

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

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Abstract

The paper investigated the effects of social media in the light of Christian spirituality. It aimed at exploring the social media's positive effects and ways of curbing its negative influences with the help of Christian spirituality. The concept, history and positive effects of social media were examined together with the spiritual and religious aspects of these impacts. While adopting the analytical and expository methods of investigation, the paper highlighted the roles of Christian spirituality in navigating the negative effects of social media and emphasized the necessity of social media evangelization through which the mission of Christ is achieved.

Introduction

Social media, as well as Internet Technology, is a wonderful breakthrough in the present era of the world of communication, which advances the actualization of the divine injunction to man to conquer and subdue the earth. Social media is impacting greatly on life in the world. Some of its positive effects are observable in the area of connectivity, interaction, information circulation, knowledge improvement, stress reduction/recreation, spiritual enrichment, and so on. However, besides these, are negative effects such as addiction/overuse, cybercrime, cyberbullying, defilement, depression, isolation and others. In the face of these effects, what roles can Christian spirituality play? What is the intent of the founders of social media and the fundamental principle upon which it is laid? What is the holistic approach available to modern man to maintain his sanity and for the media to be properly relevant in view of the negative impact? What stance can a Christian adopt to retain the genuine spirituality expected of a true follower of Christ and yet remain fully human and fully holy? In answer to these questions the paper explores in addition to clarification of terms, the history and foundational principles of social media, the positive effects of social media, spiritual/religious prospects of these effects, necessity of social media evangelization, and the roles Christian spirituality plays in curbing the negative effects of social media.

Definition of Terms

KEY WORDS: Spirituality, Christian Spirituality, Social Media, Effect.

Spirituality

Spirituality is an attitude or a motive behind one's action or outlook on life which stems from individual's religious or ethical value. Spirituality is what motivates or propels an individual to behave or act in a particular way. It refers to the nature of the spirit or the soul.

Christian Spirituality

This is the spirituality animated by the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is life centred and motivated by Christ's spirit or the gifts or fruits of the Holy Spirit;¹ a life anchored on the teachings of Christ and in emulation of his examples. It is true followership of Christ.

Social Media

This refers to a digital technology that enables the sharing of texts and multimedia through virtual networks and communities. It refers to Web. 2.0 technology whose main characteristic is interactivity and more of user-generated contents. Social media is a new communication technology and means of spreading information without the barriers of time, space, or distance. Categories of social media include: social networks (example, Facebook and LinkedIn), by which people connect and share information, thoughts, and ideas; media-sharing networks (example, YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram); community-based networks (example, Reddit and Blogger) used for in-depth discussion and commenting; and review-board networks (example Yelp) for review of products and services.²

Effect

This is an impact left on a person or a thing after an experience. It is an aftermath of a contact and this influence could be positive or negative.

Brief History and Foundational Principles of Social Media.

Social media evolved in the course of development in social communication when message started to be dispatched from one location to another. Record has it that as early as 550 BC the earliest form of primitive delivery of letter began.³ With the invention of simpler system of telegraph, Samuel F.B. Morse in 1844 was able to transmit the first written message over long distance (from Baltimore to Washington D.C in the United States of America) using electronic dots and dashes.⁴ 1865 witnessed the creation of pneumatic posts by which letters were delivered as capsules through pressurized tubes. The invention of telephone and radio in 1890 and 1891 respectively enabled transmission of messages instantaneously over wide range of area. With the creation of the first supercomputers in 1940s and subsequently Internet and World Wide Web, information could be sent between computers. The launching of ARPANET

¹ F. Antonisamy, *An Introduction to Christian Spirituality* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2008), 20

² Mukhtar Oloyede and Ganiyat Oloyede, "Effects of Social Media on Morality of Youths in Nigeria and the Role of Religion," *Proceedings of the Accra Bespoke Multidisciplinary Innovation Conference, University of Ghana* (2022): 105-112. Doi: 10.22624/AIMS/ABMIC2022P12

³ Samantha Lile, "Complete History of Social Media: Then and Now," *Small Business Trends* (August 4, 2023), <https://smallbiztrends.com/2023/08/history-of-social-media.html>

⁴ Maryville University, "The Evolution of Social Media: How Did It Begin and Where Could It Go Next?" <https://online.maryville.edu/blog/evolution-social-media/>

(Advanced Research Project Agency Network by United States Department of Defence) and CompuServe in 1969 enhanced this. In 1978, the Multi-User Domain (MUD) which provided on-line chat for users and the Bulletin Board Service (BBS) which enabled users to upload, download, read news and exchange messages were both launched. Listserv came in 1986 as the first electronic mailing list software application and NSFNET (National Science Foundation Network) in 1987.

