



*August 29, 2006 – St. Thecla Retreat House – Billerica, MA*

## **“The love of Christ impels us” ... to Seek and Tell the Good News**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When Sr. Nancy invited me to give this talk, I was fascinated by the idea of a “media apostle” retreat. The old grammarian in me may take issue with a combination of two nouns, but ... the notion of having apostles to the media or apostles on media is a Catholic communications necessity. So, I want to thank the Daughters of St. Paul for their important work in this realm.

I also want to share a little thought experiment. When I noticed the tag line for this retreat – “to live and communicate like St. Paul” – I wondered how we can be like him twenty centuries later in our communications age. I came to two conclusions:



We should not be like St. Paul in using interminably long sentences! The opening to the Letter to the Ephesians, for instance, while it appears as 12 verses in our bibles, is actually just one sentence in Greek. Paul’s singular statement in 202 words is far too long for today’s sound bite generation.

But I do think it would be beneficial to be like St. Paul in his “boldness” (*parrhesia*) while communicating the Gospel. We don’t have to be as snarky as he sometimes is (though that does appeal to me!). But the message is still revolutionary and deserves a similar zeal on our part.

Today, though, rather than speak of how to live and communicate like St. Paul, I’d prefer to talk about why we could. The title for this can serve as a little outline. The first part tries to explain what Paul means by saying “the love of Christ impels us” (2 Cor 5:11-14), while the second part will consider the meaningfulness of that claim for you who are (or wish to be) media apostles nowadays.

---

### **PART ONE: “The love of Christ impels us” (2 Cor 5: 14-17)**

Let’s begin with a bit of **context** for Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians.

(1) Corinth was the place of a Christian community established by St. Paul on the second of his three missionary voyages.

Located on the southeastern coast of Greece, its two harbors made Corinth a crossing point for wayfarers on the seas and, thus, the city was *economically* strategic. *Politically*, it was a capital city where a Roman pro-consul sat in governance. And *culturally*, the cosmopolitan mix of Romans, Orientals, and Jews made the place a vibrant urban center.

In sum, Corinth was where Christianity intersected with the secular, indeed pagan, society ... a setting not too unlike our own!

In that crossroads, two *religious* factions there came into conflict with Paul's work. On the one hand, a group of "libertines" championed the view that human freedom was such that no outside authority should be permitted to impose on their thoughts and actions. On the other hand, a group of "ecstatics" laid claim to a spiritual freedom from any order or structure that might oppose individual interest.

Both groups would challenge Paul's role as an "ambassador" and impugn the motives for his ministry.

(2) This letter offers, among other things, his self-defense ([USCCB introduction](#)). It reads as a very "personal" text, highly emotional in tone. It offers remarkable rounds of rhetoric as he makes his points. It reveals his character as a (legitimate) apostle.

In it, the "snarky" Paul comes out! He asks a barrage of questions. He poses challenges both serious and ironic. He heaps paradox upon paradox. He even hurls insults at his opponents. By all of this he strives to awaken in his hearers a true sense of value and an appropriate response to his challengers.

There, too, Paul shows himself as a "bold" communicator. His argument centers on the destiny of Jesus, in which a paradoxical reversal of values is revealed. It's the change of course mirrored in his own experience and expressive of his vision of Christian life and ministry. It's also a teaching and transformation needed for Media Apostles to "live and communicate like him."

(3) In chapter 5 of this second letter, Paul sets up the claim that is the title of my talk. He reminds his audience that they already know him and his work! He writes in verse 11:

*Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are revealed to God, and I hope that we are revealed also in your consciences.*

Since Paul probably visited the Corinthian community at least three times, and seems to have written four letters to them (of which we only have two), they should know by now that he is no fly-by-night, itinerant preacher who just happens upon them.

Indeed, he is known (“revealed”) to God, who sends him on his mission.

By hoping that he has also been revealed to their “consciences” – that place inside them where they can think critically and make sound judgments – he again invites them to receive his teaching not just as authentically human, but as a participation in the kind of seeing that belongs to God’s perspective. (Sacred Texts Guide)

That teaching comes in the verses that follow. As we will see, this passage discloses Paul’s mind in terms of soteriology and eschatology and grounds Paul’s work as a religious communicator. As such, it offers a guiding, enduring principle by which media apostles today can live and communicate like St. Paul.

