

WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

MEDIA RESPONSE TABLE EXHIBIT

(Letter Writing – Emails – Phone Calls)

This committee's purpose is to respond, typically in writing, to portrayals of the Church in the media. Responses should be presented in a loving tone, guided by *Inter Mirifica*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Father Hardon's talk on *St. Therese of Lisieux*. They should also invite, recruit and train members to defend the faith.

Responses could take the form of letters to the editor and publisher commenting on specific news or features in print, or letters to the sponsors of radio, cinema, television or Internet content.

Letters should seek to convert, not confront, teaching to the good and not the evil. In addition, they need not always be critical. Some could praise **sound** portrayals of Catholics and Catholicism.

Everyone can learn how to write effective letters that get read – and even published. The goal of this committee is to give parishioners the tools they need to respond to something they see, hear or read in the media that might not be in keeping with the teachings of the Church or something that might be misrepresented by media. They might even want to write a letter commending someone on a great article or show. The committee might also consider holding a letter writing “do's and don'ts” workshop at a later date.

The Letter Writers Committee could have various “form” letters and example letters that Catholics can use to send to media (and their advertisers) they feel air inappropriate or unsuitable material, programs, etc. The committee should have a supply of letters people can send out in response to current “hot topics”. A Letter-Writing Workshop – do's and don'ts – would be a highly effective way to teach people how to respond to inappropriate media messages. A listing of contact names and addresses for local and national media would be a valuable handout.

Representatives from the Speaker's Bureau could have information available for parishioners who might have a need for a guest speaker at their local parish, social group, etc. Pre-recorded tapes of earlier presentations may be sold for use at group meetings, etc.

SUGGESTED DISPLAYS:

1. Have a sign-up sheet for those who want to attend a session at a Letter-Writing Workshop on how to write letters to the media.
2. For representatives from the Speaker's Bureau, have a sign-up sheet to collect names of people who want to learn how to defend the faith during appearances on the media.
3. Encourage your audience to learn about the Catholic League and how they themselves can also participate in the defense of the Roman Catholic Faith. The "Catholic League defends the right of Catholics – lay and clergy alike – to participate in American public life without defamation or discrimination." <http://www.catholicleague.org>
4. Center for Media Literacy (CML) – "Dedicated to promoting and supporting media literacy education as a framework for accessing, analyzing, evaluating and creating media content, CML works to help citizens, especially the young, develop critical thinking and media production skills needed to live fully in the 21st century media culture." Their *Media & Values* Archives: "Over 350 classic articles from this acclaimed magazine are now online and linked to teaching ideas and resources you can use today." Visit: <http://www.medialit.org>

SUGGESTED HANDOUTS:

1. Letters that represent effective writing with marginal notes that explain why the letter was written in a particular way.
2. A tip sheet listing the "How To's" of effective letter writing.
3. A list of contact names and addresses, phone numbers and email addresses for local and national media that can be used by the public to voice their opinion to editors, publishers, program managers and sponsors who support anti-Catholic programs.
4. Learn how to become a guest speaker on television.