

Amplifying the Church's Evangelization Efforts via Social Media

If Jesus Christ dwelt on earth today, He undoubtedly would incorporate social media in His evangelization. Statistics in 2023 reveal the average person uses social media for 2 hours and 27 minutes every day (Seitz). What if only a portion of that time spent on social media fostered spiritual growth? Since social media is universal, it seems only fitting for the Church to use this tool to spread the Catholic faith, whose literal meaning is universal. However, the secularization of social media is an obstacle to this mission. Evangelizing via the polluted media appears intimidating and dubious. Social media is competent at disseminating information, but a majority of popularized “truths” are obscured with fallacies, luring people astray from God. The Church must recall its obligation to obey Christ's commands to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (RSVCE, Mat. 28.19). From the beginning, the Church faced barriers when spreading the faith, yet by God's grace, they have successfully grown and will persist in expanding the Body of Christ. Humanity's embrace of social media could enable Catholics to evangelize to millions more people worldwide, provided the Church incorporates and refines innovative approaches.

Social media is often perceived as an antagonistic outlet, especially concerning influencing the youth. Secular celebrities manipulate people to form opinions akin to their own on matters of pop culture, politics, familial structure, and faith. These stars lead people away from the Church by feeding them with viewpoints contrary to God's teachings. Social media's usefulness must be restored.

Despite social media appearing inherently anti-Christian, it is the influential people who possess anti-Christian outlooks that sabotage social media. Prominent stars who lack a saving faith in Christ cause others to search for the truth outside the Church. Their popularity makes it almost impossible for vocal Christians to cultivate a successful platform. Fortunately, there are other ways to make a robust impact on spreading Christianity whether or not it attracts the attention of a mainstream algorithm.

The internet boasts myriad social media outlets: podcasts, music, movies, and short videos. These resources can all be used for the glory of God by delivering the truth. A telling example is a recently released movie, *The Jesus Revolution Movie*, which instantly skyrocketed into Netflix's top ten movies (Balderston). This realistic fiction movie documented real-life testimonies and a Christian revolution in the 1970s. This movie communicated that Jesus is “the

way and the truth and the life” (NAB John 14.6), to all who watched, which included many who were not living Christian life.

Mark Wahlberg, an actor, producer, and entrepreneur, garnered considerable attention for his Catholic faith. Through social media, Mark Wahlberg’s faith intrigues many because few Hollywood stars welcome Christianity. On the app Hallow, he vocalizes the significance of his relationship with God and helps to cultivate an easy way to evangelize the faith. Hallow provides numerous ways for individuals to nurture their relationship with God. By generating additional emphatic and savvy digital advertising methods, the Church could promulgate the truth of Christ to even more souls.

The Church must recognize the necessity of linking online evangelization to in-person events. Gatherings involving fellowship, spiritual mentorship, and worship are essential in cultivating a steadfast faith. The Church can shepherd people closer to God by broadcasting in-person fellowship events in local areas via community posts online. It is paramount that once a person's heart is enkindled with ardor for a relationship with God, one must be able to effortlessly access online and or in-person communities to help facilitate a faith-filled environment. Fellowship groups can help navigate people closer to Christ; they can use social media to post information on events that would captivate people interested in pursuing the Christian faith.

In conclusion, the Church can use technology as an instrument for evangelizing. Platforms imbued with anti-Christian perspectives must not deter the Church from spreading the faith via social media. The Apostles themselves were tasked with declaring the truth in locations teeming with belligerent non-Christians and pagans opposed to the Christian faith. There are plentiful, affordable, and innovative ways that the whole Church can spread the faith through social media. “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ” (RSVCE Eph. 4.16). The entire Catholic Church must persist in expanding the evangelization ministry to the internet, always articulating the truth in love, so that all may be united into one with Christ.

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