

“Impact of the Digital World on the Missionary Involvement Today”



Editorial	
Navigating the Digital Continent with a Missionary Heart	1
Prière D'ouverture <i>Clarisse Soubeiga, OLA</i>	2
The Impact of the Digital World on Missionary Involvement Today <i>Lieve Stragier, ICM</i>	3
The Challenges and Opportunities of The Digital Age <i>Joel Nkongolo, CMF</i>	5
Spirituality of Communion in the Digital Age: A Franciscan Approach <i>Dennis T. Tayo, OFM</i>	14
L'impatto di Essere Missionari nel Mondo Digitale Oggi (Che cosa significa essere missionari nel mondo digitale oggi) <i>Pina Riccieri, FSP</i>	19
Progress with Purpose: The Church's Vision for a Human-Centred AI Frontier <i>Francisco Nirmala, FMM</i>	26
Reflection of the Participants on the Residential Seminar	29
Opening Message & Prayer <i>Mary Barron, OLA</i>	42
SEDOS Annual Report 2025 <i>John Paul Herman, SVD</i>	45

SEDOS

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Editorial

Navigating the Digital Continent with a Missionary Heart

Dear Members and Readers,



It is with great joy and a sense of profound responsibility that we are presenting the first issue of the 2026 SEDOS Bulletin to you. We are writing at a time of significant global upheaval as the shadows of war and a

rising tide of intolerance continue to inflict suffering upon the human family. In such a landscape, the mission of Christ — to bring peace, justice, and unconditional love to the marginalized — is more challenging and more essential than ever.

Today’s missionaries are called to navigate in a world where the values of the Kingdom are frequently set aside in favour of a technocratic and materialistic paradigm. Standing up for these values is no longer simply a pastoral preference; it is a prophetic necessity that, in many contexts, carries a risk to one’s own safety. Among these contemporary shifts, the digital revolution stands as a pivotal force. This issue is dedicated to the insights expressed at the **SEDOS Spring Seminar: “The Impact of the Digital World on Missionary Involvement Today.”**

Throughout the Seminar, we explored the **“Digital Continent”**— a vast virtual ecosystem that has become a primary mission field. Moving beyond the mere discussion of technical tools, our Speakers invited us to enter the digital culture with deep theological and anthropological discernment.

Sr. Lieve Stragier, ICM, opens this issue by framing the digital world as a “new continent.” Echoing Pope Francis, she urges the Church to embrace this existential periphery as a space for genuine encounter.

Fr. Joel Nkongolo, CMF, balances technical warnings — such as the “technician temptation”— against the opportunities of “cyber-theology.” He calls for **algorithethics** and for discernment rooted in the Incarnation.

Bro. Dennis Tayo, OFM, presents a Franciscan “spirituality of communion,” moving us from technical strategy to interior transformation. He advocates “mending the nets” of relationships through humility and listening.

Sr. Pina Ricciari, FSP, describes the digital world as an ecosystem that reshapes identity. She demonstrates how the Evangelical Counsels transform digital “contacts” into encounters centred on Christ.

Sr. Francisco Nirmala, FMM, explores the “human-centred AI frontier.” She calls Artificial Intelligence a “gift of God” that requires moral integrity; she reminds us to prioritize human dignity over technocratic efficiency.

In addition to these reflections, this issue features the lived experiences of our Residential Seminar participants and the **SEDOS Annual Report** which was presented at the General Assembly on 11 November 2025 at the UISG. We are publishing a special message from **Sr. Mary Barron, OLA**, as she concludes her six-year term as President of SEDOS. We thank her warmly for her dedicated service and wish her every blessing in her future assignment.

As you read these pages, may you be inspired to navigate this new digital frontier with the same courage as the explorers of old, guided by a heart that remains ever-fixed on the person of Jesus Christ.

Dr. John Paul Herman, SVD
Director of SEDOS



Prière D'ouverture

Frères et sœurs, aujourd'hui, nous portons dans notre prière un aspect essentiel de notre monde : le monde numérique, cet espace où se croisent chaque jour des millions de voix, des fragilités silencieuses, mais aussi de belles possibilités de rencontre.

Ce monde, souvent rapide, fragmenté et bruyant, devient pourtant un lieu où l'Évangile peut circuler, où des hommes et des femmes s'engagent avec créativité et fidélité pour rejoindre les cœurs derrière les écrans. La mission ne se limite plus aux routes visibles : elle passe aussi par les réseaux, les messages, les images, et par la qualité de notre présence en ligne.

Aujourd'hui, nous voulons confier au Seigneur tous ceux qui annoncent l'Évangile dans ces espaces nouveaux, ceux qui cherchent à bâtir des ponts, à semer la paix, la vérité et la fraternité au milieu des flux numériques. Que notre prière soutienne leur engagement et ouvre nos propres cœurs à une mission toujours plus ajustée aux réalités d'aujourd'hui.

Mot de clôture

Au nom du Bureau Exécutif SEDOS, je voudrais exprimer notre profonde gratitude à chacune et chacun d'entre vous pour votre présence et votre participation à cette session consacrée à un thème aussi actuel que déterminant : *l'impact du monde digital sur l'engagement missionnaire aujourd'hui*. Merci d'avoir offert votre temps. Que ce que nous avons partagé aujourd'hui continue de porter du fruit dans vos missions respectives.

Nous disons merci à nos intervenants (le Père Joël, le frère Dennis et la sœur Pina Ricciari). Grâce à la qualité de chacune de Vos contributions nous avons pu percevoir plus clairement comment les outils numériques transforment non seulement nos modes de communication, mais aussi notre manière d'annoncer l'Évangile, de rejoindre l'autre dans

sa réalité concrète, et de servir ces périphéries humaines et spirituelles qui nous sont confiées.

Grâce à vous, nous repartons enrichis, stimulés, et peut-être même un peu bousculés.

Un remerciement tout particulier à UISG, qui nous ouvre toujours ses portes. Merci pour votre hospitalité, et votre disponibilité. Merci pour cet espace qui est un véritable lieu de réflexion, de dialogue et de communion entre congrégations, où la mission se pense, se partage et se renouvelle. Merci.

Nous n'oublions pas non plus les traducteurs, les techniciens, et toutes les personnes qui ont œuvré dans l'ombre pour que cette rencontre se déroule avec fluidité et qualité. Votre travail discret mais essentiel nous rappelle que la mission se construit aussi grâce à celles et ceux qui servent avec compétence et générosité. Merci.

En clôturant cette journée, nous repartons avec l'idée que notre réflexion ne s'arrête pas ici mais que les défis et les opportunités du monde digital nous invitent à poursuivre la réflexion, à approfondir notre discernement et à renouveler notre engagement missionnaire avec créativité, audace et humilité. Puissions-nous continuer à être des témoins authentiques, capables d'habiter les espaces numériques avec la même passion évangélique que les lieux physiques.

Merci encore à chacune et chacun. Que le Seigneur bénisse votre mission et qu'Il nous accompagne sur ces chemins nouveaux où l'Esprit nous précède déjà.

Chant final:

Que le Dieu des grands espaces et des larges horizons nous ouvre maintenant la route et nous entraîne plus loin.



Lieve Stragier, ICM

The Impact of the Digital World on Missionary Involvement Today

Welcome to this year's SEDOS Spring Seminar. Today, we turn our attention to a timely and challenging theme: *"The Impact of the Digital World on Missionary Involvement Today."*

Though we will speak about the digital and virtual world today, we are very happy that we are here in real presence — able to see and touch one another, to shake hands, and to share a drink together. Virtual meetings have become a great saving factor in our post-Covid world, yet nothing surpasses meeting each other face to face, is it not? So, I hope that today we will truly enjoy one another's presence and the gift of being together, of being enriched by the different speakers of today.

When we speak about the digital world, we are not simply referring to a set of tools or platforms. We are standing before something much larger — almost like the discovery of a new continent. In the 16th and 17th centuries, explorers set out across unknown seas, convinced that beyond the horizon lay lands they had never imagined. Today, we find ourselves in a similar moment. A vast new world has opened before us: the digital world, the virtual continent where millions of people now live, think, relate, and search for meaning. It is as an entire ecosystem created by digital technology.



If mission means going where people are, then we cannot ignore this new continent. From the early days of his pontificate, Pope Francis, of blessed memory, had been calling the Church to

“missionary outreach.” He called the ecclesial community to “step out of its comfort zone and have the courage to reach out to all the peripheries that need the light of the Gospel.” For generations, we had understood those



peripheries mainly as the most remote corners of the earth — places difficult to reach, geographically or culturally. Yet Pope Francis also reminded us of another kind of frontier: the existential peripheries, the places where people feel unseen, unheard, wounded, or searching for meaning. Today, a new periphery has emerged that is not defined by distance but by connection. The digital world has become one of the great frontiers of our time — a space where people gather, form relationships, express their hopes and fears, and voice the deepest questions of the human heart. It is often precisely here, in this vast and restless digital continent, that many dwell in existential loneliness or longing. To ignore this periphery would be to overlook one of the most urgent mission fields of our age.

This theme has also been taken up strongly by the Synod on Synodality, which speaks of the digital culture as a *“crucial dimension of the Church’s witness in contemporary culture”*. The Synod reminds us that digital culture reshapes how we conceive of reality and consequently relate to ourselves, one another, our surroundings, and even to God. It calls the whole Church to ensure that this environment becomes a place of encounter, dialogue, and communion, and it has even dedicated one of its ten Study Groups to the theme of *Mission in the Digital Environment*.

Our session today invites us to take some steps as explorers of this new continent, this new space — not with fear, but with curiosity; not

with nostalgia, but with hope. The digital world is not a threat to our mission. It is one of the places where our mission now unfolds. And like real explorers, we step into this new world with a listening heart, ready to recognize and nurture the seeds of the Gospel already present there.

For this exploration, we are accompanied today by three guides whose congregational charisms place them right at the heart of our theme. This morning, we begin with Fr. Joel Nkongolo, CMF, a Claretian missionary. The Claretian tradition has long been committed to evangelization through communication and the creative use of media, making him a fitting voice to help us reflect on *“The Challenges and Opportunities of the Digital Age.”*

In the second part of the morning, Br. Dennis Tayo, OFM, of the Franciscan Friars, will lead us into the *“Spirituality of Communion in the Digital Age.”* The Franciscan way, rooted in simplicity, fraternity, and universal kinship, offers a precious lens for discerning how communion can be nurtured even in virtual spaces.

This afternoon, we will be guided by Sr. Pina Ricci, FSP, of the daughters of St. Paul. Her congregation’s mission is explicitly dedicated to evangelization through the modern means of communication.

She will help us explore *“The Impact of Being a Missionary in a Digital World Today,”* drawing from a charism shaped by decades of presence on the frontiers of media and digital culture.

