



The Holy See

PAUL VI

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER
FOR THE WORLD SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS DAY**

Theme: Social Communications and Youth

*My dear sons and daughters,
Men of good-will everywhere,
and young people, you, in particular,*

The theme of World Communications Day this year touches what I am sure is one of your chief interests: "Social Communications and youth". Undoubtedly, it is clear to everyone that there is an immense responsibility on the part of all, before history and God Himself, to put to good account the extraordinary opportunities offered by the communications media to help young people to inform and form themselves, to bring out the real problems of the world, to seek the authentic values of life and to live up to their calling as individual persons and Christians.

It is, indeed, a burning issue for all men of good will, for private organizations both national and international, for the Church no less; all are to ask themselves: what are the young people of tomorrow going to be like as they grow up in the world being constructed today? And you, young people, what kind of society will you, yourselves construct when the destiny of the world will have passed into your own hands?

Dear sons and daughters, in the full consciousness of Our pastoral responsibility, We wish to say to you all: tomorrow will be precisely what we shall have made it with the grace of God.

Need We call to mind once again, now that the phenomenon is assuming ever larger proportions, that the press, motion pictures, radio and television are tending to hide, perhaps even supplant, what the traditional vehicles of culture, that is, contacts at home, at school and in the parish, as well as the teaching of educators, used to allow past generations to hand down to their heirs.

These days it is the media of social communications that provide new sources of knowledge and culture, with their considerable power of moving men's feelings and minds, together with the train of ideas and stirrings of the imagination carried by the sounds and sights they transmit.

Truly they are wonderful means for broadening one's outlook, establishing contacts, communicating and sharing. Obviously however, only as long as they remain in actual fact means to an end, the one end worthy of the name: the service of the whole of mankind and of the whole man (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, no. 14). Unfortunately, all too often, the contrary is the case. We witness young people and children, used as easily-secured consumers by an industry that makes itself its own end, being dragged into the pit-falls of eroticism and violence or led along the perilous paths of incertitude, anxiety and anguish. It is not asking too much that all right thinking persons should unite at last to sound a cry of alarm and to put an end to enterprises that deserve to be called corrupting.

Who is unaware of the urgency of putting to good account the means of social communication with their stirring mode of address through sound, image, color and movement, to make of them real modern instruments for communing among men, that measure up to the expectations of young people? What excellent fare they can provide, so long as it is wholesome and the organism prepared to receive it and assimilate it without being intoxicated! Undoubtedly, they have a great deal to offer to youth: choice of recreation, a wealth of information, for some the beginnings of an education before they can even read or write. We wish to stress this during this "World Year of Education" promoted by the United Nations at the opening of the second decade of development. The communications media are capable of providing youth with access to a culture of quality as well as a taste for the authentic values of brotherhood, peace, justice and general welfare.

This is an enormous task, a truly glorious enterprise, for all who set in motion these exceptionally powerful instruments for the service of youth. All this however, will not take us far, unless parents and educators play their part in helping young people to choose, to judge and to assimilate what is presented to them, so that they too can become complete human persons and Christians. Not much can be achieved if the young people themselves remain passive as though under the spell of these powerful attractions, held captive by desire and incapable of self-control.

Finally, we ask ourselves: who is it that can bring to youth this message of true life, the sincere and courageous word that they consciously unconsciously seek? Millions of men have shared the same thrill before the images brought to them of man's first steps on the moon. Who is it that can bring them to experience together the same deep emotion before the God of love Who came down to walk on our earth as a man, "to call us all to participate as sons in the life of the Living God, Father of all men"? (cf. P.P., N. 21)

We lend our words of warm encouragement to the numerous pastors of souls, priests, religious and lay people who with true zeal endeavour to seek through the communications media a new

language, and find it they must, to announce to the young the Good-News, that always remains astounding. No one will doubt that the young people of today really await this announcement. They yearn for this witness. They too know how to recognize, with profound joy, Him Who is the answer to their most radical and disquieting questionings, Who "for us has become wisdom, justice, sanctification and redemption" (1. *Cor.*, I,30).

"Young people, seek Christ, in order to remain young (St. Augustine, *Ad fratres in eremo*, Sermon 44): this is our hope, this is our prayer.

With the earnest wish that parents, educators and all communicators through the media will make the best of the opportunity offered by the World Day specially dedicated to them, for beneficial reflection and fruitful resolutions for the greater advantage of youth, We address to all Our affectionate and confident Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 6 April 1970

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