However, it was in 1997 that the first true social network application called Six Degrees was launched by Andrew P. Weinreich, and followed by other similar apps like BlackPlanet, Asian Avenue, and MoveOn, together with blogging services like Blogger and Epinions in 1999.⁵ Friendster came in 2001, and MySpace and LinkedIn in 2003. In 2004, Facebook which is the most visited social media app today⁶ was launched by Mark Zuckerberg and others. YouTube was established in 2005 by former PayPal employees and Twitter in 2006 by Jack Dorsey and his three other colleagues. WhatsApp was founded in 2009 by Jan Koum and Brian Acton and Instagram in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. In 2014, Facebook which was later rebranded as Meta acquired WhatsApp. Other popular social media applications include Pinterest, WeChat, Snapchat, Reddit, TikTok and so on. On account of the usefulness and popularity, social media has continued to expand and new ones are continually coming up such as Discord, Twitch, Patreon, Spotify Greenroom and Caffeine.

The intention of the founders of social media generally was to advance and simplify all forms of social communication and to overcome obstacles and challenges therein. In brief, the motive was to ease human interaction, relationship, community-living, as well as human life and endeavours in general. For instance, in the application for patent of the first widely recognized social media network, “Six Degrees” of Weinreich, it was stated:

It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide a networking database in which a plurality of individuals register and become respectively linked with one or more other registered individuals by defined relationships. The present invention is thus broadly directed to a networking database and a method of constructing a networking database. The invention also relates to applications of the networking database in commercial enterprise.⁷

With regard to Facebook, Zuckerberg’s intention at its invention was to build human community, to connect people in the college setting. Thus, he stated: “[there] was a basic need, where I looked around at the internet and there were services for a lot of things that you wanted. You could find music, you could find information, but you couldn’t find and connect with the people that you cared about, which as people is actually the most important thing”⁸

⁵ Simon Edosomwan, Sitalaskshmi Prakasan, Doriane Kouame, Jonella Watson, and Tom Seymour, “The History of Social Media and its Impact on Business,” *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship* 16, no. 3 (2011)

⁶ Lile, “Complete History of Social Media...”

⁷ Google Patents, “Method and Apparatus for Constructing a Networking Database and System,” (1997), <https://patents.google.com/patent/US6175831B1/en>

⁸ Catherine Clifford, “How Mark Zuckerberg Came Up with the Idea for Facebook,” *Make it* (January 17, 2018) <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01/17/why-mark-zuckerberg-started-facebook.html>

Hence, the intent of social media founders realizes the principle and theory of sociology as proposed by its pioneers, Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tonnies who believed that existence of social groups depends on shared values, beliefs, and conflicts. Summarily, social media was founded for the good of human interaction and relationship. This intention aligns with the ideal and fundamental principle of human/social communication founded in God communicating Himself to man in the Incarnation, “the Word becoming flesh” to rectify the original harmonious communication into which man was created but disrupted by sin and fraternal strife.⁹ Second Vatican Council beautifully puts this thus: “As the only mediator between the Father and mankind he made peace between god and man and laid the foundations of unity among men themselves. From that moment, communication among men found its highest ideal and supreme example in God who had become man and brother.”¹⁰

Positive Effects of Social Media

Social media, as part of social communication, greatly influences the way people live and think.¹¹ The positive effects of social media manifest in its usefulness or benefits as observed in the following advantages:

Connectivity: by affording people fora for building relationships and keeping connected with one another and interacting with each other.

Education: through providing avenues to increase one’s learning and education via tutorials and on-line learning in social networks; it also supports interaction between teachers and students in exchange of ideas.

Help: via eliciting empathy and kindness for others through encouraging messages, comments or concrete assistance; thus, it deepens social consciousness.