As we enter this space of discovery together, we do so with the lenses our tradition offers us: the lens of spirituality, which helps us discern God’s presence in unfamiliar terrain; the lens of mission, which urges us toward every periphery, including the digital ones; the lens of communion, which teaches us to build relationships even in fragmented spaces. My wish is that this day may open our imagination as missionary congregations — helping us see the digital world not as a burden or a threat, but as a place where the Spirit is already at work, inviting us to listen, to accompany, and to witness. May this shared reflection strengthen our capacity to walk together, also in this new continent, with creativity, humility, and renewed missionary joy.

Welcome to this space of encounter!



The Challenges and Opportunities of The Digital Age

I. The Digital Age in Context



The Digital Age, also known as the Information Age, defines the current period of human civilisation through a fundamental shift from industrial to information-based

economies and social structures. Its roots reach to the mid-twentieth century, when the invention of the transistor in 1947 by John Bardeen, Walter Brattain, and William Shockley at Bell Laboratories laid the physical groundwork for modern computing.¹ The subsequent development of the microprocessor by Intel's Ted Hoff and his team in 1971 dramatically miniaturised computing power, making technology progressively available to ordinary people and setting the stage for a revolution that would touch every aspect of human life.²

The age truly gained social momentum in the 1970s and 1980s with the rise of personal computers and then decisively entered the public sphere in 1989, when the British scientist Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web, transforming the internet from a tool of academics and the military into a global public resource. The 1990s brought an explosion of internet adoption, e-commerce, and digital media. The launch of the smartphone in the mid-2000s marked a further turning point, ensuring that billions of people now carry the power of the internet at all times. By 2023, the

number of smartphone users worldwide had surpassed 6.8 billion.³

The cultural and anthropological impact of this transformation is immense. Manuel Castells, in his landmark trilogy *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, argued that digital networks have given rise to a new form of society organised around information flows rather than physical geography.⁴ Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee documented in *The Second Machine Age* how digital technologies generate unprecedented economic productivity while simultaneously widening inequality and displacing labour.⁵ The United Nations has consistently identified the 'digital divide', that is, the gap between those with and without meaningful access to digital technology, as a major driver of global injustice.⁶ The World Economic Forum projected that AI and automation could displace 85 million jobs globally while creating 97 million new ones by 2025, a transition whose social consequences for the most vulnerable remain largely unaddressed.⁷

The critical theological move, however, is to pass from an analysis of technology to an analysis of culture. As the Dicastery for Communication's *Towards Full Presence*

¹ Cf. J. Bardeen – W.H. Brattain – W. Shockley, «The Transistor, a Semi-Conductor Triode», in *Physical Review* 74 (1948) 230–231.

² Cf. F. Faggin – M.E. Hoff – S. Mazor – M. Shima, *The History of the Intel 4004*, Intel Corporation, Santa Clara 2006.

³ STATISTA RESEARCH DEPARTMENT, *Number of smartphone users worldwide 2013–2028*, Statista, Hamburg 2024, accessed on 1 March 2026: <statista.com/statistics/330695>.

⁴ Cf. M. CASTELLS, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 3 vols., Blackwell, Oxford 1996–1998, vol. I, p. 21.

⁵ Cf. E. BRYNJOLFSSON – A. MCAFEE, *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies*, W.W. Norton, New York 2014, pp. 7–11.

⁶ Cf. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, *Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier*, UNDP, New York 2020, pp. 112–118.

⁷ Cf. WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, *The Future of Jobs Report 2020*, WEF, Geneva 2020, p. 5.

(2023) insists, the digital world is not merely a collection of tools but a genuine cultural environment – a place – with its own logic, its own formation of desires, and its own structuring of attention and relationship.⁸ Pope Francis expressed this with pastoral directness in his 2013 address to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications: The Church must enter this world, walk alongside its pilgrims, and offer the saving word of God.⁹ Pope Benedict XVI's introduction of the concept of the 'Digital Continent' in 2009¹⁰ was more than a metaphor; it was a missiological claim. Just as the great missionary orders received new continents as their apostolic field, so the Church today is called to a genuinely missionary presence on this new continent, not simply replicating existing pastoral structures online, but engaging digital culture from within.

This missiological urgency has been given its most recent and most directly relevant expression by Pope Leo XIV. In his address to participants in the meeting promoted by the Union of Superiors General (26 November 2025), he offered a measured but clear summons to consecrated people:

information technology represents a challenge also for consecrated people. On the one hand, it offers immense opportunities for good, both for community life and for the apostolate. It would be shortsighted to ignore the extraordinary opportunities it provides to communion and the mission, allowing us to reach faraway people, to share faith through new languages, and to reach even those who, through ordinary means, find it difficult to approach our communities. At the same time, however, these resources can strongly influence, and not always for the better, the way we build and maintain relationships¹¹.

⁸ Cf. DICASTERY FOR COMMUNICATION, *Towards full presence. Pastoral reflection on engagement with social media*, 2023, n. 2.

⁹ FRANCIS, *Address of Holy Father Francis to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications* (21 September 2013).

¹⁰ BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 43rd World Communications Day* (24 May 2009).

¹¹ LEO XIV, *Address to participants at the meeting promoted by the Union of Superiors General (USG)* (26 Novembre 2025).

This address, the most recent magisterial word addressed directly to religious superiors on the digital theme, integrates the relational pastoral emphasis of Francis with the theological concerns of Benedict XVI, and it forms the living horizon of the present reflection. The following analysis organises its inquiry under the five dimensions most immediately pertinent to us: (1) **mission and evangelisation**, (2) **community and fraternal life**, (3) **spirituality and prayer**, (4) **formation**, and (5) **ethics**. A section on discernment and a conclusion follows.

II. The Challenges of The Digital Age

The proper starting point is not alarm but discernment, that is, the Ignatian capacity to read the movements of a cultural moment in the light of faith. Grounded in the method of *Gaudium et Spes*, which calls the Church to read the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel,¹² this analysis names the challenges with honesty, knowing that recognition is already the beginning of wisdom.

II.1 Mission and Evangelisation: The Technician Temptation

The digital environment is simultaneously the most accessible public square in history and the most saturated. John Paul II's vision of the 'new Areopagus' of communications as a genuine mission frontier¹³ has been vindicated by the sheer scale of human presence online: more than five billion people now inhabit digital spaces where they search for love, meaning, community, and truth. Yet the very abundance of the digital world constitutes its first danger for the mission.

The economy of attention is fiercely competitive, and the metrics of digital culture (clicks, likes, shares) reward spectacle over substance. The risk is what might be called 'evangelisation by hashtag': a reduction of the kerygma to slogans that move emotions without transforming lives. Pope Francis warned in 2013 that there is a temptation for the Church to become merely technically present, to produce content rather than to witness, so that 'technicians supplant evangelisers,' failing to

¹² SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, *Gaudium et Spes*, 4.

¹³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 37c.

convey the face of Christ or to build a Church that functions as home.¹⁴ Authentic proclamation requires encounter, and encounter requires a depth of communication that digital media can facilitate but also easily subverts.

Algorithmic logic compounds this. Platforms are designed not to facilitate genuine encounter but to maximise engagement, which typically means amplifying what already provokes strong emotional responses – conflict, fear, outrage. The resulting ‘echo chambers’ directly undermine the Church’s prophetic mandate to reach beyond existing constituencies and to model charitable disagreement. For congregations working across cultural, linguistic, and political divides, this structural feature of digital platforms poses a particularly serious challenge.

The digital divide introduces a further dimension of justice. A mission that digitises without attending to who is excluded risks reproducing, in technological form, the colonial patterns it ostensibly opposes. CELAM’s 2025 pastoral document on artificial intelligence addresses precisely this dynamic in the Latin American context, noting that algorithmic systems developed in the Global North often arrive in the South with embedded biases that are invisible to their designers but deeply felt by those they affect.¹⁵

II.2 Community and Fraternal Life: Connection Without Communion

The sociologist Sherry Turkle, in her landmark study *Alone Together*, documented the paradox at the heart of the digital age: unprecedented connectivity accompanied by an epidemic of loneliness.¹⁶ For religious communities, this paradox takes a specific and vocational form. Pope Francis, in his 2013 Plenary address, stressed that virtual connections must never substitute for relationships requiring ‘presence,

prolonged and patient listening, and deep sharing.’ Digital communication can support these relationships, but it cannot replace them.¹⁷

The theological weight of this observation is considerable. The vowed life is essentially communal: it is a sign of the coming Kingdom, lived in fraternal charity.¹⁸ When smartphones interrupt common meals, personal devices replace shared recreation, and community members are present at the same table while inhabiting separate digital worlds, the prophetic sign that religious community is called to be is quietly eroded. The witness of fraternal life – its visibility, its joy, its willingness to endure the friction of real togetherness – is one of the most powerful evangelising realities available to the Church. Digital life, without communal governance, can corrode it from within.

Pope Francis has consistently identified loneliness as one of the defining pathologies of contemporary culture.¹⁹ The digital age, far from addressing this crisis, often deepens it by offering the simulacrum of connection in place of its substance. For novice masters and formators in particular, this reality demands attention: young candidates for religious life frequently arrive with years of digitally mediated relationships as their primary social formation, and the habits of intimacy appropriate to community life must often be learned from scratch.

II.3 Spirituality and Prayer: The Assault on Interiority and the Gnostic Temptation

The contemplative tradition insists that encounter with God requires what the Desert Fathers called *hesychia*, a stillness of spirit that disposes the soul to receive what cannot be grasped. The digital age is structurally inimical to *hesychia*. Social media platforms are engineered to capture and hold attention through dopaminergic reward loops; the smartphone has become a machine of distraction whose pull is experienced even in the most sacred spaces.

¹⁴ Cf. FRANCIS, *Address to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications* (2013), 3.

¹⁵ Cf. CELAM, *La Inteligencia Artificial: Una Mirada Pastoral desde América Latina y el Caribe*, CELAM, Bogotá 2025, 4.1.

¹⁶ Cf. S. TURKLE, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, Basic Books, New York 2011, pp. 1–16.

¹⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Address to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications*, 2.

¹⁸ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Vita Consecrata*, 41–42.

¹⁹ Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for the 53rd World Communications Day* (24 May 2019).

Pope Benedict XVI, in his address to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, named this with theological precision: digital culture challenges the ‘symbolic language that talks about transcendence’, threatening to reduce reality to what can be represented, quantified, and shared – and thereby impoverishing liturgy, prayer, and the soul’s capacity for silence.²⁰ The constant mediation of experience through screens carries the risk of what Benedict called the ‘spirit made prisoner of matter’: a life so saturated with digital input that the interior spaces necessary for genuine prayer become inaccessible.

Alongside this general challenge, there is a specifically theological danger: what might be called the ‘Gnostic temptation’ of digital spirituality. The digital world tempts the believer toward a disembodied faith, rich in spiritual content, aesthetically satisfying, morally engaged, yet fundamentally detached from the incarnate, sacramental, and communal realities that constitute the Christian mystery. Pope Francis’s insistence that the Church must carry ‘the smell of the sheep’ applies with full force here: a missionary spirituality that retreats into curated digital beauty, however genuinely pious, has lost contact with the flesh and blood it is called to serve.

