

Communicating Christ

'Christian Communicators' is a topic that might sound relatively new to many Vincentians. In today's age of world-wide mass communications we think of it as something electronic and media driven, which it is. But it is as old as our Faith.

Pope Francis addressed a group of Catholic communication specialists last January, in Rome, as they celebrated the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of writers and communicators. Pope Francis likened the story of The Fall to 'fake news' as he pointed out that Satan used lies to trick Adam and Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, creating enough confusion in the minds of our first parents that they could be persuaded to doubt God. Lies and manipulation of facts led to the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In the same way today's 'fake news' can mimic and manipulate the truth and cause doubt, despair, fear, hate, etc. It is never easy to combat 'fake news' but Pope Francis' adaptation of the Prayer of St. Francis can be an inspiration:

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Help us to recognize the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion.
Help us to remove venom from our judgements.
Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.
You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world:
Where there is shouting, let us practise listening;
Where there is confusion let us practise harmony;
Where there is ambiguity, let us bring clarity;
Where there is exclusion, let us offer solidarity;
Where there is sensationalism, let us use sobriety;
Where there is superficiality, let us raise real questions;
Where there is prejudice, let us awaken trust;
Where there is hostility, let us bring respect;
Where there is falsehood, let us bring truth.
Amen*

Weren't these words written for professionals? What do they mean for the average Vincentian?
...for the average Christian?

If you are reading this online, you are an electronic communicator of Christ's love for all people. Do you send emails? Use Facebook? Twitter? Other e-sites? Every word written and everything read online by every one of us should be subject to Pope Francis' prayer.

When we make home visits, volunteer in stores, visit the sick or incarcerated, or do any of the Vincentian works we are communicating Christ to His poor ones.

It isn't necessary to preach or baptise or perform miracles to bring Christ to others. Blessed Frederic was a master communicator. Students flocked to hear him. He wrote prodigiously about many issues of his day and in several languages. But his home visits were simple and direct. According to *'Frederic Ozanam, Professor at the Sorbonne; His Life and Works'* published in 1878:

He (Blessed Frederic) never preached to them; after giving whatever he had to give, he would sit and chat on any subject likely to cheer or interest them.

Lord, help us to communicate your love to all of your children, everywhere. Amen

*Denise Bondy, Spiritual Advisor
Ontario Regional Council
Member of the National Spirituality Committee*