The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PERSONNEL OF THE TELEVISION NETWORK TV 2000

Paul VI Audience Hall
Monday, 15 December 2014

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning. I apologize for the delay, but there were many, many audiences. One audience, I say of half an hour, but then 40 minutes passed, another was the same, and then you pay for it. [Laughs] Another thing: Your Excellency spoke of two motivations, two motives for requesting this audience: you, it is true. But there is a third that you did not say. I think — and this is a personal opinion — that you are a little jealous because I received Corallo and not you [They laugh]. There's a little jealousy there, is there not?

I welcome you and I thank you for your warm reception. I thank the President of the Communication and Culture Foundation and the Director for the greetings they addressed to me. And I greet Lucio, who is in hospital.

You work for the Italian Church's TV, and this is precisely why you are called to carry out your service with greater responsibility. In this regard, I would like to share with you three thoughts which I have especially at heart about the role of the communicator.

First. The Catholic media has a very challenging mission with regard to social communication: to strive to safeguard it from everything that seeks to twist and bend it to other purposes. Communication has often been subject to propaganda, to the ideologies, to political agenda or to economic and technological control. In the first place what would be good for communication is *parrhesia*, that is, the courage to speak to one's face, to speak honestly and freely. If we are truly convinced of what we have to say, the words come. If, instead, we are concerned about tactical aspects — tactical manoeuvering? — our speech will be artificial, and barely communicative,

insipid, contrived. And this does not communicate anything. Freedom also includes ready-made fashions, clichés, prepackaged formulas, which in the end obscure the capacity to communicate. Re-kindle words: Revive words. Because, every word has in itself a spark of fire, of life. Reawaken that spark, that it may shine. Reawaken words: this is the communicator's first task.

Second. Communication should avoid "fillers" and "closures". It "fills" when it tends to saturate our perception with excessive slogans that, rather than setting our thoughts in motion, quells them. It "closes" when, rather than pursuing the long path of comprehension, it prefers the short cut of presenting individuals as if they were able to resolve all problems, or on the contrary as scapegoats on whom to load all responsibility. To reach a solution immediately without making an effort to represent the complexities of real life, is a frequent expedient mistake in communication that is increasingly fast-paced and allows little room for reflection.

To open and not to close: this is the second task of the communicator, who will be more productive the more he lets himself be led by the action of the Holy Spirit, the only one capable of building unity and harmony.

Third. *To speak to the integral person*: this is the third task of the communicator. Avoiding those things, which, as I have already said, are the sins of the media: misinformation, slander and defamation. These three are the sins of the media. Misinformation, in particular, prompts one to tell only half the facts, and this leads to the incapacity to judge reality accurately. Authentic communication is not concerned with "making an effect": alternating between catastrophic alarmism and comforting disengagement, two extremes. We see these continually proposed in today's communication, and this is not a good service that the media can offer the public. It is important to speak to the whole person: to the mind and the heart, so that each may be able to see beyond the immediate, beyond a present that risk's being rapid and fearful. Of these three sins — misinformation, slander and defamation — slander seems to be the most insidious, but in the communications media, the most insidious is misinformation, because it leads one to make mistakes, to err; it leads one to believe in just a partial truth.

To reawaken words, to open and not to close, to speak to the integral person brings about this *culture of encounter*, which is so necessary today in an increasingly plural context. Conflicts get us nowhere. Build a culture of encounter. This is a fine task for you. This requires you to be willing not only to give, but also to receive from others.

I know that you are in a phase of rethinking and reorganizing your professional work at the service of the Church. I thank you very much for your work, I thank you for accepting this work. I encourage you in it and I wish you much success. I also know that you have an ongoing relationship with the Vatican Television Center — this is very important to me — which allows you to present the Magisterium and the Pope's activities to Italy. I thank you for what you do with expertise and love of the Gospel. And I thank you for your honest efforts, professional honesty and

and rectitude, which you want to permeate your work. It is a path of honesty, that you want to follow.

I entrust you to the protection of Our Lady and of St Gabriel the Archangel, the great communicator: he was the most important communicator: he communicated the great news! And meanwhile, I ask you to continue praying for me, as I need it, and I wish you a Holy and Happy Christmas. And now let us pray to Our Lady, that she bless us. Hail Mary,...

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