Nicholas Carr, in *The Shallows*, provides empirical grounding for these theological concerns: internet use measurably diminishes the capacity for sustained attention and deep reading, the very cognitive and affective capacities upon which *Lectio Divina*, contemplative prayer, and serious theological study depend.²¹ Thomas Merton identified the fundamental spiritual stakes: ‘Silence is not an absence of speech. It is the presence of God.’²² What is most at risk in the digital age is precisely this silence.

²⁰ Cf. Benedict XVI, *Address to the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications* (2011).

²¹ Cf. N. Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*, W.W. Norton, New York 2010, pp. 115–143.

²² T. Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York 1958, p. 46.

II.4 Formation: The Rival Formation System

Digital culture does not merely distract from formation: it is itself a formation system. Social media platforms shape desires, model identities, reward certain behaviours, and penalise others. They operate, in the philosopher Charles Taylor’s sense, as ‘strong evaluative frameworks’ - environments that tell their inhabitants, continuously and at a level below conscious deliberation, what is worth wanting, what is worth being, and what is worth sharing. Pope Benedict XVI, in his Plenary address, observed that the digital age influences the ‘way of thinking and living’, posing fundamental anthropological questions about communion, authority, and collective understanding.²³ It requires, he insisted, ‘thorough and adequate formation’ to avoid ‘despondency or loss of



identity’ among those whose primary formation has taken place in digital environments. Pope Francis’s *Christus Vivit* identifies the risk for young people specifically: virtual relationships risk substituting for real encounters, producing a generation capable of digital intimacy but struggling with the sustained, vulnerable, and accountable presence that consecrated life demands.²⁴

For those responsible for initial and ongoing formation, this analysis has concrete implications. The digitally formed self is often, in sociological terms, a ‘performing self’: one accustomed to constructing and curating a public identity, to seeking validation through external response, and to withdrawing from

²³ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Address to the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications* (2011).

²⁴ FRANCIS, *Christus Vivit*, 88.

environments that offer insufficient affirmation. These habits are directly at odds with the self-gift that profession requires, with the obedience that community life demands, and with the poverty of spirit that contemplation presupposes.

II.5 Ethics: New Moral Frontiers

The digital age has generated a cluster of urgent ethical questions that the Church must address prophetically. Shoshana Zuboff's analysis of 'surveillance capitalism', which is the economic logic by which platforms extract, analyse, and monetise the most intimate data of human behaviour, exposes a systematic assault on human dignity that takes place largely outside public awareness.²⁵ Every prayer app, every faith-sharing platform, and every digital pastoral tool operates within economic and technological structures whose values may be deeply inimical to the Gospel.

Artificial intelligence introduces a further range of moral questions. The Pontifical Academy for Life's *Rome Call on AI Ethics* addresses the risks of algorithmic decision-making for human dignity, emphasising that no technological system can substitute for the personal moral responsibility that is constitutive of authentic human agency.

*We must think about making not only the decision-making criteria of AI-based algorithmic agents understandable, but also their purpose and objectives. These devices must be able to offer individuals information on the logic behind the algorithms used to make decisions. This will increase transparency, traceability and responsibility, making the computer-aided decision-making process more valid.*²⁶

Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* provides the broader framework: the 'technocratic paradigm', in other words, the tendency to treat technological capacity as its own justification, is a spiritual

pathology before it is an economic or political one.²⁷

The ethical dimension also includes the question of digital misinformation and the crisis of truth. The Church has a centuries-old tradition of reasoned inquiry, careful discernment, and commitment to truth. In a digital environment where misinformation spreads exponentially and where algorithmic amplification rewards emotional provocation over factual accuracy, this tradition is both a countercultural resource and a standing obligation.

III. The Opportunities of The Digital Age

The Christian tradition is fundamentally hopeful. After naming the wounds, theological reflection moves with energy and conviction to the opportunities and roots them in the deepest convictions of the faith. The God who became flesh in a specific cultural moment is the God who enters the digital age with equal generality.

III.1 Mission and Evangelisation: The New Areopagus

Saint Paul's encounter with the Athenian philosophers at the Areopagus (Acts 17:16–34) stands as the paradigmatic scriptural image for mission in a new cultural environment: entering the public square where people gather, engaging the questions they are already asking, and offering the unexpected answer of the Gospel. Pope John Paul II identified the 'new Areopagus' of media and communications as precisely this kind of mission field.²⁸ The digital age has realised this vision on a scale no one in 1990 could have imagined.

Pope Francis articulated the missionary logic with pastoral warmth in his 2013 Plenary address: the digital missionary is called to walk 'like Jesus on the Emmaus Road', warming hearts through accompaniment and listening, moving at the pace of those who are searching rather than broadcasting from above.²⁹ The image is perfectly calibrated: not technological mastery but pastoral presence; not the efficiency

²⁵ Cf. S. ZUBOFF, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, PublicAffairs, New York 2019, pp. 8–15.

²⁶ PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE, *Rome Call on AI Ethics* (2020).

²⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 102–114.

²⁸ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 37c.

²⁹ Cf. FRANCIS, *Address to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications*, 2.

of mass communication but the intimacy of encounter.

The Pontifical Council for Social Communications' *Communio et Progressio* offered the foundational vision: the Church's engagement with social communications serves the unity and progress of the human family.³⁰ Fifty years later, this vision can be realised at a genuinely global scale. Religious congregations can now maintain living contact with diaspora communities, reach isolated individuals who have no access to a physical ecclesial community, and offer catechesis, prayer, and accompaniment to the 'digital ones' – those who have left institutional religion, but who continue to search for transcendence in digital spaces.

III.2 Community and Global Solidarity

The same technologies that threaten community, when used with deliberate discernment, can build extraordinary bonds of solidarity across geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers. The Dicastery for Communication's *Towards Full Presence* offers the image of the Good Samaritan as the model for digital presence: attentive, compassionate, willing to stop and be moved by the need of the other, and committed to genuine accompaniment rather than to the performance of attention.³¹

SEDOS itself exemplifies this: a global network of missionary congregations, sharing theological reflection, missiological resources, and pastoral experience across five continents - doing so ever more effectively through digital means. Pope Francis's *Fratelli Tutti* envisions universal fraternity grounded in genuine encounter with the other³²: digital tools, used in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, can extend this encounter to those who would otherwise remain unreachable.

The COVID-19 pandemic offered an unwanted but revealing test case. While it demonstrated conclusively that digital community cannot

replace physical presence, it also showed that digital tools could sustain forms of prayer, pastoral accompaniment, and fraternal connection that would otherwise have been entirely impossible. The lesson is not that digital community is equivalent to embodied community, but that it can be a genuine supplement to it and, in circumstances of isolation or emergency, a lifeline.

III.3 Spirituality: Cybertheology and the Spiritual Hunger of the Digital Age

One of the most striking paradoxes of the digital age is that a culture structurally inimical to contemplation has generated an explosive hunger for it. The growth of mindfulness apps, online retreat programmes, digital prayer communities, and spiritual direction by video reflects a profound spiritual need that digital culture itself creates but cannot satisfy. This hunger is itself a missionary opening.

Antonio Spadaro SJ, in his seminal work *Cyberteologia*, introduced the concept of 'cybertheology': the task of thinking Christian faith (liturgy, grace, revelation, sacraments) in creative conversation with the categories of the digital world.³³ Digital symbols and metaphors can illuminate the Kingdom of God, adapting Jesus's parables (nets, seeds, flocks) to contemporary experience. Pope Benedict XVI himself explored this territory, noting that theology must engage 'digital thought' in order to enhance rather than diminish our understanding of faith.³⁴

The mystics are going viral. Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, Julian of Norwich, and Ignatius of Loyola find unexpected audiences in digital spaces where people search for depth, silence, and the experience of God. Religious communities and individuals are discovering that digital tools, if used wisely and with discernment, can support and extend the spiritual life: apps facilitating the Liturgy of the Hours, online directed retreats, platforms for

³⁰ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS, *Communio et Progressio* (23 May 1971), 1.

³¹ Cf. DICASTERY FOR COMMUNICATION, *Towards Full Presence*, 7.

³² Cf. FRANCIS, *Fratelli Tutti*, 43–44.

³³ Cf. A. SPADARO, *Cyberteologia. Pensare il Cristianesimo al tempo di Internet*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2012, p. 18.

³⁴ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Address to the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications* (2011).

Lectio Divina communities, and podcasts introducing the contemplative heritage to new audiences.

III.4 Formation: Democratizing Education

Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, in *Connected Toward Communion*, demonstrates how digital tools, when grounded in ecclesial intentionality, can serve the formation of disciples and the building of genuine community rather than undermining it.³⁵ Distance learning and digital formation resources have expanded dramatically, enabling missionary congregations to offer formation to members in remote or resource-poor environments. This is of particular significance for the Global South, where formal theological education has historically been inaccessible to many.

Yet the opportunity of the digital age for formation reaches deeper than access to content. Pope Francis' *Christus Vivit* identifies the digital world as a space where young consecrated persons are already constructing their identity, forming relationships, and searching for meaning; wise formators can meet them there, accompanying the process of integration rather than ignoring it. Digital tools can also support ongoing formation across the entire arc of religious life: online directed retreats, digitally facilitated spiritual direction between a formator and a geographically distant director, virtual gatherings that maintain congregational unity across continents, and podcasts and video lectures that bring the great living theologians into formation houses that could never afford to host them.



³⁵ D. ZSUPAN-JEROME, *Connected Toward Communion: The Church and Social Communication in the Digital Age*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville (MN) 2014, pp. 32–38.

Pope Leo XIV, in his 2025 address to the Union of Superiors General, explicitly acknowledged these possibilities, calling it "shortsighted to ignore the extraordinary opportunities" that digital technology offers to communion and mission. The condition, however, is always intentionality: formation in and through digital means requires the same discernment, the same relational attentiveness, and the same rooting in prayer and community that characterise all authentic formation in consecrated life. The digital tool serves the person; it never replaces the formator, the community, or the encounter with the living God that is the heart of all formation.

III.5 Ethics and Prophetic Witness:

Algoethics and the Common Good

The Church possesses, in its social teaching, its tradition of moral theology, and its centuries-long reflection on human dignity and the common good, precisely the resources needed to engage the ethical questions of the digital age prophetically. Paolo Benanti OFM, advisor to the Pontifical Academy for Life, has developed the concept of 'algoethics': the ethical analysis of the values embedded in algorithmic systems, ensuring that they serve human dignity rather than commercial or political interests.

