



## **POSITIVE USE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE TRUTH IS OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY - Rev. Fr. Gerard Musa**

Jun 10, 2019

### **ENUGU, NIGERIA -**

The use of the social media and modern media technologies can only be beneficial to humanity if properly and effectively used to promote love and the truth; as well as facilitate a communal human community. However, at the rate they are being used, these agents of virtual community promote falsehood and untruth to the detriment of the common good of humanity

Above was the contention of Rev. Fr. Gerard Musa of (CESACC), Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Rivers State; while commenting on the World Communications Day message of the Holy Father, Pope Francis. The theme of the Pope's message was: We Are Members, One of Another (Eph.4: 25). The CESACC lecturer was the Guest Lecturer at this year's World Communications Day lecture, organized by the Directorate of Communication, Catholic Diocese of Enugu at Holy Ghost Cathedral, Enugu.

In his lecture titled: Truth As Collective Responsibility in Social Media, Fr. Musa, expounding on the Pope's message, used several passages of the Bible and other documents of the Church and noted that "the message emphasizes collective responsibility for truth in the online network. He remarked: " First, the message invites all to put away falsehood and speak the truth, second, to guard the truth in order to maintain mutual relationship of communion." He added: "What is more, the message states that truth is found in communion."

The lecturer used many academic references to outline the potentials of the digital world and new media technologies and their potency of spreading falsehood as a result of lack of central control; and other challenges that do not promote communal network which is more beneficial to the society.

He remarked: "It is a common sight to see how digital media have been abused in so many ways. Many times, video images of people have been manipulated to discredit or vilify them. There are cases where videos are doctored to fit into false narrative and propaganda. Video editing on digital media makes it possible to superimpose another person's head on a different body, Cases abound where politicians, business people and ideological opponents willingly and unethically manipulate images, texts and videos to gain advantage over their rivals."

Noting that the virtual community consolidates the real community of people, Fr. Musa stressed that the world communications day message of the Pope "shows that networking sites also interconnect human beings and we have to use Internet networks responsibly and truthfully."

Speaking on the role of journalists and media practitioners in the perspective of the Pope's message, the CIWA lecturer declared: "Professional media practitioners and journalists have greater responsibility in the digital world. In the current information superhighway, people look up to mainstream professional media for clarification, truth, accuracy and objectivity." He concluded: "If professional media institutions are taken seriously, it is mainly because they verify their news and operate with acceptable ethical standards."