Here’s the **text**:

(v. 14) For the love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died.

(v. 15) He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

(v. 16) Consequently, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh; even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer.

(v. 17) So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

For sure, the beginning (in verse 14a) is not a typically long sentence, but it does disclose Paul’s characteristically bold conviction. He forthrightly states:

***the love of Christ impels us.***

We don’t come across the English word “impel” very often. But you can get a sense of the intended image of a driving force from other words we use that have the same Latin root:

- *expel* means to drive out, *repel* to drive away, *dispel* to drive about (scatter)
- when we *propel* something, we push it forward
- when we *compel* someone, we oblige them to do something

The Greek word Paul uses here (*synechei*) is really vivid. It means to grip, press hard, or hold together under pressure.

In Luke’s gospel, the term describes a fever seizing a body (8:45) or a crowd pressing in from every direction (12:50).

It's a term used *about* Paul in the Acts of the Apostles (18:5), where it says that he "occupied himself" with preaching the word.

It's a term used by *Paul* in describing to the Philippians (1:21-23) his existential dilemma of being "caught between" the twin desires of remaining in this life and departing to be with Christ.

What Paul seems to be saying here to the Corinthians is that the love of Christ pressures him, on the inside and in a positive sense, to do what he does in proclaiming the Gospel. In other words, he doesn't just want to do that, nor does he simply think he should do it.

No, Paul does what he does because he "has to" ... not that a divine power is forcing him, against his will, to do so; but in the sense that he has become so deeply convinced of the love that Christ bears toward him, that it "constrains" him, leaving him no room to do things his own way, as he used to prior to his encounter with the Lord on that road to Damascus. (Sacred Texts Guide)

But that vocational truth is not just for the apostle to the Gentiles. The same divine love also impels us. Paul says as much when he completes the sentence (verse 14b). The love of Christ impels us ...

*once we have come to the conviction that **one died for all; therefore, all have died.***

Paul considers Christ's death not just as a one-off event, historically speaking, not just something people witnessed long ago and read about nowadays. No, it transcends time and has eternal consequences. One person was crucified, but that one Son of God lifted up all of humanity in his suffering and death.

As Paul writes to the Romans (cf. Romans 6:3-4), this happens to and for us by virtue of our baptism – through which Christ's 'death for all' is not merely a transaction on our behalf, but an event we are caught up in. (Sacred Texts Guide)

The Jesuit cardinal, CARLO MARIA MARTINI, the biblical scholar who served as Archbishop of Milan, explains this in a unique way (*La Debolezza è la mia forza*). He makes reference to the philosophy of Parmenides, the ancient Greek philosopher who uses the same terminology as Paul to speak of the all-embracing presence of Being: "Being is always present; it surrounds us from every side like a sphere in which we are and we live. ... Thus, Being embraces us and we cannot think of ourselves outside of this Being."

That philosophical idea, says the cardinal, "helps us to understand the thought of Paul: whatever we do, wherever we go, we are surrounded by the love of Christ. We cannot flee Him, we are within him, overwhelmed by his love. All that we see, touch, hear is the love of Christ for us." This, says Martini, is Paul's great intuition: "So powerful, so loveable, so extraordinary is the love of Christ that we cannot resist him, we have no choice when we truly encounter him."

So, for Paul, the redemptive death of Jesus is the foundation to, and reason for, his own apostolic ministry. For us, it's what we profess at every Mass, when we proclaim the mystery of our faith – a mystery that will inspire us and our work, as well, if and when we are as convinced of it as Paul is.

But there's more! In the next line (verse 15), Paul expresses a further realization about Christ's death. He makes explicit the rationale for it and indicates the transformation that, at least potentially, follows from it:

*He (Christ) indeed died for all, **so that** those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

For Paul, the mystery of salvation connects the eternity of divine love with Jesus's death and resurrection. The purpose of Good Friday and Easter is "so that" we might have new kind of life, a life that shares in this divine embrace of love.

This new kind of life into which we have been baptized reorients our very existence. It ontologically turns us inside out.

Believing in the love of Christ for us impels us to turn from a life focused first on ourselves, to see and live, instead, for Him who died for us. (*Sacred Texts Guide*). This belief is what leads to the conversion that Paul expresses famously to the Galatians when he says, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (2:20).