Information and Updates: in keeping one in-touch with important events through instant spreading of news.

Advertisement: by offering fora to announce and popularize one’s product, business or enterprise.

Building communities: through providing opportunity to establish ties with others by joining in different platforms and building network of friends. Hence, it serves as a tool to foster brotherhood and to enhance human unity.¹²

⁹ cf. Genesis 4:1-16; 11:1-9

¹⁰Flannery, Austin. ed. *Vatican Council II, Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communications: Communio et Progressio*. (London: Fowler Wright Book, 1981), no. 10

¹¹Second Vatican Council, *Communio et Progressio* (CP), 1

¹² CP, 8, 9

Self-development: by availing one opportunity to learn better communication skills and build self-confidence through forum discussion with others.

Impact and motivation: by supporting creation of valuable contents through which one can influence and motivate others or be inspired by professionals or experts in different fields.¹³

Increase of knowledge: in providing forum for sharing of ideas and synthesizing them through unifying creative work; and what is shared is multiplied.¹⁴

Spiritual/Religious Prospects of Positive Effects of Social Media

Christianity in general perceives social media as a response to the divine injunction to man to possess and master the world and to cooperate in the work of creation. Prospects or opportunities of social media for the Church in this dimension include:

- Evangelization: Vast number of people can be evangelized using social media because it is ‘a modern and effective version of the pulpit’ which the Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she neglects this wonderful tool for reaching souls.¹⁵ Practical ways of doing this include: sharing of inspiring scriptural texts/verses, homilies/reflections, teachings of the Church, and motivating stories/experiences; and creating websites for purposes of evangelization and so on. Hence, the Church exhorts pastors of souls to acquire competence in the use of social media.¹⁶ This implies that agents of evangelization and Church leaders are to be present in social media to create contents able to impact on the people. However, some pastors have recently undertaken this media evangelization; for instance, the Facebook page of Bishop Godfrey Onah and the YouTube channel, ‘*Word on Fire*,’ of Bishop Robert Barron which was frequented mostly by men in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, the group difficult for the Church to reach.
- Knowledge: Youths are the future of the Church. Seminarians undergoing formation to take up the Church’s mission should be enabled to possess proper knowledge of social media. This can equip them better to influence their peers who spend much of their time in social networks. Thus, the Church states: “If students for the priesthood and religious in training wish to be part of modern life and also to be at all effective in their apostolate, they should know how the media work upon the fabric of society, and also the technique of their use. This knowledge should be an integral part of their ordinary education.”¹⁷

¹³ W. Akram and R. Kumar, “A Study on Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Society,” *ICSE International Journal of Computer Sciences and Engineering* 5, no. 10 (2017):347-354 57-IJCSE-02480.pdf

¹⁴ CP, 7

¹⁵ Paul IV, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), 45.

¹⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Inter Mirifica* (IM), 15, 16

¹⁷ CP, 111

Hence, Second Vatican Council emphasized that students in Church institutions are to be taught how to use social media¹⁸ while theologians themselves are to study deeply issues and implications of social media under the setting of moral and pastoral theology.

- Training: Evangelization today is a duty of every follower of Christ. Thus, the lay faithful should be given training in effective use of social media in evangelization and encouraged to take up professions with regard to social communication. Seminars ought to be organized for the youth on social communications and issues regarding management of social media challenges. Periods of parish catechetical instructions and religious gatherings should also be utilized to educate Catholics on social media communication.
- Apps Development: Catholic media experts need to be encouraged to develop apps for the propagation of faith.
- Small Christian Community: Social media platforms can be of help in building up strong Small Christian Communities where faith and love are nurtured and parishioners are acquainted and bonded together in true Christian spirit.
- Religious, cultural, and artistic values: With social media these values can be promoted to ennoble, educate and raise human mind to explore deeper areas of visible and invisible realities.¹⁹
- Charity: Social media can serve as a great means of fostering charity (the goal of Christian perfection), since some of the most effective methods of cultivating love of neighbour are provided by it.²⁰
- Human dignity: Respect for human dignity is basic for everyone; and social media can help to achieve this when sincerity, honesty, and truthfulness are made the basis of its communication, taking into consideration the factors concerning the content, presentation, and audience.²¹ In other words, the Church should encourage using social media to promote the religious dimension of human life.
- Aid for the Church: Social media helps the Church in revealing herself to the modern world, promoting dialogue within the Church, and becoming aware of contemporary opinions and attitudes.
- Recreation: Social media provides avenues for wholesome amusement and inspiration, especially for young minds.²²

