

Pope to priests: Go forth and blog

YouTube-era pontiff urges priests to send their message through 'modern' digital media

By Sharon Gaudin

January 25, 2010 02:10 PM ET

Computerworld - A year after the Vatican launched its own [channel on YouTube](#), the pope is asking priests worldwide to adopt social media to spread the word of God.

In advance of May's 44th World Communications Day, [Pope Benedict XVI released a message](#) at a press conference over the weekend, urging priests to use digital media to reach out and take their ministry online. He encouraged priests to use blogs, Web sites, [video](#) and images, along with their traditional communication methods.

"Priests stand at the threshold of a new era: As new technologies create deeper forms of relationship across greater distances, they are called to respond pastorally by putting the media ever more effectively at the service of the Word," the Pope wrote in his message. "The spread of multimedia communications and its rich 'menu of options' might make us think it sufficient simply to be present on the Web, or to see it only as a space to be filled. ... Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization and catechesis."

The pope also cautioned his followers to be careful in their use of new media, adding that "new technologies demand greater responsibility."

The pope's comments seems to be in line with the Vatican's move to establish a larger online presence in recent years.

The Vatican created its [YouTube channel](#) last year, offering video and audio clips of Pope Benedict's addresses, along with news of the pontiff.

Fourteen years ago, the Vatican [launched its own Web site](#), offering access to the Vatican Secret Archives and the Vatican Museums. It even features a section in Latin.

The Catholic News Service, which is affiliated with the Vatican, is no technical slouch either, running its own [Facebook page](#), which includes news stories, notes and blogs.

Many world leaders, including [Queen Elizabeth II](#), communicate with constituents via YouTube.

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