Paul then explains the implications of this newfound Christian belief in verse 16:

*Consequently, from now on **we regard no one according to the flesh**; even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer.*

Because of our faith experience of the love of Christ, we regard all those for whom Jesus died – and that would be everyone! – in a new way. We look at them and think about them differently ... or we should! We don't see others from a human or worldly point of view (that is, "according to the flesh").

Because of our experience of the love of Christ, we have a new perspective, a new lens through which to assess the people we encounter in this world. We even see Jesus differently ... more than a good man, more than a wise teacher, He is truly God.

Paul learned this first-hand. He who had looked upon Jesus as a fraud, and persecuted his followers for that, knows from his spiritual encounter that the full reality of Christ exceeds every earthly category that Paul had previously applied to him. (*Sacred Texts Guide*)

But for us to see no longer “according to the flesh” is hard. We naturally tend to look upon others based on our first impressions. To “regard” them is to see past that, to think of them even beyond our later experience(s) of them.

The Christian, impelled by the love of Christ, holds people in an entirely new regard not according to their appearance or their attitudes or their actions. Because we have been changed by the divine regard for us, we now see people in an entirely new light.

This new Christological perspective leads Paul to a grand conclusion (verse 17), perhaps the most theologically loaded statement in all of his letters:

*So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, **new things have come.***

Invoking the prophetic vision of God’s promising to do a new thing and create new heavens and a new earth (Isaiah 43 and 65), Paul believes that time has come! The paschal mystery of Jesus Christ has decisively begun a new order in the world and in us who exist in it.

Qualitatively different than all that has been in human history, this cosmic eschatological reality is already present through faith in Christ. So, the “new creation” is not a future promise waiting to be received; it is a present identity waiting to be inhabited. (Sacred Texts Guide)

As a result, we no longer need to live and work within limitations of a secular existence. Instead, by freely choosing to believe in Jesus Christ, we transfer the meaning of our lives from the dominion of this world to the dominion of God’s world.

That’s the Word of the Lord that Paul speaks to us in this letter.

To **summarize** it in simple terms, Paul’s message in this short passage reveals the bold claim of Christianity: that God has chosen to love us and showed it by Jesus’s dying on the Cross for us.

That’s a truth that trumps everything!

The love Christ has for us has laid claim to our lives.

When we discover that, and as we grow in our comprehension of that, the divine love substantiated in the Incarnation, Crucifixion & Resurrection of Jesus presses us and obliges us, urging us onward and giving impetus to who we are and what we do.

If we are to live and communicate like St. Paul, then our Christian faith beckons us to live in this new way through the particular vocation to which the God who loves us has called each one of us.

***The love of Christ impels us.***

But now we must ask ... toward what does that love of Christ impel us?

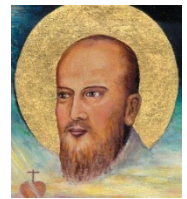
---

## PART TWO: **to Seek and Tell the Good News**

The apostle Paul's brief but bold claim expresses his intuition. It also reveals a theological truth that undergirds his understanding of soteriology (the meaning of Jesus's death) and of eschatology (the goal of all existence).

For us here – and in less theologically heavy terms – my intuition is that Paul's claim can also ground the life of media apostles, interiorly and exteriorly. For I suggest to you that the love of Christ impels us to seek and tell Good News.

To make this point about the meaningfulness of Paul's claim – so that we can “live and communicate like St. Paul” – I offer you in this second part the perspective of another media communicator who is also a saint: **FRANCIS DE SALES**, the seventeenth century Bishop of Geneva who happens to be patron saint of Catholic writers and journalists.



Frankly, as an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, I've come to know much more about him than about St. Paul! But for those of you who may not know much about him, let me briefly point out five connections he has with St. Paul.

(1) Both saints were originally trained as lawyers.

- Paul learned “at the feet of Gamaliel,” the most famous of rabbis in Jerusalem,
- Francis studied with Pancirolo at the University of Padua, where he earned a double doctoral degree, in civil and canon law, by the age of 25.

(2) The two saints also shared a spiritual experience – both getting knocked over, quite literally, by the God who wanted to send them a convincing message!

- For Paul, it was a blinding call to conversion;
- For Francis de Sales, it was the confirmation of his priestly vocation when his horse bucked him off, and his sword and scabbard formed a cross.

(3) As a result of their encounters with God, both became missionary preachers, traveling far and wide to preach the Gospel.

