



Features: NEW MEDIA CAN ENHANCE EVANGELIZATION APOSTOLATE OF THE CHURCH

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ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Modern information technology, especially the New media and Social media have been described as veritable organs for the evangelization apostolate of the Church, if positively applied.

This position was posited by the Director of Social Communications, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Rev. Fr. Chris Anyanwu in his paper delivered at the 2017 Theology Week of the Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA), held recently in Port Harcourt. The theme for the Theology Week was Catechesis and the new Media.

In the paper titled: *Sifting the Substance from the Chaff in an Age of New Media*, Fr. Anyanwu spoke extensively on the development of information technology from analog to digital, pointing out the phenomenon of new media as a veritable tool for evangelization. While outlining the advantages of the new media for the mission of the Church, the speaker also highlighted “some of the threats and damages overreliance on the new media is causing in the family and social relationship; which can also affect the Church.

Giving the historical perspectives of information technology information from the analog era to the digital age, Fr. Anyanwu also dwelt on the new media and how it can be explored as a tool to enhance theological discourse, strengthen catechesis and boost strategy for new evangelization.

Areas of information on which the speaker dwelt extensively in the paper included: the difference between old media and new media; the difference between new media and social media, the definition and benefits of the new media and its challenges. The challenges identified by Fr. Anyanwu included: spread of fake news, weakening of traditional authorities and institutions, false sense of sociality, loss of social etiquette, loss of reading and writing culture, limitation of productivity, erosion of family values, loss of privacy and increase in cyber/social media crimes.

While noting that in spite of the identified challenges, the new media and social media can still be effectively used for the positive evangelization apostolate of the Church. Towards this perspective, the CSN director of Social Communications pointed out the need for a renewed sense of mission, seeing the new media as a tool to reach out to the people, seeing the Digital World as a new space, and building a participatory Christian community and the need for new media education.

While urging the Church to take advantage of the new media for effective missionary apostolate in the country, Fr. Anyanwu declared: "In reality, the new media has come to stay. All we need to do as a Church is to adjust to the new

ways of doing things offered by this new medium to enhance our mission of being the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:14 - 16).” He added: “when used positively, social media is a veritable tool for evangelization, learning and motivating others.”

- Fr. Chris Anaynwu