The Dicastery for Communication's *Towards Full Presence* calls believers to co-create digital spaces as environments of encounter and solidarity, not merely to consume existing digital culture but to transform it from within by the presence of Gospel values.³⁶ This is itself a form of mission: modelling a different digital culture, one characterised by truth-telling, hospitality to the stranger, depth of attention, and care for the marginalised.

Digital platforms give religious and missionary voices access to a global public square from which they can speak prophetically on justice, peace, ecological integrity, and human dignity. The rapid spread of *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* through digital channels demonstrates that the Church's moral teaching can reach audiences far beyond traditional Catholic

³⁶ Cf. DICASTERY FOR COMMUNICATION, *Towards Full Presence*, 4.

constituencies when it is communicated with clarity and pastoral warmth.

IV. Principles for Discernment

Discernment, the distinctively Christian practice of reading experience in the light of faith, under the guidance of the Spirit, is the proper Christian response to the digital age. The following five principles are offered not as rules but as theological orientations for communities, congregations, and individuals seeking to inhabit the digital world faithfully.

IV.1 Incarnation: Enter the Flesh of the Digital World

The Incarnation is the model for all Christian cultural engagement. God did not communicate with humanity from a safe distance but entered fully into the conditions of human existence, including its cultural, linguistic, and social particularity. The Church's missionary tradition has understood this: genuine mission requires genuine presence, not the management of presence from a distance.

For digital mission, this means entering the environments where people actually live, not creating sanitised Catholic spaces that speak only to the already converted, but engaging the public square of the internet with its messiness, its conflict, its searching, and its genuine beauty. It means, as Pope Francis consistently insists, going to the peripheries, including the digital peripheries where the most isolated, the most wounded, and the most spiritually hungry are to be found.³⁷

IV.2 Contemplation before Communication

The apostolic and monastic traditions converge here: the one who communicates must first have something to communicate, and that something flows only from encounter with the living God in prayer and silence. Henri Nouwen identified solitude, silence, and prayer as the 'three movements' that ground all genuine ministry³⁸; Thomas Merton grounded the same insight in the Cistercian contemplative tradition.³⁹ In a

culture of distraction, this insistence is countercultural, and precisely for that reason, prophetic.

Cal Newport's concept of 'digital minimalism', which refers to intentional, deliberate, and selective use of digital technology, governed by explicit values rather than by technological defaults⁴⁰, represents a secular convergence with the ancient wisdom of the monastic tradition. Communities that establish norms of shared digital simplicity – phone-free prayer and common meals, regular digital sabbath, and communal discernment about platform use – are not merely managing a problem but embodying a witness.

IV.3 Community Accountability and Shared Norms

Religious life is, by its nature, a form of life governed by communal discernment rather than individual preference. The question of digital use is not, therefore, primarily a matter of personal virtue but of community wisdom. Chapter discussions on digital life, treating it as a question of charism, mission, and fraternal witness rather than merely as a matter of regulation, are an expression of the ongoing discernment that is constitutive of religious life. The three evangelical counsels speak directly to digital life. Poverty invites digital simplicity: resisting the accumulation of platforms, data, and digital possessions that serve no genuine mission purpose. Chastity calls for purity of relationship in digital spaces: genuine encounter, respect for the dignity of others, and refusal of the commodification of persons. Obedience invites accountability: willingness to submit personal digital habits to the scrutiny of the community and to the guidance of the Magisterium.

IV.4 Preferential Option for the Digitally Marginalised

The Church's preferential option for the poor demand's attention to the digital divide as a justice issue. A mission that digitises without attending to who is excluded risks inadvertently

³⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 264.

³⁸ Cf. H.J.M. NOUWEN, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*, Seabury Press, New York 1981, pp. 25–44.

³⁹ Cf. T. MERTON, *Thoughts in Solitude*, Farrar, Straus &

Giroux, New York 1958.

⁴⁰ Cf. C.S. NEWPORT, *Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World*, Portfolio/Penguin, New York 2019, pp. 30–55.

deepening existing inequalities. CELAM's 2025 document on AI presses this point with particular force: technologies developed in contexts of abundance often arrive in contexts of poverty with hidden costs and structural biases that demand prophetic challenge.⁴¹

The digital mission of a congregation must therefore include both digital presence and digital solidarity: active advocacy for the broadening of meaningful digital access, attention to the most vulnerable users of digital platforms, and resistance to the tendency to measure the success of digital mission by metrics that reflect only the reach within already-connected populations.

IV.5 Authenticity over Performance: Witnesses, Not Influencers

The most penetrating challenge the digital age poses to religious life is not technological but anthropological: the culture of digital performance, in which the self is continuously curated and presented for external validation, is directly at odds with the inner freedom, self-gift, and willingness to be unseen that consecrated life requires. Pope Francis's distinction between witness and performance, between the missionary who goes out and the one who merely appears to go out, has its most contemporary application in digital life.⁴²

The greatest contribution religious communities can make to digital culture may be precisely this: modelling a different way of being – one characterised by depth rather than breadth, by genuine encounter rather than managed impression, and by the willingness to be present without performance. In a culture saturated with digital noise, the prophetic witness of silence, attention, and unhurried presence carries an extraordinary evangelising force.

V. *Duc in Altum*: Put Out into The Deep

The Church has navigated many civilisational transformations: the fall of Rome, the Carolingian renaissance, the invention of the

printing press, and the encounter with modernity. In each case, the Gospel proved its capacity to enter a new cultural moment not by avoiding it but by transforming it from within. The digital age is the latest and perhaps the vastest of these frontier moments. The digital continent is real, it is vast, and it is inhabited by billions of human beings who search, often without knowing it, for the One who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Pope John Paul II's summons at the dawn of the new millennium – "*Duc in altum*, put out into the deep"⁴³ – applies with full force to the digital sea. The missionary Church does not wait on the shore, analysing the water. It puts out, with the Emmaus companion's attentiveness, the Good Samaritan's compassion, the Desert Father's stillness, and the Apostle's courage, into the deep.

This means, concretely, engaging digital culture with the full resources of the Church's tradition: its theology, its spirituality, its social teaching, its mystics, and above all its living witness of consecrated persons who have staked their lives on the conviction that God is real, that love is



possible, and that mission is worth everything. It means bringing to the digital world not merely content but presence; not merely information but encounter; not merely programmes but persons formed by prayer, shaped by community, and sent by the Spirit.

The digital age is not the enemy of the Gospel. It is its newest field. And as the whole tradition of missionary religious life attests: the harvest is great, the labourers are needed, and the Lord of the harvest goes ahead of those he sends.

⁴¹ Cf. CELAM, *La Inteligencia Artificial: Una Mirada Pastoral desde América Latina y el Caribe*, CELAM, Bogotá 2025.

⁴² Cf. FRANCIS, *Message for the 57th World Communications Day*, (21 May 2023).

⁴³ JOHN PAUL II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 38.

Dennis T. Tayo, OFM

Spirituality of Communion in the Digital Age – A Franciscan Approach

“Communion is the fire from which mission is born.”



We gather under a theme that is not simply contemporary but defining for our missionary generation: the impact of the digital world on missionary involvement today. Beneath necessary

conversations about strategies and pastoral applications lies a more fundamental question: Who are we becoming as missionaries within this digital world?

It is important to pause and look deeply at the spiritual foundations beneath all of this. This year, as the Church journeys as Pilgrims of Hope and commemorates the 800th year Anniversary of the Transitus of Francis of Assisi, we are invited to explore the meaning of communion through the unique lens of Franciscan spirituality. St. Francis’ passing was not simply a conclusion but a transition into deeper communion. His life teaches us that hope flourishes where communion is safeguarded and renewed, and it invites us to reflect on the direction in which our own lives are being shaped as we face the opportunities and challenges – the digital culture brings.

The digital world is no longer merely a place we visit. It has become a formative space we dwell in, where communion can either be nurtured or slowly eroded. Even those who never actively enter digital platforms still live in a world shaped by them. Many of us spend hours each day within digital environments - reading, responding, connecting, reacting, posting, searching, and sometimes even praying. Digital space is no longer simply a tool we use; it is a place we inhabit.

Even before we evangelize any culture, that culture is already shaping us. Mission always

shapes the missionary; the field evangelizes us even as we evangelize it. Our engagement with digital media is therefore not only about influencing online spaces, but also about recognizing the ways those spaces influence us. This is precisely why spirituality must come before strategy. Technology amplifies what is already within us.

We must ask ourselves: How does my online presence shape my own capacity for communion with God, with myself, with my community, with the wider human family, and with the rest of creation? Does my time online deepen my capacity for attention and relationship, or does it weaken my presence to the reality around me?

In ecclesial language, communion is not simply cooperation or agreement. Communion is participation in the very life of the Trinity.¹ St. John Paul II described a “spirituality of communion” as the capacity to see what is positive in others, to make space for them, and to bear one another’s burdens.² It is relational participation in God’s life, not efficiency or uniformity.

For St. Francis of Assisi, this theology became concrete and radical. In the Earlier Rule, he instructs that “*those placed over others should not be called priors, but simply lesser brothers, and that they should wash the feet of the brothers*”.³ Here, brother precedes function, relationship precedes role, and minority precedes power. These are not poetic phrases. They are a radical reordering of priorities. Authority becomes service; leadership becomes fraternity.

¹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* (1964), §4.

² John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001), §43.

³ Francis of Assisi, *Regula non bullata* (Earlier Rule, 1221), Ch. 6.

In our religious lives, communion grows slowly. It is fragile. It also weakens slowly - often without our noticing. This raises a delicate question:

Is our digital presence strengthening our fraternity, or quietly replacing it?

Are we remaining connected online while becoming less present to one another offline?

Digital culture introduces a rhythm of speed, reaction, interruption, and continuous stimulation. The deeper issue is not simply what this rhythm is doing to our habits, but whether we are consciously choosing what shapes our hearts. If communion requires attentiveness, what happens when attention becomes fragmented? If patience is required, what happens when instant response becomes habitual?

St. Francis refused to allow his heart to be shaped by the logic of power or status. He chose a different rhythm.

Hope is sustained where communion is protected. Every new culture test communion; digital culture does so subtly but powerfully. Yet it also offers an opportunity to choose communion again.

St. Francis' vision of communion was expansive. He embraced the leper, the stranger, the outsider, and the poor. He called the sun and the moon his brothers and sisters. His communion was not selective - it was cosmic.

Yet today our digital environment can quietly do the opposite. Algorithms, echo chambers, and curated feeds often show us more of what we already prefer. Voices that challenge us are filtered out. We are rewarded with confirmation rather than conversion.

Pope Francis has warned that digital environments can create closed circuits that limit authentic encounter.⁴ Slowly our world can shrink - and our compassion may shrink with it. We risk mistaking familiarity for communion.

For religious communities, this is crucial. Our charisms were born at the peripheries, not at the center of comfort. Digital space must not shrink our missionary horizon. Instead, it should become a place where we consciously widen it. Communion is never selective - not even digitally.

