

WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY, the only worldwide celebration called for by the Second Vatican Council ([Inter mirifica](#), 1963), is **celebrated** in most countries, on the recommendation of the bishops of the world, on the Sunday before Pentecost.



- The announcement of the **theme** is made on September 29, the Feast of the Archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel, who have been designated as the patrons of those who work in radio.
- The Holy Father's **message** for World Communications Day is traditionally published in conjunction with the Memorial of St. Francis de Sales, patron of writers (January 24), to allow bishops' conferences and diocesan offices sufficient time to prepare audiovisual and other materials for national and local celebrations.
- Information about World Communications Day is archived on the [website](#) of the Vatican's Dicastery for Communication.

BACKGROUND

by Patrick Duffy at www.catholicireland.net/what-is-world-communications-day

What is it?

World Communications Day was established by Pope Paul VI in 1967 as an annual celebration that encourages us to reflect on the opportunities and challenges that the modern means of social communication (the press, motions pictures, radio, television and the internet) afford the Church to communicate the gospel message.

Where did it come from?

The celebration came in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, which realised it must engage fully with the modern world. This realisation is expressed in the opening statement of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* on "The Church in the Modern World", which says: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anguishes of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anguishes of the followers of Christ as well."

Why is it celebrated every year?

In setting it up on Sunday 7th May 1967, less than two years after the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI, knowing that the Church is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history, wanted to draw attention to the communications media and the enormous power they have for cultural transformation. He and his successors have consistently recognised the positive opportunities the communications media afford for enriching human lives with the values of truth, beauty and goodness, but also the possibly negative effects of spreading less noble values and pressurising minds and consciences with a multiplicity of contradictory appeals.

The communications world: first Areopagus of the modern age

Pope John Paul II (1990) in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio* 37 said: "The world of communications is the first Areopagus of the modern age, unifying humanity and turning it into what is known as a 'global village'. The communications media have acquired such importance as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration for many people in their personal, family and social behaviour. In particular, the younger generation is growing up in a world conditioned by the mass media." Increasingly aware of the world as a global village and the power of the media as a free market place for philosophies and values, the Church has sought to be in there with its message and to use the media to proclaim the values it sees are beneficial for human development and for the eternal welfare of people.