



Montfort EurHope: Evangelizing with Digital Technology

BERGAMO, Italy – Monday, June 7, 2021. *The Province of Italy has offered a day of permanent formation entitled "Cast the digital net... I will make you fishers of men". On behalf of the Provincial Commission for Evangelization, which organized the meeting, Fr. Aldo Bolis tells us how the initiative was born, how it unfolded and the fruits that we hope for from this formation.*

The Covid has enormously accelerated the use of digital and the web in all areas. The Church is also learning to harness this potential, experiencing multiple DIGITAL EVANGELIZATION initiatives that have flanked the most ordinary or integrated those that could not be done face-to-face. Enriched with a year of experimentation, we could begin to assess the advantages and the new avenues that have opened up and, at the same time, better weigh the risks and limits that digital tools impose on evangelization.

This is what we tried to do on Monday, June 7 at the usual continuing formation meeting that precedes the Annual Assembly of Superiors. The conference saw the "face-to-face" participation of many colleagues, while the possibility of following "via zoom" still had few connections. The day was moderated by Father Mattia MAGONI, head of the Communications Office of the Diocese of Bergamo, with an intervention in the morning on "digital evangelization experiences" and a "tutorial lab" in the afternoon to use from the YouTube channel.

The massive use of digital technology at the time of the pandemic imposes the need to be aware of the anthropological change induced by the use of digital technology in order to understand that the media are not only tools, but, much more, a sort of "agora" which modifies culture and, with it, people.

It suffices to grasp the substantial and behavioral difference of a subject today compared to that of twenty years ago, to easily recognize how the anthropological revolution induced by the digital has literally changed the coordinates of human life from space, time, experience, body. Father Mattia illustrated with concrete examples linked to the digital world, how important such changes are: it is no longer necessary to go to a specific space (like a theater) to attend a concert, but with digital tools, you can listen to a concert in any space and thanks to the media, the music itself becomes a space that colors and gives flavor to the physical

space; if, to watch a film, you had to wait for the day and time when it was scheduled. Today, thanks to digital technology, you are not anymore constrained by time.

The second part of the morning was devoted to social networks, of which Father Mattia indicated the typical characteristics: it is a network of contacts (like a telephone directory) always active within which content is shared (videos, images, texts...) according to different levels of interaction creating communities of interest. He then presented the most popular social networks in chronological order, indicating the specificities of each: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tinder, Telegram, TikTok ...

The afternoon was devoted to listening to experiences of evangelization with digital media already experienced both among the Montfortian confreres and at the wider level of the Italian Church. We listened to the sharing of Fr. Marco PASINATO, for the General Curia; Fr. Alfio MANDELLI, for the Province site; Fr. Angelo CALABRESE, for using WhatsApp; Fr. Sergio GASPARI, for the radio broadcasts; Fr. Eugenio PERICO, for the use of Facebook; Mr. Roberto for the online experience of the Trinitapoli; Fr. Roberto CARLI and Mr. Andrea for the activity of our parish in Monte Mario; Fr. Aldo BOLIS for the various digital initiatives of the Scholasticate of Rome. It should be noted with pleasant surprise the initiative of many confreres which foreshadows apostolic ardor despite the pandemic and advancing age. Indeed, it has been observed that digital technology has not been a hindrance for some who have already advanced in years, but even an additional possibility compared to the limits imposed by age, restoring new enthusiasm and new vitality. There are so many possibilities for evangelization and digital means still widen the field of action, even in the specific context of the dissemination of Montfortian spirituality, without excluding and neglecting ordinary methods. In addition to the Montfortians, there was also the sharing of Father Bernardino GIORDANO from the Loreto delegation and that of Dr. Rita MARCHETTI, who presented the YouTube channel of the *WebCattolici Italiani* Association.

For almost all those present, a window has truly "opened" on this precious portal to learn, from pastoral agents, how to promote the world of the web and the various tools it makes available. At the end of the intense training day, Father Mattia presented some guidance, in the form of tutorials, on how to open and set up a YouTube channel and prepare a video to upload to the network. Taking advantage of the testimonials presented in the afternoon, it was stressed that it is not enough to download videos, but it is important that it is prepared according to certain rules (duration, sound, content, images, pace and tone of voice, etc).

Fr. Aldo BOLIS, SMM