

THE INTERNET

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*

“THE GREAT ADVENTURE”

For the Church the new world of cyberspace is a summons to the great adventure of using its potential to proclaim the Gospel message. This challenge is at the heart of what it means at the beginning of the millennium to “put out into the deep” (Lk 5:4).

“MAGNIFICENT OPPORTUNITIES”

The Internet can offer magnificent opportunities for evangelization if used with competence and a clear awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.

“TO THE REAL WORLD OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY”

By providing information and stirring interest it makes possible an initial encounter with the Christian message, especially among the young who increasingly turn to the world of cyberspace as a window on the world. It is important ... that the Christian community think of very practical ways of helping those who first make contact through the Internet to move from the virtual world of cyberspace to the real world of Christian community.

“EXCELLENT HELP”

Especially in an unsupportive culture, Christian living calls for continuing instruction and catechesis, and this is perhaps the area in which the Internet can provide excellent help.

“A UNIQUE SUPPLEMENT AND SUPPORT”

It is clear ... that while the Internet can never replace that profound experience of God which only the living, liturgical and sacramental life of the Church can offer, it can certainly provide a unique supplement and support in both preparing for the encounter with Christ in community, and sustaining the new believer in the journey of faith that then begins.

EVANGELIZATION DEPENDS ON PERSONAL WITNESS

Electronically mediated relationships can never take the place of the direct human contact required for genuine evangelization. For evangelization always depends upon the personal witness of the one sent to evangelize (cf. Rom 10:14-15).

“SERVE THE CAUSE OF PEACE?”

How can we ensure that this wondrous instrument first conceived in the context of military operations can now serve the cause of peace? Can it favor that culture of dialogue, participation, solidarity and reconciliation without which peace cannot flourish? The Church believes that it can; and to ensure that this is what will happen she is determined to enter this new forum, armed with the Gospel of Christ, the Prince of Peace.

NO ROOM FOR CHRIST, NO ROOM FOR MAN

The Internet causes billions of images to appear on millions of computer monitors around the planet... Will the face of Christ emerge and the voice of Christ be heard?... This is what will make the Internet a genuinely human space, for if there is no room for Christ, there is no room for man.

“PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP OF THE NET”

I dare to summon the whole Church bravely to cross this new threshold, to put out into the deep of the Net, so that ... the great engagement of the Gospel and culture may show to the world “the glory of God on the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).

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