- Paul took to the cities of Asia Minor in and around the lands of present-day Turkey and Greece, establishing the first full-fledged Christian churches.
- Francis sojourned throughout the Chablais region in what is now France and Switzerland, where he re-converted tens of thousands of former Catholics.

(4) Perhaps because of their stressful work, but more likely due to something genetic, both saints also became prematurely bald!

(5) But what matters most for us today ... both St. Paul and St. Francis de Sales were prolific, inspirational writers.

- St. Paul's twelve letters (that we have) inspired and communicated the entirely new way of life known as Christianity.
- For de Sales, the twenty-seven volumes of writings we have, including his acclaimed *Introduction to the Devout Life*, led to his being declared one of only thirty-eight "doctors" of the Church.



In those many writings, Francis de Sales refers to the letters of St. Paul frequently. The Pauline saying we are focusing on, he cites in fifteen different places! He even dedicates an entire chapter in his monumental *Treatise on the Love of God* to this Pauline theme, giving it the title of the "ecstatic and superhuman life."

So, I think St. Francis de Sales could help anyone who strives to be a media apostle.

He offers a deep appreciation of the connection between St. Paul's foundational claim – that "the love of Christ impels us" – and our striving as communicators to seek and tell the Good News, as I will now try to explain in terms of the theme for your retreat, namely, "the interior life of the communicator."

### ***Interior Life***

Looking back to St. Paul's work as an apostolic communicator, it should be noted that he did not seek the good so much as it sought him – in the person of Jesus Christ in their encounter on the road to Damascus. From that event, Paul interiorizes what he experienced and then communicated how "the love of Christ impels us."

For Francis de Sales, that fundamental teaching is best understood when we experience being claimed by God's love ourselves ... something that can only happen interiorly, through the grace that enlightens our mind and inspires our heart and moves our will.

The Doctor of the Church speaks of this very experience of the inner life in his ***Treatise on the Love of God*** (book VII, chapter 8). There he explains how we, too, can come to an appreciate awareness that “the love of Christ impels us.”

First, he affirms the significance of the apostle’s claim. He writes:

In my judgment, St. Paul has made the strongest, most cogent, and most admirable argument ever advanced to bring all of us to ecstasy and rapture in life and operation. I beg of you, listen, consider, and weigh the power and efficacy of the burning, heavenly words of that Apostle who was completely ravished and transported with love for his Master. Speaking of himself, but the same thing must be affirmed of each of us, he says, “The charity of Christ presses us.”

Then, Francis explicates the power of Paul’s image:

nothing urges on a man’s heart so much as love. If a man knows that he is loved by no matter whom, he is impelled to love in turn. If a commoner is loved by a great lord, he is much more impelled to return that love, and if by a great monarch, how much further is he impelled to do so! But now ... we know that Jesus Christ, true God, eternal and almighty, has loved us even so far as to will to suffer death for us, “even death on a cross” ....

He goes on to elucidate how this crucified love impels us interiorly:

(The Apostle) means that our Savior’s charity presses down upon us in an especial way when we judge, consider, weigh, meditate, and attend to this conclusion of faith. What is the conclusion? ... If one, namely Jesus Christ, died for all ... it was endured for them and in consideration of them.

To spell out the implications of this saving death, Francis pleads directly to us, in words that seem to arise from his own interior life:

What follows from this? I think I hear that apostolic mouth crying like thunder into our hearts’ ears, “Christians, it follows that in dying for us Jesus Christ had desired us.” What has he desired for us except that we should be conformed to him, “so that” says the apostle, “they who are alive may live no longer for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again.” As God is true ... how powerful a conclusion is this in matters of love! Jesus Christ died for us; by his death he has given us life. We live only because he died. He died for us, belonging to us, and in us. So, our life is no longer ours, but his who has purchased it for us by his death. Therefore, we must no longer live as belonging to ourselves but to him, not in ourselves but in him, and not for ourselves but for him.

Finally, Francis confirms the result of Paul’s teaching for the spiritual life:

What further conclusion must we draw ... except (that) ... we should consecrate every moment of our life to the divine love of our Savior's death ... all our works, all our actions, all our thoughts, and all our affections. ... Thus, then, the holy ecstasy of true love is accomplished when we live no more according to human reason and inclinations but above them according to the inspirations and promptings of the divine Savior of our souls.