¹⁸ CP, 107

¹⁹ IM, 12

²⁰ CP, 12

²¹ CP, 14, 17

²² IM, 11

Necessity of Social Media Evangelization

The principle behind this is that Christ is the perfect communicator. Through his incarnation he shared fully in human nature (except sin) and communicated his message both in words and deeds, and also enjoined his followers to proclaim this message “in the light of the day” and “from the roof-tops.” Reasons for this necessity include:

- The social media culture: the fact that social media has become part and parcel of the daily experience of the modern man, especially the youth. So, it is pertinent to bring into this cyberspace the word of salvation; and as Pope Benedict XVI notes: “unless the Good News is made known also in the digital world, it may be absent in the experience of many people for whom this existential space is important.”²³
- Christians have been entrusted with the message of salvation for which every human heart longs²⁴ and this ought to be proclaimed in a forum widely accessible to many people – the social media which from viewpoint of modern technology is the most popular means of communication today. In other words, it is a mandate for the Church to use social media to proclaim the good news because it is what is available for her today to reach vast number of people instantly.²⁵
- Social media is invaluable in Christian education today, that is for religious/doctrinal teaching, as many Catholics lack thorough knowledge of the Church’s doctrine and do not avail themselves of the opportunity of Sunday Evening Instruction (where this is organized).
- Vast multitude of people in actual fact have not known Christ. According to John Paul II, “two thirds of the world’s six billion people do not in any real sense know Jesus Christ ... [and majority of the baptized] have lost a living sense of the faith, or no longer consider themselves members of the Church.”²⁶ This is the case of many youths today who are turning to paganism and traditional religion. In tackling this challenge, social media which is a popular platform for youths in general cannot be ignored; and to employ it is like proclaiming the gospel from the housetop.

²³ Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 47th World Communication Day: “Social Networks: portals of truth and faith; new spaces for evangelization” (Sunday, 12 May 2013)

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/document/hf_ben_xvi_mes_20130124_47th-world-communication-day.pdf

²⁴ Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 35th World Communication Day: “‘Preach from the housetops.’ The Gospel in the Age of Global Communication” (Sunday, 27 May 2001)

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communicatons/documents/hf_jp_ii_mes_20010124_world-communication-day

²⁵ CP, 126

²⁶ John Paul, 35th World Communication Message

- Social media evangelization is the suitable mode of spreading the good news for today's Internet age as the Church adapts in each cultural era to the means that is most accessible to the people. She did that in the Renaissance and the invention of printing, the Industrial Revolution and the birth of the modern world.
- Digital world accompanies written word with images and sound to make it attractive and appealing to the imagination as the parables of Jesus did.
- Social networks enable believers to share not only the expression of their faith but also witness to it in order to make greater impact which suits both the mind and the senses. Example is to free people from their doubts and confusion regarding the faith and doctrine through engaging with them in dialogue on social media platforms.
- Social media can be used to initiate, instruct and catechize people and thus prepare them for liturgical and sacramental life of the Church as it happened during COVID-19 lockdown. Besides, it can assist in facilitating faith gatherings or apostolates in the Church by using it to invite people personally and showing concern for them as true brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Social media serves as an important tool for those incapacitated for instance by sickness and age, to access Holy Mass, sermons and homilies.
- Social media enables one to express practical charity to Christians, isolated or persecuted due to geographical, cultural or religious reasons (example, Christians in Northern Nigeria). This is done through sharing spiritual and liturgical resources like prayers and songs, and also canvassing for their material support. In addition, through social media, those alienated from the faith can be reached and won back with the power of the gospel coupled with dialogue provided by the media.²⁷.

