

Digital media and new humanism

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“In the virtual world, we are looking for a real man, and so a new humanism may arise.” This statement by the auxiliary bishop, **Monsignor Paolo Martinelli**, which he made at the end of his brilliant speech, explains the very positive and profound slant that the **Social Communications Office of the Diocese of Milan** has given to the education course, entitled “The parish communicates. Second part: communication instruments”.

Saturday, 5 March, at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, in Milan, marked the beginning of the new course for parish communicators. The first lecture was also open to journalists who had not enrolled in the entire project. The room was packed, with more than 300 people, and the main topic was Talking Locally, Acting Globally.

This topic is also central to the Varese festival, Glocalnews, and **Don Davide Milani**, who is running the course, and is responsible for communication in the Diocese of Milan, and is the editor of the *Rivista del Cinematografo* (Cinema Magazine), pointed this out several times.

Subjects covered included the **communicator, his ethics, his human and spiritual qualities**, in talks given by prominent people in the sector, such as **Luciano Fontana**, the editor of the newspaper Corriere della Sera, **Massimo Bernardini**, the RAI journalist and presenter, Monsignor **Dario Edoardo Viganò**, prefect for Communication at the Holy See; spiritual reflections were given by Monsignor **Paolo Martinelli**, the auxiliary bishop and episcopal vicar of the Diocese, on “New media, new virtues and sins”. Contributions were also made by the editors of three local media outlets: **Michele Brambilla**

(Gazzetta di Parma), **Nino Ciravegna** (Noi Brugherio) and **Marco Giovannelli** (VareseNews).

Massimo Bernardini, a well-known face on RAI television, had the job of explaining what is authentic in communication. “Narcissism and power are the greatest dangers for a journalist. We must be careful not to have a close relationship with this two aspects.”

According to **Don Diego Viganò**, we should talk first about professionalism before ethics. His speech was inspired by the Holy Scriptures. “The priest is responsible and must not take possession of his flock. Where the media’s power lies is in creating explanatory frameworks, and often complete information is not made available.”

The editor of Corriere della Sera, **Luciano Fontana**, spoke about the developments in his profession, starting with the relationship between paper, the web and social media. “Being on social media is a difficult job, and the rules of communication are broken. Despite this, we must not fear the digital reader, even though the dynamics of this world are often foreign to us.”

Monsignor Paolo Martinelli spoke on a very delicate topic, the new sins and new virtues in the digital era. He said, “Today, what is virtual is real, and with the new media, there has been a great change. It’s true that this has produced a speed that we are not accustomed to, and the relationship between desire, time and enjoyment with the digital media may hurt the desirer. If what we are looking for in the virtual world is a real man, then what may arise is a new humanism.”

Michele Brambilla, who recently became the editor of the newspaper Gazzetta di Parma, started with an anecdote that explained well what a local newspaper is. “If you don’t go to the page of obituaries in Parma, you aren’t dead. I’m convinced that the more the digital media grows, the more people will need local newspapers.”

Nino Ciravegna of Noi Brugherio spoke about his experience in running a hyperlocal weekly publication, which starts with the choice of readers, to decide what to publish.

Our editor, **Marco Giovanelli** was the last to speak. “For a local newspaper, the relationship with its community is vital. Indeed, the newspaper is the expression of a territory, and it can only talk about it if it knows it, if it knows how to listen to the people, and to interested parties, like businesses, associations and institutions. The social media are very important in the relationship with the community, but the relationship with the readers cannot be limited to these powerful platforms, which lie outside the newspaper. We have to have a strong relationship with the reader, and make him feel at home whenever he reads our publication.”

The course for parish communicators is modular in structure: the first part was given in March 2015. After the appointment on 5 March, another five meetings are scheduled on Saturday, 12 and 19 March, 2, 9 and 16 April, from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Interest in the initiative is already very high; last year’s quota of 160 has already been doubled. There will be 34 qualified lecturers and many Christian communities waiting for “ministers” that are trained to communicate the “Good News” to every man, via the media.

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