What we hear in these few quotations is how Francis fully appreciated the depth and breadth of Paul's teaching.

But for us, these saintly sayings may raise real questions.

We all believe that Christ died for us. We all know, in theory, that we are called to love God with everything we've got.

But in the hectic world of the twenty-first century, given the many responsibilities we all have, what does it mean that "our life is no longer ours" and "we should consecrate every moment of our life to the divine love of our Savior's death"? How is that even possible? What can we do to fulfill this?

To answer that, and assure us in our faith, St. Francis de Sales takes us a step beyond St. Paul. In a **sermon for Good Friday** in 1614 (*Oeuvres* IX: 44), the Bishop of Geneva says:

(considering) the love that caused our Savior to die, nothing else remains except that we live out of love for him; not by any kind of love, but by a love similar to his (similar, not the same kind, for that is not possible), by a strong and courageous love which grows amid contradictions.

Salesian spirituality is realistic!

None of us needs to show our love by being crucified ... thankfully! None of us can love in a manner that complete, even if we think we could; nor will any of us have that opportunity, even if we wish we could. That redemptive love pertains to God alone, and we can only be its recipients.

So, that is where our ministry as media apostles begins – in receiving God's sacrificial love. We do this through prayer. Through mental prayer (or meditation) we can *listen, consider, and weigh the power* of Paul's words. With a contemplative spirit, we can *attend to* what happened at the crucifixion and *consider* and *weigh* the *efficacy* of that act for our own salvation.

To that end, Francis de Sales concludes his masterful *Treatise* by designating Mount Calvary as the "school of love." In the final chapter, we read:

Upon Calvary one cannot have life without love, nor love without the death of Our Redeemer. But, except there, all is either eternal death or eternal love: and all Christian wisdom consists in choosing rightly.

For communicators, seeing and seeking the love of Christ for us on the Cross ought to be a continual prayer. It is the Gospel loop, the Good News on which our interior life runs. By it we will become ever more aware and appreciative of God's regard for us, just like St. Paul did himself and exhorted the Corinthians to do.

## **Missionary Preaching**

In Salesian spirituality, that divine regard impels us to respond in kind, in and through the circumstances of our own lives.

Being pressed by recognition of the enormity of God's love for us, we are urged, again and again, to make the choice to live and to work according to the measure of love ... which is to love without measure (to quote a popular Salesian saying).

But what might it mean in practice?

Here I would draw your attention to two Salesian principles that I have shared with communicators on other occasions, namely, that "the love of Christ impels" us to engage in communications that are (1) person-focused and (2) heart-centered.

The first principle draws on Francis de Sales' experience as a missionary, not long after he was ordained a priest. He volunteered to be sent to "enemy territory" (as it was called then), to the towns and villages along the southern side of the Lake of Geneva, the Chablais region which by then had become a stronghold of Calvinism.

There, young Francis's life was in such jeopardy that he had to reside in the castle of a friend of his father. In one town (Thonon), people were explicitly prohibited by law from listening to him in public. He himself thought that his prospects for bringing the citizenry back to the Catholic faith were slim at best.

Yet he succeeded beyond all expectations ... re-converting virtually the entire region, including many of the Protestant leaders who governed there.

Certainly, the holiness of his own life was a key factor to his missionary impact. But his approach to communications was likewise critical to his work.

What scholars today refer to as "the Salesian method" is a communications strategy grounded on St. Paul's understanding that Christ's love for us impels us to believe that Christ died for all and that by doing so He has brought about a new creation. Francis de Sales adopted this understanding of the universal destination of the salvation won for us in Christ as the starting point for his mission.

He looked upon all those he interacted with differently. He regarded them not as “enemies” of the Church, but as brothers (and sisters) in the Lord, as ones for whom the Lord also died on the Cross. This impelled him never to shy away from speaking to anyone, even the heretics!

When he did speak, He sought to engage his interlocutors in dialogue more so than to refute them through argument. His goal was always to persuade, never to coerce. He knew that if could make sense to them of what Catholicism actually believes, rather than simply state it or belligerently impose it, then people would respond well.

To put it simply, Francis de Sales modeled the principle that **having a passion for people is more effective than showing zeal for an idea.**

He approached his work as a communicator from that vision of the new creation that Paul preaches, and he engaged with people reasonably rather than with militant zeal, knowing that “gentleness” (meekness) is more effective than violence.