The Roles of Christian Spirituality in Curbing the Negative Effects of Social Media

Despite the wonderful positive effects of social media, its misuse can give rise to some negative effects. A web content creator argues that, "technology itself is neutral – it is how we use and regulate it that determines its impact on society."²⁸ Thus, wrong use of social media can lead to negative effects such as: disinformation/distortion of truth, cyberbullying/defamation of character, disregard for sacredness of life, social isolation,

²⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, 47th World Communication Day

²⁸ Lile, "Complete History of Social Media..."

addiction/overuse, pornography/offensive posts, etc. In the face these, Christian spirituality has some roles to play.

- In the danger of distortion of truth, half-truths, selective contents, serious omission, or fake news the consumer of social media needs discretion. This aspect of divine wisdom enables the user to realize that opinion of majority does not necessarily represent the best or the truth, hence detachment should be maintained and the content of post discerned by listening to several sources (the Church inclusive) in order to know the truth and to ensure reliability and seriousness of information.²⁹ According to Pope Francis, “it is only by paying attention to *whom* we listen, to *what* we listen, and to *how* we listen that we can grow in the art of communicating.”³⁰ Christ who is the source and founder of Christian spirituality is full truth himself.³¹
- In the threat of cyberbullying and defamation of character, users of media ought to know that people have right to their good name and protection of their privacy, whether that of individuals or families.³² Maturity, nobility of character, and human dignity demand control of one’s emotions of anger, hatred, or vengeance and calls for respect of others as oneself. Social media is not meant as an instrument to destroy others but to build them up, not to discourage or demote but to encourage and promote. The bedrock of interaction and communication which purpose social media serves is love. Love should accompany proclamation of truth,³³ and perfection in love is the apex of Christian spirituality.
- In the menace of posts of violence, brutality, and debasement of human life, both users and consumers of social media need to realize that such contents pervert the true image of human being, muddle human mind, and can lead to psychosis which promotes violence and savagery in society.³⁴ The image of God which human beings partake in should be respected whether alive or dead. Christian charity and spirituality demand it.
- In the risk of social isolation or turning oneself into ‘a social hermit’ and reduction of human contact, there is need to understand that social media cannot replace face-to-face human encounter where communication is experienced in its deepest level and love of neighbour demanded of followers of Christ is exercised.
- In the danger of addiction and overuse, the youths especially, need to know that over-dependence on social media can lead to burnout, sleep disruption, depression or anxiety symptoms, distractions, and other mental health issues. Besides, it has adverse effect towards one’s academic performance. Thus, self-control and limited time should be

²⁹ CP, 31

³⁰ Pope Francis, 56th World Communication Day

³¹ Cf. John 14:6

³² CP, 42

³³ Cf. Ephesians 4:15

³⁴ CP, 43

allotted to social media. This is the discipline necessary also in other aspects of maturity and growth in Christian spirituality.

- In the peril of cyber-crime, such as hacking, scamming, or destroying human life, for instance, the case of Cynthia Osokogu who was lured, defrauded, and killed by her two Facebook friends,³⁵ the users of social media should exercise great caution. They need to beef-up internet security, especially through the use of unique username and password (example, double verification code strategy), privacy setting (by restricting unauthorized use of one's profile), use of password or lock code for one's device, and caution in responding or interacting with unknown or faceless identities or clicking to induced or suspicious internet links. Every user of Internet and modern technology in general should be aware that fraud does not in actual fact pay. What is gained deceitfully has no enduring benefit. Scripture says: "woe to him who gets evil gain for his house You have devised shame to your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life."³⁶ The golden rule is to treat others as oneself.

- In the threat of offensive or pornographic posts, Christian spirituality cautions users of social media to be aware that such materials corrupt human heart and mind and can lead to destructive consequences like pre-marital sex and deviant sexual behaviours such as masturbation, lack of focus, and addiction. Thus, one should avoid sites that provoke lust and contents inimical to Christian morality and spirituality. Social media should be approached with motivated selectivity, purity of desire, prayerful disposition, self-control and custody of the senses. St. John of the Cross suggests here detachment of the soul from such things and mortification of voluntary appetite since "too attachment to creature defiles a soul, because this attachment makes it similar to the creatures...[and] too inordinate appetites would defile and dirty the soul, in itself a perfect and extremely beautiful image of God."³⁷ Hence, he advises: "When you have an opportunity for the gratification of looking upon objects that will not help you come any closer to God, do not desire this gratification or sight."³⁸ This reiterates Jesus' injunction that "if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell."³⁹ That is why for St. Teresa of Calcutta, "if there is no chastity, there is no holiness," because chastity controls both the desire for sexual pleasure and actions that lead to it.⁴⁰ Faithfulness in purity of life demands constant effort and sacrifice as one responds to the graces and inspirations of the Holy Spirit.⁴¹

