their choice of newspapers, magazines, motion pictures, and broadcast media and he reaches out to parents and teachers who are responsible for the education and development of children.

The following excerpt is the directive that the Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. Media Apostolate takes to establish a World Communications Day plan that may be used as a guide to establish a World Communications Day celebration at the parish level:

"Most helpful and laudable is therefore, every serious initiative that aims at forming the critical judgment of the reader and spectator, and at inducing him to elevate the news, the ideas and the images that are presented to him, not only under the aesthetical and technical aspects, but also from the human moral and religious point of view, bearing in mind the highest values of life."

Pope Paul VI goes on to say:

"We therefore express the hope that this "Day" may prove an occasion for a considered appeal aimed at an awakening of consciences and a united endeavor on the part of all in such an important cause. We exhort Our sons and daughters to undertake generous action, in prayerful unity of intent with their Pastors and with all who are willing to give their welcome cooperation, in order that, with God's help and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, they might attain those results that the celebration of World Communications Day aims at achieving for the good of mankind."

Given this background as our genesis, the Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. Media Apostolate has developed the following mission statement:

The World Communications Day Committee, under the direction of a chairman, will develop and provide a three-part instructional program to be used by parishes that will:

- 1 – educate their parishioners on the value and meaning of quality media;
- 2 – teach them sound methods to effectively counteract negative and/or immoral uses of media; and
- 3 – give them the tools to create a demand for quality media.

The World Communications Day celebration will be designed as an annual event parishes may use to promote World Communications Day, as designated by Rome, and, each year, will follow a specific theme based on the Holy Father's message for World Communications Day.

As stated, the appeal for a celebration of World Communications Day is made to two groups: the first, to the professionals and leaders in the social communications industry and the second, to the general population – parents, teachers, "every reader, every spectator".

The Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. Media Apostolate outline for the celebration of World Communications Day concentrates on the second audience, that of the laity.

Contents

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 2 – Pastor Information

Section 3 – Formation of Committees

Section 4 – Publicity Preparations – Forms

Section 5 – Hall Preparations – Checklist and Forms

Section 6 – Media Table Guidelines – Checklist and Forms

Section 7 – Alternate Ways to Celebrate World Communications Day