Yet choosing a different rhythm cannot remain a personal intention; it must become a shared commitment. For this reason, the Order of Friars Minor addressed this reality in *Incipe Iterum*⁵ ("Begin Again"), a guideline for digital media presence. The document is not simply about using tools effectively, but about inhabiting digital culture consciously as brothers, where mission, relationships, and witness truly matter.

It also encourages each entity of the Order to develop local protocols suited to its context, grounded in prayer and shared discernment. In this way, religious life is invited to discern how each charism inhabits the digital continent with fidelity to its identity. Only then can our presence be authentic — as individuals and as communities, as consumers and as creators.

Culture's influence lies in its subtlety - it shapes our perceptions, actions, and values almost imperceptibly. For younger generations, the divide between online and offline is blurred, with both realms intertwined. Beneath the digital noise, people yearn for meaning, belonging, and genuine listening. Where longing exists, there is an opportunity for mission.

The Dicastery for Communication's *Towards Full Presence* reminds us that digital engagement must be rooted in authentic relational presence, not merely visibility.⁶ Effectiveness without depth can erode authenticity. It is because digital platforms promise connection. And in many ways, they deliver it. But connection does not automatically mean communion. We can be visible without being vulnerable, followed

⁵ Order of Friars Minor, *Incipe Iterum: OFM Guidelines for Digital Media Presence*. (Mirror test: p-4)

⁶ Dicastery for Communication, *Towards Full Presence: A Pastoral Reflection on Engagement with Social Media* (2023).

⁴ Pope Francis, Message for the 53rd World Communications Day, 24 January 2019.

without accompaniment, and connected without presence.

A familiar situation illustrates this tension. A friar or sister may post a reflection that receives hundreds of reactions online, with notifications continuing throughout the day. Yet that same evening, during recreation or a shared meal, attention remains divided as the phone is repeatedly checked.

Broad digital connection can subtly displace immediate communal presence. A single authentic conversation may be more missionary than a message seen by thousands. The difference is the difference between proximity and relationship. Over time, this illusion of closeness can weaken our capacity for real encounter.

Metrics suggest impact. Communion quietly thins. The digital world measures reach, engagement, visibility. The Gospel measures trust, depth, transformation.

When Francis of Assisi exclaimed, “*And the Lord gave me brothers,*”⁷ he reminded us that people must never become numbers, metrics, or audiences. They are persons - our brothers and sisters. Genuine presence chooses encounter over broadcasting, and fraternity over self-promotion. Hope cannot be reduced to visibility. It grows where people feel accompanied.

Digital culture rewards speed, visibility, and performance - not always truth. There is a subtle temptation, even within religious life, to curate a spiritual image: to appear inspiring, coherent, ideal and always confident. Yet Gospel witness is different. It is often slow, hidden, and communal.

St. Francis insisted that preaching was not first a matter of words but of life. In the Earlier Rule, he exhorts the brothers to preach always through their conduct, reminding them that witness precedes speech.⁸ For him, presence itself was proclamation. Communion begins not with speaking - but with being present.

The Gospel calls for genuine witnesses, not perfect images. People seek coherence - a life that makes faith believable. For religious, digital presence should reflect authentic community, not a curated persona. When performance overshadows authenticity, communion fades; but credibility grows when words and actions align. Christian faith is incarnational. God chose real presence, not distance. The Incarnation is God’s definitive rejection of abstraction.

Thomas of Celano recounts how, at Greccio, St. Francis did not explain the mystery of the Incarnation abstractly; he made it visible and tangible.⁹ Faith was embodied. Relationship was concrete.

Communion is never abstract. It is lived in flesh, proximity, and risk. As Saint Francis’ remains are venerated in Assisi, we are reminded that communion is tangible - lived through closeness and vulnerability, even in the face of letting go. To remain is an act of love.

In digital spaces, this genuine connection matters more than simply talking about faith in abstract terms. Listening matters. Silence matters. Dialogue and respect matter. Encounter precedes proclamation. Presence precedes influence. While digital culture often conditions us to react quickly, communion teaches us to stay.

People today are not only searching for religious content. They are searching for coherence - for lives that make the Gospel believable. If the digital world is part of our mission field today, our presence within it should reflect our deepest charism. Communion does not happen by accident. It must be cultivated intentionally, especially online. So before asking how to evangelize online, we must first reflect on whether our digital presence builds communion or fractures it:

Do I seek to inspire or to be admired?
Do I sow hope or feed on anger?
Do I accept criticism with humility, or react defensively?

⁷ Francis of Assisi, *Testament*, §14, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1.

⁸ Francis of Assisi, *Regula non bullata* (1221), ch. 17.

⁹ Thomas of Celano, *The Life of St. Francis*, ch. 30, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1.

Do I engage in thoughtful critique or contribute to defamation?

Do I seek lasting Gospel impact or fleeting trends?

Every culture tests spirituality. St. Francis lived during a time of Church crisis and social division. Instead of withdrawing, he chose humble fidelity and service. Our response to digital culture cannot be withdrawal, nor uncritical immersion. It must be a discerning presence. Every culture asks us: Who am I becoming? What do I value? What kind of relationships am I forming?

We are challenged and asked to humanize digital culture. And this begins with small acts: delaying reaction, responding with kindness, refusing aggression, seeing the person behind the profile. Humanization is slow. But culture is shaped through repeated small decisions. When encounter deepens into communion, digital space becomes humanized.

Religious life has always been a sign of communion, especially within fractured societies. Today that sign must also become visible online. We are invited to bring presence instead of performance, truth instead of noise, and communion instead of isolation; as co-travelers in digital world.

In the Gospel, Jesus always encounters before He teaches. He sees before He speaks. In digital spaces, something similar must happen. Listening becomes evangelization. Accompaniment becomes mission. Humility becomes credibility. Before proclaiming our beliefs or values, we are called to encounter others - listening deeply, in dialogue, and in accompanying them. Hope takes flesh through encounter. Arguments may win attention. Encounter wins hearts. Communion, in this sense, is not merely aspiration, it must become the fundamental measure of every digital interaction. It is the essential path that leads to authentic proclamation.

Leaders and animators often focus on outcomes, but before evaluating a digital initiative's efficiency, we must ask: Does it foster communion? Communion means creating unity and genuine connection. Strengthening these

bonds nurtures the community. Whatever nurtures communion nurtures the Church.

In this year of hope, leaders should foster trust and unity, offering optimism online where many feel divided. Communion is essential - a core leadership duty - because only from this wellspring does our mission gain true strength and credibility.

The challenge then is clear: Are we safeguarding activity, or communion? Before launching new projects, we must first be rooted in prayer, fraternity, and shared discernment. These foundations are vital, preceding any expansion or measurement of ministry impact. Mission cannot be sustained externally if communion is fragile internally. Communion must be cultivated within our fraternities first. Only what is alive among us can be credibly offered beyond us.

Mission without communion becomes activism - busy, visible, but spiritually thin. Communion without mission becomes safe, inward, and self-contained. St. Francis held both together: contemplation and itinerancy, fraternity and proclamation.

Communion, therefore, is the fire from which mission is born. When communion deepens, mission becomes credible and life-giving. When communion weakens, mission becomes noise.

As leaders and animators, our first responsibility is not to expand the mission, but to tend its fire. If communion is weak, spreading it will not strengthen mission. If communion is strong, mission will naturally radiate brighter and warmer. We are invited to continual renewal, keeping our hearts and fraternities open and responsive to the signs of the times. In doing so, our charism is not lost or diluted in the digital space, but truly embodied and lived out there. St. Francis held together being sent and letting go - rooted in fraternity, yet free for mission.

And so, as we conclude, we return to these words that began his journey: "Go and repair

my Church.”¹⁰ Today, part of that Church lives and breathes within digital space.

St. Francis did not begin with strategy. He began with conversion - a conversion that became a fraternity, and a fraternity that became a mission.

Today, the Lord calls us to rebuild the Church - both its visible structures and the unseen networks of communion. Before engaging digital platforms, we must renew ourselves in prayer, fraternity, and unity. Only a transformed heart and community, can authentically share our charism in the digital world. True repair begins with hearts ignited by communion.

Pope Francis speaks of the need to “mend the nets”¹¹ - not nets of followers, but torn relationships; not networks of influence, but bonds of trust - to “speak with the heart” and always let truth and charity go together.¹² To mend means to remain, to care, and to repair what has frayed. In the end, we do not conquer the net. We mend it. And in mending it together, we ourselves become a living network of communion.

The question we carry from here is not how to conquer digital space, but where the Lord is asking us to begin again. The digital world may change the way we meet, but the heart of mission remains the same: presence, encounter, and the living witness of the Gospel.

Every time we choose “communion”: presence over performance, encounter over argument, and proclamation over self-promotion, we are already repairing the Church.

St. Francis of Assisi reminds us in his Letter to the Faithful that we “give birth to Christ” when we carry Him in our hearts and make Him visible through love.¹³

If communion becomes our digital style, then even amid the constant noise, the Gospel will remain recognizable - because communion is a language the world still understands and deeply yearns for.

As St. Francis once blessed his brothers, we ask for that same blessing as we pray:

“May the Lord bless us and keep us.

May the Lord show His face to us and have mercy on us.

May He turn His countenance toward us and give us peace.”¹⁴

A peace born from communion, carried into mission, and made visible — even in digital space. Amen.



¹⁰ Bonaventure, *The Major Legend of Saint Francis* (Legenda Maior), II, 1

¹¹ Francis, *Evangeliu Gaudium* (24 November 2013), §67

¹² Pope Francis, Message for the 57th World Communications Day (24, January 2023).

¹³ Francis of Assisi, *Letter to the Faithful* (Second Version), Ch. 5. §53.

¹⁴ Cf. *The Blessing of St. Francis* (cr. Num :6: 24-26)

L'impatto di Essere Missionari nel Mondo Digitale Oggi

(Che cosa significa essere missionari nel mondo digitale oggi)



Premessa

Le innovazioni tecnologiche aprono alla vita consacrata e alla missione scenari nuovi, ricchi di possibilità ma anche di interrogativi. Il digitale ci riguarda non perché dobbiamo semplicemente “stare al passo coi tempi”, ma perché la missione chiede di incontrare le persone là dove oggi vivono, cercano, si informano e si raccontano. È lì che molti pongono domande di senso, chiedono ascolto e cercano consolazione. Per questo la presenza missionaria nel digitale non può essere improvvisata: richiede discernimento, stile evangelico e responsabilità ecclesiale. Da qui nasce l'urgenza di approfondire il senso e l'uso dei media digitali, sia nella vita quotidiana delle persone consacrate sia nella missione dei diversi istituti.

La Domanda Decisiva: Che cosa Sta Cambiando in Noi?