³⁵ *Vanguard Online News*, August 21, 2012

³⁶ Habakkuk 2: 9, 10

³⁷ St. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 1, Chapter 9, 1

³⁸ *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. 1, Chap. 12, 4

³⁹ Matthew 5:29

⁴⁰ Andrew Apostoli, *When God Asks for An Undivided Heart* (Irving TX: Basilica Press, 2007), 22

⁴¹ Andrew Apostoli, *Undivided Heart*, 20, 23

- In the disturbance of other forms of distraction arising from varied thoughts and imaginations, St. Teresa of Avila advises that one does not need to worry about them because neither can these imaginations be controlled nor do their presence imply loss of all the powers of the soul. Patience and indifference to them are what is needed. If the imagination comes from the devil, the indifference will make it vanish. If it arises from frail human nature, acceptance of its affliction for the sake of God's love reveals a person in-touch with his humanity longing for a better place. In brief, one should overlook the wandering thoughts and imagination and concentrate on the will and intellect.⁴² In all these, according to John Cassian, purity of heart is essential. This is achieved through his three stages of renunciation: first, rejection of all the pleasures and riches of this world; second, self-renunciation with repudiation of vices, wicked habits, and all unruly affections of the spirit and of the flesh; third, withdrawal of one's heart from all present and visible things and reclining it on the eternal and invisible.⁴³

- Generally, in the midst of the negative effects of social media, Christian spirituality plays the following roles:
 - Purifying the desire so that the will can be directed only to the noble and decent social media sites.
 - Enabling one to develop the spiritual disciplines of prayerfulness, custody of the senses, self-control and selectivity in approach to social media contents.
 - Propelling one to pay more attention to positive values of social media that aligns with the real goal in life and eternal destiny which the soul actually longs for.
 - Increasing thirst for integrity and word of God even as one engages in cyberspace of social media.
 - Sensitizing one into self-rediscovery of turning back to authentic and moral living when out of human frailty one derails into the negative influence of social media.
 - Helping one to discern those social media contents which at face-value appear neutral or 'good' but on the contrary are not.
 - Fortifying one to be a responsible user and consumer of social media contents.

Conclusion

For social media to be a platform that genuinely promotes human values, the presence of Christ in it is paramount. This is because "it is only when [the face of Jesus] is seen and his voice heard [in the social media] that the world will know the glad tidings of our redemption. This is the purpose of evangelization. And this is what will make

⁴² St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, 4th Mansion, Chapter 1, no. 9-13

⁴³ John Cassian, *Conferences*, 3,6. In Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1985), 60

Internet a genuinely human space, for if there is no room for Christ, there is no room for man.”⁴⁴ Amidst the hazards of negative effects of social media, the role of Christian spirituality remains essential both for the Church and her members to retain their identity and integrity as true followers of Christ who aspires to perfection of charity, and also uses the gift of social media to carry out the mission of evangelization. An essential way of fulfilling this is by spreading the word of God through social media. This word of God can have great impact on their recipients as the scriptural text of Mt. 19:21 had, for instance, in the life of St. Anthony of Egypt in his embracing the life of hermitage, or the text of Rom. 13:13-14 in the conversion of St. Augustine. The Church is “duty bound publicly to communicate her belief and her way of life,”⁴⁵ and one of the wonderful tools to achieve this today is the social media. Hence, all the faithful are expected to use their social networks to spread the word of God and the glory of God like Blessed Carlo Acutis, a teenager who used his website to promote Eucharist miracles and the approved Marian miracles. Such use of social media, no doubt, will have positive effects on people.

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⁴⁴ Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 36th World Communications Day: “Internet: A New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel” (Sunday, 12 May 2002 https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp_ii_mes_20020122_world-communication-day)

⁴⁵ Matthew 28:19; CP, 122

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