Yes, as media apostles, we need always to present the truth of the faith accurately. But our primary concern has to be for the people to whom, with whom, and for whom we teach that truth.

In today’s age of outrage, where communication is often more about gaining the upper hand than about gauging what is true and right and good, we could learn much from Francis the missionary about the need to tell Good News, always.

The second Salesian principle for communications comes from his experience as a preacher.

For that, Francis de Sales was renowned. In eight different cities across France, he preached the Lent-long series of sermons. Twice he was invited to Paris, there to preach to the court and in the city’s grand churches.

He was even asked by the new bishop of a neighboring diocese for advice on how to preach. The book-length letter with which Francis responded (*On the Preacher and Preaching*) contains many gems of homiletic wisdom. (My favorite: “if you can’t be good, at least be brief”!)

Relevant to all of us here is this dictum: **“to speak well, it suffices to love well.”** That also applies to writing, blogging, posting, and producing audio and video ... in short, to all communications.

Following upon the person-focused approach he adopted in the Chablais mission, and in keeping with his pastoral approach as a letter-writing spiritual director, Francis emphasizes here the need for communications to be heart-centered.

Earlier, in the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, he set forth the position that evangelization is most effective when it works from the inside out, for once one captures another’s heart, he has gained the whole person.

In his letter, he tells us

“We must speak well, but **heart speaks to heart** and the tongue only speaks to men’s ear. ...

How can the various forms of media be used to communicate *cor ad cor*?

In a word it means to speak with affection and devotion, with simplicity and candor, and with confidence, and to be convinced of the doctrine we teach and about which we persuade.”

(As a side note: the most recently named Doctor of the Church, John Henry Newman, took this phrase “*cor ad cor*” from Francis de Sales to use as his cardinalial motto!)

To communicate in a heart-centered way is more challenging in a digital world. But even today, communications touches people most deeply when our work bears Christian affection for them, shows honesty toward them, respects their freedom, and expresses concern, primarily and ultimately, for their good.

I hope you can see how the two Salesian principles of communicating in a way that is person-focused and heart-centered flow from St. Paul’s saying that “the love of Christ impels us.” As media apostles, we are called to experience this same love of Christ for us through our interior life.

Then, as St. Francis de Sales teaches, we return our love for Christ’s love in the everydayness of our life and work in the realm of communications, which comes with its own “crosses” for us to bear! Yet, it is in the daily embrace of cruciform love that we are impelled to love the God who has made us a new creation and calls us to be media apostles.

---

## CONCLUSION: **Being Media Apostles Today**

By way of conclusion, let’s return to the thought experiment with which we started but this time ask: how would Paul make out in a world of artificial intelligence?!

As you know, Pope Leo’s encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* focuses on this new world in which we are immersed and the anti-human vision that potentially threatens our existence there. He writes:

Our relationship with life seems to be in crisis today. Everything that appears as a ‘limit’ — incapacity, illness, old age, suffering, vulnerability — tends to be seen primarily as a defect to be corrected. (no. 118)

In this world, ours is the task of proclaiming again Paul’s teaching that Christ’s love for us, shown through His death on the Cross, leads to a new creation.

Our communications – in on, and by way of media technologies – needs to disclose the truth that a magnified humanity is not one that's technologically enhanced, but a humanity ultimately enlivened by the love of God.

Before the publication of his first encyclical, Pope Leo spoke about AI in his Message for World Communications Day last January. There he said:

renouncing creativity and surrendering our mental capacities and imagination to machines would mean burying the talents we have been given to grow as individuals in relation to God and others. It would mean hiding our faces and silencing our voices.

Certainly, the apostle Paul was not one to hide his face or silence his voice! Nor did St. Francis de Sales. And neither should we.

Even in an AI world, the need to seek good and tell good remains, for there are still many who do not know the gospel at all; others who, if they have heard the gospel, don't believe it's true; and still others who have heard it and may believe it, but who have no personal relationship with the Christ who died for love for them.

And so, the Church will always need media apostles. Our ecclesial life benefits from the faces and voices of those, like St. Paul and St. Francis de Sales, who themselves know of the love of Christ that impels them to seek and tell Good News ... as I hope and pray you will always do.

Thank you for listening!

+ May God Be Blessed +

-----