Quando parliamo di impatto, non ci riferiamo soltanto a strumenti, piattaforme o strategie comunicative. Tocchiamo qualcosa di molto più vicino alla vita: ciò che il digitale genera in noi, nel nostro modo di pensare, di relazionarci e di vivere la missione. Per comprenderlo, occorre partire da un dato di fondo: è cambiato il paradigma comunicativo. Per molto tempo nella società ha prevalso un modello comunicativo più verticale: dal centro verso la periferia. Pochi decidevano i contenuti e i temi rilevanti, mentre gli altri ricevevano. Con Internet, invece, si è affermato un paradigma diverso: una comunicazione più orizzontale, diffusa e decentrata: non c'è più un unico centro che orienta la comunicazione, ma una pluralità di voci, messaggi, schermi e stimoli che attraversano continuamente la vita quotidiana. Ognuno può esprimersi, partecipare, intervenire. Ma il punto decisivo non è soltanto che è

cambiato il modo di comunicare. La domanda più profonda è un'altra: che cosa sta cambiando in noi? Che cosa accade alla nostra identità, al nostro modo di stare con Dio e con gli altri, quando viviamo e annunciamo il Vangelo dentro questo nuovo contesto? Quali possibilità si aprono e quali rischi dobbiamo riconoscere per non perdere il centro, che è Cristo, insieme all'unità di vita e alla libertà interiore?

Il Digitale non è “Fuori”: È un Ambiente che ci Abita

Il digitale non è più una realtà esterna, uno strumento da usare solo in alcuni momenti: è diventato il contesto abituale della nostra vita, un vero ambiente vitale nel quale ci muoviamo, pensiamo, costruiamo relazioni e prendiamo decisioni. La rete, dunque, non è un universo parallelo contrapposto al reale, ma parte della nostra esperienza quotidiana e incide sul modo in cui percepiamo noi stessi, gli altri e Dio. Per questo la missione, oggi, passa anche da qui: da come abitiamo questo ambiente senza smarrire il cuore del Vangelo. Un ambiente, però, non è mai neutro: dà ritmo alle giornate, sollecita l'attenzione, influisce sulle relazioni, rende alcune cose più immediate e altre più faticose, orienta ciò che consideriamo desiderabile o “riuscito”. Perciò il digitale non è soltanto un mezzo da usare, ma un ecosistema ossia un sistema complesso che offre possibilità nuove e, nello stesso tempo, esercita una forza che lentamente ci plasma. Di conseguenza, la qualità della missione non si gioca solo in ciò che diciamo, ma anche in ciò che diventiamo mentre lo diciamo. Ed è proprio da qui che nasce la necessità di un discernimento più preciso: se questo ambiente incide sulla persona, sul pensiero e sul modo di scegliere, allora occorre imparare a leggerlo in profondità.

Tre Chiavi di Lettura per essere Missionari nel Mondo Digitale Oggi

Prima di entrare nelle tre dimensioni fondamentali della persona — antropologica, cognitiva ed etica — è importante fissare il criterio di fondo. Papa Leone XIV lo esprime così nel *Messaggio per la LX Giornata Mondiale delle Comunicazioni Sociali* (2026): «La sfida pertanto non è tecnologica, ma antropologica. Custodire i volti e le voci significa in ultima istanza custodire noi stessi. Accogliere con coraggio, determinazione e discernimento le opportunità offerte dalla tecnologia digitale e dall'intelligenza artificiale non vuol dire nascondere a noi stessi i punti critici, le opacità, i rischi»¹. Alla luce di questo criterio possiamo leggere l'impatto del digitale sulla persona e sulla missione attraverso tre dimensioni strettamente intrecciate: antropologica, cognitiva ed etica. Non sono ambiti separati, ma tre prospettive complementari che aiutano a comprendere che cosa accade al missionario nel digitale e come abitarlo in modo evangelico.



1) Ricaduta antropologica

Quando diciamo “antropologico”, parliamo dell'umano nella sua interezza: corpo, affetti, identità, relazioni, tempo, desideri. Ed è proprio qui che il digitale incide in profondità: non cambia solo ciò che facciamo, ma anche ciò che impariamo a desiderare e a considerare normale. L'ambiente mediale possiede un proprio orizzonte antropologico, portatore di rischi e potenzialità, che le nuove generazioni hanno già interiorizzato — spesso in modo implicito — e stanno già vivendo. Esso può influenzare il modo in cui una persona costruisce la propria

¹ Leone XIV, *Custodire voci e volti umani*, Messaggio per la LX Giornata Mondiale delle Comunicazioni Sociali 2026.

identità e, nella vita consacrata, persino l'immagine di consacrato o consacrata che oggi va prendendo forma. Il Direttorio sulle Comunicazioni Sociali lo afferma con chiarezza: «Ogni nuovo linguaggio ha un'inevitabile ricaduta antropologica e sociale, ossia condiziona l'esistenza, la mentalità e le relazioni delle persone. Determina lo sviluppo di atteggiamenti e di sensibilità differenti: ad esempio una maggiore capacità intuitiva rispetto a quella analitico-sistematica, ma anche una diversa organizzazione logica del discorso e del pensiero, del tempo e dello spazio. Più radicalmente, possiamo dire che i media sono portatori di una nuova cultura nella misura in cui le loro modalità di funzionamento (ad esempio la capacità di fornire informazioni di qualunque provenienza o di creare contatti a distanza in tempo reale) portano a mutare il tradizionale rapporto con la realtà e con gli altri uomini e a far valere nuovi paradigmi e modelli di esistenza»².

Lo spazio: la vicinanza non sempre è intimità

Nel virtuale lo spazio non viene eliminato: viene “compattato”. Social e messaggistica istantanea rendono possibile una prossimità quotidiana anche con chi è lontano, superando le distanze geografiche. Questo ha portato frutti reali: soprattutto dopo la pandemia, abbiamo sperimentato incontri virtuali, riunioni, formazione online, perfino celebrazioni in streaming altrimenti inaccessibili. In questa prospettiva la tecnologia, se integrata con discernimento, può sostenere la comunione e farci incontrare “in un ‘noi’ più forte della somma di piccole individualità”³. Eppure questa vicinanza porta con sé anche un paradosso. Il Web ci dà una sorta di “passaporto digitale”: ci fa andare altrove restando a casa. Lo spazio si contrae e ci si sente più vicini, persino più intimi. Ma proprio qui si nasconde l'ambivalenza. Papa Leone XIV la riassume in modo incisivo: «Le tecnologie, pur avvicinando persone lontane, spesso allontanano chi sta vicino»⁴.

² Conferenza Episcopale Italiana, *Comunicazione e Missione*. Direttorio sulle Comunicazioni Sociali nella Missione della Chiesa [=CM], Roma, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2004, n. 11.

³ Francesco, *Fratelli tutti*. Lettera enciclica sulla fraternità e l'amicizia sociale, 3 ottobre 2020, n. 78.

⁴ Leone XIV, *Omelia Santa Messa per il Giubileo dello*

La “sindrome da confessionale”: quando il privato si espone troppo

La riduzione della distanza può portare ad abbassare le difese e a condividere dimensioni personali profonde con troppa facilità: è quella che alcuni definiscono “sindrome da confessionale”. Il punto non è demonizzare il digitale, ma riconoscere che la relazione online — veloce, disintermediata, continua — può far saltare prudenza e gradualità. Ed ecco la domanda antropologica: che rapporto sto sviluppando con il limite? Il limite è costitutivo dell’umano. Il digitale, invece, suggerisce facilmente l’illusione di poter essere ovunque, rispondere sempre, fare tutto. È una tentazione spesso “buona”, perché nasce dal desiderio di servire; ma può diventare una trappola: il rischio è che il voler essere ovunque finisca per indebolire la qualità della presenza reale.

“Insieme, ma soli”⁵: il deserto affollato

I social ampliano la cerchia dei contatti, ma non garantiscono relazioni profonde. Sherry Turkle, pioniera negli studi sull’identità e le relazioni nell’era digitale, usa un’espressione molto efficace: “insieme, ma soli”. È l’immagine di un deserto affollato, in cui si è circondati e tuttavia emotivamente isolati. La comunicazione umana è fatta di gesti, volti, silenzi e linguaggio corporeo: è questo che rende un incontro veramente umano. I rapporti digitali, quando sostituiscono la pazienza della reciprocità, rischiano di offrire un’apparenza di socievolezza senza costruire un vero “noi”. Per la vita consacrata il punto è decisivo: il digitale può favorire il contatto, ma la sfida è trasformare il contatto in cura, in presenza, in relazioni significative. In questo orizzonte si colloca anche la questione dell’intelligenza artificiale, che introduce un’ulteriore ambivalenza educativa. Può certamente sostenere il lavoro, offrire supporto e facilitare alcuni processi; ma può anche diventare una forma di alterità surrogata: una relazione senza frizione e senza imprevisto, che conferma, accompagna e talvolta lusinga, senza chiedere la fatica dell’incontro reale. Il rischio, allora, non è

soltanto usarla troppo, ma assimilare da essa un modello relazionale che poi si trasferisce nella vita concreta, rendendo più difficile sostenere il limite, il conflitto, l’attesa e la complessità dell’incontro umano.

Un tempo per ogni cosa: tra connessione e vita fraterna

Un’altra questione cruciale riguarda la gestione del tempo, elemento costitutivo dell’identità umana e religiosa. È diffusa la percezione che molte religiose e religiosi dedichino troppo tempo alla navigazione tra i contenuti del Web e dei social media, saltando da un’informazione all’altra e disperdendo energie preziose per la missione. Come ha ricordato papa Francesco, «i media digitali possono esporre al rischio di dipendenza, di isolamento e di progressiva perdita di contatto con la realtà concreta, ostacolando lo sviluppo di relazioni interpersonali autentiche»⁶. Tutto ciò tocca profondamente anche la vita comunitaria. L’eccessiva connessione può innescare una dipendenza dal cellulare o dai social che, privando di spazi di silenzio e di profondità, finisce per indebolire i rapporti fraterni. Il paradosso è evidente: il telefono che connette virtualmente può diventare lo schermo che separa concretamente. E allora la fraternità perde ossigeno: si parla di più, ma ci si ascolta meno; si è vicini, ma non presenti; si condivide tanto, ma non sempre ciò che conta davvero. . Il Qoèlet (3,1-8) ci ricorda che c’è un tempo per ogni cosa: per parlare e per tacere, per cercare e per costruire. Se scrivesse oggi, forse aggiungerebbe: «C’è un tempo per connettersi e un tempo per disconnettersi».

2) Ricaduta cognitiva

Il digitale incide profondamente anche sul nostro modo di pensare: tocca l’attenzione, la memoria, la capacità di riflettere e di giudicare. Il punto centrale è semplice: l’attenzione è come un muscolo, e ciò che facciamo ogni giorno la esercita in una certa direzione. Per questo non è indifferente abitare un ambiente fatto di velocità, stimoli continui e passaggi rapidi da un contenuto all’altro.

Sport, 15 giugno 2025.

⁵ Cfr. S. Turkle, *Insieme ma soli. Perché ci aspettiamo sempre più dalla tecnologia e sempre meno dagli altri*, Einaudi, Torino 2019.

⁶ Francesco, *Fratelli tutti*. Lettera enciclica sulla fraternità e l’amicizia sociale, 3 ottobre 2020, n. 43.

Velocità e giudizio: quando l'informazione corre più della coscienza

Papa Francesco lo ha detto con lucidità nel 2014: «Internet può offrire maggiori possibilità di incontro e di solidarietà tra tutti, e questa è una cosa buona, è un dono di Dio. Esistono però aspetti problematici: la velocità dell'informazione supera la nostra capacità di riflessione e giudizio e non permette un'espressione di sé misurata e corretta» (Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale delle Comunicazioni Sociali, 2014). Quando la velocità cresce, si restringe lo spazio dell'intervallo: la pausa, il silenzio, l'assimilazione. E senza intervallo diventa più difficile reggere l'attesa, accogliere i tempi dell'altro, maturare una risposta. Perfino sostare davanti a Dio, senza fuggire subito altrove, può diventare più faticoso. Il rischio, allora, è abituarsi non a pensare, ma a reagire.

Infobesity: tanto sapere, poca conoscenza

Un secondo effetto è la saturazione informativa. La quantità di contenuti disponibili e il passaggio continuo da una notizia all'altra possono generare ciò che oggi viene chiamato *infobesity*, cioè una sorta di “obesità informativa”: più informazioni di quante ne possiamo realmente assorbire. Il risultato è paradossale: si accumula molto, ma si assimila poco. Si sa di più, ma non sempre si comprende meglio. E quando manca un processo di integrazione, si indeboliscono la memoria, la profondità e la capacità di collegare. Senza questo lavoro interiore, dall'informazione non nasce conoscenza e dalla conoscenza non nasce sapienza.



Pensiero critico: non rinunciare alla fatica buona

Uno dei rischi più concreti dell'ambiente digitale è abituarci a un pensiero sempre più rapido, ma sempre meno profondo. La velocità, la semplificazione continua e la pressione

dell'immediatezza possono renderci più pronti a reagire che a riflettere. Anche le neuroscienze mostrano che l'iperconnessione modifica le nostre abitudini mentali: alcune capacità, come la rapidità e la praticità, si rafforzano; altre, come l'elaborazione e la riflessione, si indeboliscono. Il risultato può essere un pensiero più reattivo e più superficiale: meno domande, meno connessioni tra i fatti, più impulso. Qui entra un criterio decisivo, richiamato da Leone XIV: «Non rinunciare al proprio pensiero»⁷. Perché il pensiero non è un optional: è il luogo in cui si forma la coscienza, matura la libertà e la fede diventa personale. Vale anche qui un principio ignaziano sempre attuale: *non multa sed multum*, non tante cose, ma in profondità. Proprio questo oggi rischia di indebolirsi: i passaggi decisivi dell'elaborazione e dell'interiorizzazione. Senza elaborazione l'esperienza resta grezza; senza interiorizzazione la Parola resta esterna. Così anche ciò che è vero e buono rischia di informare senza formare. È proprio qui che la formazione diventa decisiva. Oggi è chiamata ad accompagnare questo passaggio: dall'istantaneo al profondo, dal consumo al discernimento, dalla reazione immediata a una libertà più matura. In questo scenario, il ruolo di chi accompagna i percorsi formativi e di chi esercita il servizio dell'autorità è insieme delicato e fondamentale. Non si tratta di diventare tecnici informatici né “poliziotti digitali”, ma educatori della libertà, custodi dei processi interiori e testimoni di una vita integrata. La formazione, infatti, incide spesso più per lo stile di vita che per le norme: non tanto per ciò che si prescrive, quanto per ciò che si incarna. È la qualità concreta di una presenza — il modo di usare il tempo, di abitare le relazioni, di custodire il silenzio, di dare misura alla connessione — a educare davvero e a trasmettere criteri capaci di orientare l'uso del digitale in senso umano ed evangelico.

3) Ricaduta etica

Il digitale mette alla prova non solo ciò che facciamo, ma il modo in cui scegliamo e la qualità delle nostre relazioni. La prima

⁷ Leone XIV, *Custodire voci e volti umani*, Messaggio per la LX Giornata Mondiale delle Comunicazioni Sociali 2026.

questione etica è la libertà quotidiana: io scelgo o vengo trascinata/o? Automatismi come il controllo continuo del cellulare e dei social, il bisogno costante di aggiornamento o la risposta immediata non sono un peccato in sé, ma diventano un problema quando prendono il posto della scelta. Una missione senza libertà rischia di trasformarsi in agitazione. La seconda questione è la verità. L'ambiente digitale è attraversato da contenuti parziali, emotivi, polarizzati; per questo il missionario non può diventare un amplificatore inconsapevole. Ma verità significa anche verità di sé: sono online la stessa persona che sono davanti a Dio? Non si tratta di raccontare tutto, ma di non costruire un personaggio. La terza questione riguarda lo stile relazionale: mitezza, rispetto, sobrietà. Nel digitale è facile reagire "a caldo", voler prevalere, alimentare il conflitto. Lo stile evangelico, invece, ascolta, non umilia, non riduce l'altro a un'etichetta. E qui vale una regola d'oro: non tutto ciò che è vero deve essere detto; e non tutto ciò che si può dire è utile. Il cuore etico della missione, infine, è l'unità di vita. Il missionario è credibile non perché non sbaglia mai, ma perché non vive "a compartimenti". Lo è quando ciò che annuncia e ciò che vive, ciò che è online e ciò che è offline, la preghiera, le relazioni, la vita comunitaria e le scelte quotidiane non si contraddicono, ma si sostengono a vicenda. In questa armonia si riconosce la verità della testimonianza: la parola nasce da una vita abitata, e la vita torna a Dio come sorgente e criterio. Se il digitale tende a frammentare — spezzando il tempo, disperdendo l'attenzione, moltiplicando ruoli e risposte — il compito evangelico diventa allora integrare: ricondurre tutto a un centro, custodire priorità e ritmi, scegliere ciò che nutre la comunione e lasciare ciò che svuota. Perché l'annuncio non regge solo sulla qualità dei contenuti, ma sulla coerenza di una vita unificata davanti a Dio e davanti agli altri.

I voti: una profezia concreta anche nel digitale⁸

Nel mondo digitale i voti non perdono attualità: la rivelano. Perché il digitale tende a spingerci

verso il possesso — di contenuti, di attenzione, di visibilità —, verso legami rapidi e ambigui, verso l'autoreferenzialità e la reazione immediata. I voti, invece, sono una forma di libertà evangelica che ci aiuta ad abitare questo ambiente senza esserne assorbiti. La povertà diventa sobrietà dello sguardo e del desiderio: significa non sentire il bisogno di vedere tutto, seguire tutto, reagire a tutto o accumulare contenuti senza misura; non riempire ogni vuoto e non trasformare la missione in una produzione continua. È la scelta di un'essenzialità che libera tempo, attenzione e cuore, e restituisce alla parola evangelica il suo peso. La castità custodisce la qualità delle relazioni anche nel digitale: significa rispetto dei confini e della privacy, trasparenza e purezza d'intenzione. Chiede disciplina nell'esposizione di sé, evitando di condividere in modo sconsiderato informazioni personali; sobrietà nel consumo dei contenuti; e uno stile relazionale rispettoso e non invasivo, libero da seduzione e possesso. È un modo di stare con l'altro che non usa, non trattiene, non manipola; e proprio per questo rende credibile l'annuncio. L'obbedienza diventa stile di ascolto e di discernimento: significa non agire in modo isolato, come se la missione digitale dipendesse solo da me; non rispondere d'impulso; non trasformare il proprio profilo in un pulpito, cioè in uno spazio da cui parlare sempre e solo in prima persona, cercando visibilità o imponendo il proprio punto di vista senza ascolto, confronto e appartenenza ecclesiale. Vuol dire restare in comunione con la Chiesa e con la comunità, imparare a verificare, a lasciarsi correggere, a scegliere tempi e parole secondo il Vangelo. I social premiano la visibilità e la performance; l'obbedienza, invece, chiede tempi lunghi e ascolto profondo. La sfida è passare da una comunicazione guidata dai numeri — like e follower — a una comunicazione di qualità, capace di generare relazioni vere. Così i voti non sono un limite alla missione nell'era digitale: ne sono la bussola. Ci riportano al centro: una vita unificata, libera, capace di presenza reale. E nel digitale — dove tutto tende a diventare immediato e misurabile — scegliere uno stile sobrio e non esibito è già una forma di profezia, ed è già evangelizzazione.

⁸ Per approfondire: P. Riccieri, *Commissione e vocazione. La vita consacrata nell'era digitale*, Paoline editoriale, Milano 2026.



La comunità nell'era Digitale: Luogo di unità, Discernimento e cura

Le tecnologie digitali sono diventate una sorta di lente di ingrandimento: mettono in evidenza la maturità delle persone e il contesto in cui agiscono. Nella vita consacrata, più che creare problemi nuovi, spesso la rete amplifica fragilità già presenti e le rende più visibili. Può accadere, ad esempio, che il tempo trascorso sui social venga presentato come attività apostolica, ma diventi in realtà una forma di allontanamento dalla vita comunitaria. Oppure che la cura dell'immagine e l'attesa dei "mi piace" rivelino un bisogno di riconoscimento. A volte il digitale diventa una via di fuga: tensioni e incomprensioni non affrontate si trasformano in una ritirata silenziosa nello schermo. Anche il confronto continuo con altre comunità può accrescere paragoni e insoddisfazioni; relazioni coltivate online, in forma privata, possono diventare legami affettivi intensi, difficili da vivere con equilibrio. In tutto questo, il digitale non genera la fragilità, ma la porta alla luce, mostrando dove è necessario un cammino umano, comunitario e spirituale. Allo stesso tempo, se usato con consapevolezza, il digitale può diventare una risorsa. Può favorire percorsi formativi sull'uso responsabile delle tecnologie, rendere possibili incontri tra comunità lontane e sostenere il dialogo senza spostamenti onerosi. Può offrire anche strumenti utili per la crescita spirituale: momenti di preghiera condivisa, accompagnamento a distanza, accesso a contenuti biblici e carismatici, corsi e materiali di approfondimento. Così, se ben integrato, il digitale può sostenere la comunione, la formazione continua e la missione. Sono opportunità preziose, purché non si perda la centralità dell'ascolto, della fraternità vissuta e della presenza reale. Per i consacrati e le

consacrate, il digitale offre strumenti utili anche per la preghiera personale e la meditazione della Parola: testi liturgici, commentari, meditazioni quotidiane. Tuttavia, nella preghiera non dovrebbe sostituire del tutto la dimensione analogica, lo spazio concreto e tangibile che spesso prepara l'incontro con Dio. Il breviario e la Bibbia cartacei ricordano che anche il corpo prega: nel gesto di sfogliare, nel segno lasciato sul margine, nel silenzio e nella lentezza. Con gratitudine usiamo i supporti digitali quando servono; e custodiamo, nello stesso tempo, quegli spazi lenti che la rete tende a comprimere: ripetizione, contemplazione, silenzio. Nell'era digitale, la comunità non è solo il luogo in cui si vive insieme: è un antidoto alla frammentazione e una scuola di libertà e di presenza. Per questo diventa anche luogo di discernimento sull'uso dei media: non per controllare, ma per custodire la missione e la qualità della vita fraterna. Chiedersi insieme quale stile vogliamo avere online, quali confini proteggono la preghiera e la fraternità, come evitare che l'urgenza digitale colonizzi i tempi comuni, come restare miti e veri quando la rete polarizza, significa prendersi cura dell'umano e del Vangelo. Quando la comunità è abitata con autenticità, diventa essa stessa una testimonianza: mostra che si può essere connessi senza essere dispersi, presenti in rete senza perdere la presenza reale, capaci di annuncio senza sacrificare la qualità delle relazioni.

Online per la Missione: Testimoni, non "Testimonial"

Essere online per la missione non significa costruirsi un'immagine religiosa né inseguire la visibilità. Il digitale premia facilmente l'effetto e la prestazione; il Vangelo, invece, chiede verità e fedeltà. Per questo la domanda decisiva non è: "quanto sono vista/o?", ma: "che cosa passa di Cristo attraverso la mia presenza?". In rete si è esposti con facilità alla logica del testimonial: conta chi funziona, chi convince, chi raccoglie consenso. Ma la logica evangelica è un'altra. Il testimonial punta sull'effetto e sul gradimento; il testimone, invece, rimanda a una verità che non mette al centro sé stesso. Il primo misura il valore con i numeri; il secondo lo riconosce nei frutti: pace, consolazione, libertà, desiderio di bene, apertura alla speranza. Per

questo la presenza evangelica in rete chiede uno stile sobrio e rispettoso, più capace di ascolto che di reazione. Anche il silenzio, a volte, è missione: non tutto va commentato, non tutto va prodotto. In questo ambito, la Chiesa ha offerto negli anni criteri e orientamenti importanti, anche se non dispone ancora di modelli del tutto maturi per l'evangelizzazione nelle piattaforme digitali. Documenti recenti, come *Verso una piena presenza. Riflessione pastorale sul coinvolgimento con i social media* (2023), indicano con chiarezza uno stile di presenza credente autentica. Molti creatori di contenuti cristiani si chiedono: "Qual è la strategia più efficace? Quale stile funziona meglio?". Sono domande legittime, ma non sufficienti. La comunicazione, infatti, non è solo una strategia, ma coinvolge tutta la persona. Si comunica con l'anima e con il corpo, con la mente e con il cuore. Evangelizzare online, allora, non significa semplicemente produrre contenuti religiosi, ma imparare a leggere e ad abitare cristianamente anche ciò che appare ordinario, fino a saper, come invitava il beato don Giacomo Alberione, "parlare di tutto cristianamente". È una missione esigente: chiede di tradurre il messaggio evangelico nel linguaggio di oggi, facendo dei social un'agorà della fede e non un palcoscenico di autopromozione.

Conclusione

Il digitale è nato con la promessa di migliorare la vita e moltiplicare le possibilità di incontro. E in parte lo ha fatto. Ma per molti ragazzi — e non solo — non è andata così: l'aumento della connessione non sempre ha generato più benessere, più relazioni, più libertà interiore. Per anni abbiamo ragionato quasi per opposizione: più digitale, meno reale.

Oggi la sfida è più matura: ridare qualità al reale e rendere più umano ed etico l'online. Il mondo "fuori" deve tornare a essere accogliente e generativo, capace di offrire relazioni vere, esperienze condivise e spazi di crescita. E il mondo "online" va abitato con criteri più responsabili: non può essere guidato solo dalla logica dell'algoritmo e della prestazione, né da meccanismi che catturano l'attenzione e consumano il desiderio di realtà. In questo orizzonte, la vita consacrata è chiamata ad abitare con sapienza entrambi gli spazi, perché la connessione diventi incontro e l'annuncio resti radicato in volti, corpi, tempi umani e relazioni capaci di costruire davvero un "noi". Questo richiede competenza, libertà interiore, creatività e responsabilità; soprattutto, chiede un cammino condiviso, fatto di discernimento e di cuore.

Il futuro non si attende passivamente: si costruisce nel presente, restando vicini alle persone e continuando ad accendere luce là dove abitano le domande e le speranze più profonde.



Progress with Purpose

The Church's Vision for a Human-Centred AI Frontier

Imagine a monk in the 15th century, his fingers stained with ink, marvelling as the first rhythmic thuds of a printing press replaced the silent scratching of his quill. For the Catholic Church, that echo was more than just noise; it was the beginning of a long journey viewing technology as a “gift of God” designed to draw humanity closer together. From the crackle of the first radio broadcasts to the blue glow of a smartphone in a darkened pew, the Church has never stood in the shadows of rejection.

Today, we stand at a new frontier: Artificial Intelligence. Rather than retreating in fear, the Church steps forward with a “techno-progressive” spirit, recognizing AI as the latest chapter in our sacred, ancient duty to steward creation. This is not a blind embrace, but a continuation of a tradition of discernment - an active effort to harness the common good while remaining vigilant against potential harm.

As machines grow in power, the Church issues a provocative call for “Algor-ethics”. This is an ethical framework rooted in prudence, ensuring that the algorithms of tomorrow never lose sight of human dignity. Ultimately, we are challenged to be more than just users; we are called to be wise stewards, ensuring these incredible capabilities are designed to serve and enhance the flourishing of every human person.

A Theological Compass for the Digital Age

This journey into the digital frontier is not guided by technical manuals alone, but by a profound theological compass. At the heart of the Church's response is the principle of integral human development, a cornerstone of Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*.

Genuine progress cannot be measured by processing power or profit margins alone; true advancement must enrich the *entire* person—spiritually, socially, and economically. When we decouple innovation from this holistic vision,

we risk a “progress without a purpose,” where the person is eventually subordinated to the machine.

The encyclical raises a powerful warning against a purely technical understanding of human advancement. As stated in the document, “It requires new eyes and a new heart, capable of *rising above a materialistic vision of human events*, capable of glimpsing in development the ‘beyond’ that technology cannot give” (CV 77). When society pursues innovation without a corresponding ethical and spiritual foundation, it risks becoming a “soulless society,” where the value of a person is subordinated to the efficiency of a machine. This perspective challenges the common assumption that what is technologically possible is automatically desirable.



Directing AI for Humanity

Pope Benedict XVI warns that progress, when separated from moral truth, becomes an “empty shell.” His encyclical emphasizes that “Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way” (CV 3). For AI, this serves as a powerful reminder that even the most advanced and well-meaning technologies can be directionless if they are not guided by a clear vision of what is truly good for humanity. Without an internal moral compass, AI's potential could be exploited for goals that are merely profitable or convenient, resulting in outcomes that are ultimately dehumanising.

Integral human development calls for a different, more discerning path. It compels us to ensure that AI and all forms of technology are developed and used for goals that truly serve humanity. This requires shifting our focus from

the question of what AI *can* do. to a more profound question: what AI *should* do? For example, instead of using AI solely to maximise corporate profits, it could be directed to address critical issues like poverty, access to education, and enhance healthcare access, always with the human person at the heart of its purpose. Caritas in Veritate emphasizes the need for this kind of action, stating: “This can be done by investing in rural infrastructures, irrigation systems, transport, organization of markets, and in the development and dissemination of agricultural technology that can make the best use of the human, natural and socio-economic resources that are more readily available at the local level, while guaranteeing their sustainability over the long term as well.” (CV 14)

Vision for Integral Ecology

Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato si’* expands upon previous Catholic social teachings by introducing the concept of “Integral Ecology.” It presents a powerful framework for understanding the interconnectedness of all life and offers a profound critique of the prevailing “technocratic paradigm.” In the encyclical, he highlights that “Technology, which, linked to business interests, is presented as the only way of solving these problems, in fact proves incapable of seeing the mysterious network of relations between things and so sometimes solves one problem only to create others” (LS 20). This paradigm, which reduces reality to an object for endless manipulation, is a significant ethical danger in the development of artificial intelligence.

He argues that a true solution to our global crises cannot be found in isolated approaches. Instead, he proposes “Integral Ecology,” a concept that recognizes the deep and essential links between environmental destruction, social injustice, and our human relationships. The encyclical posits that our treatment of nature is a reflection of how we treat one another. It warns that “The basic problem goes even deeper: it is the way that humanity has taken up technology and its development *according to an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm*. This paradigm exalts the concept of a subject who, using logical and rational procedures, progressively approaches and gains control over an external object.” (LS 106). We need to

remember that the development of AI should not be viewed solely as a technical or economic matter but as an integral part of the complex web of human and natural relationships.

Re-evaluating Our Relationships

The core danger Pope Francis identifies is the “technocratic paradigm,” a mindset that believes every problem can be solved with technology and that human ingenuity holds ultimate control over reality. The encyclical emphasizes this, noting that, “Life gradually becomes a surrender to situations conditioned by technology, itself viewed as the principal key to the meaning of existence. In the concrete situation confronting us, there are a number of symptoms which point to what is wrong, such as environmental degradation, anxiety, a loss of the purpose of life and of community living. Once more, we see that “realities are more important than ideas” (LS 110).

This view treats the world as a limitless resource for consumption and reduces human beings to consumers and data points. In the context of AI, this perspective is particularly perilous. To counter the dangers of this paradigm, *Laudato si’* calls for a fundamental re-evaluation of our relationship with both creation and each other. The encyclical warns that a purely technological worldview can lead to a profound sense of isolation and a loss of meaning. It indicates that “For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.” (LS 47). This re-evaluation is crucial for AI, ensuring that its development is guided by a moral compass that seeks to strengthen human relationships and enhance connectedness. Algorithms and virtual connections can’t replace direct human relationships. Instead, technology should be used to support and strengthen the bonds that connect us and the world around us.

A New Way of Leadership

These teachings are directly applied to AI in documents such as the Pontifical Academy for Life’s “The Rome Call for AI Ethics” (2020) and the joint publication from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for

Culture and Education, “Antiqua et Nova” (2025). The Rome Call outlines six principles for “algor-ethics”: transparency, inclusion, responsibility, impartiality, reliability, and security and privacy. It mandates that “AI-based technology must never be used to exploit people in any way, especially those who are most vulnerable; instead, it must be used to help people develop their abilities... and to support the planet” (Pontifical Academy for Life, 2020). By emphasizing that technology must serve every person while respecting human dignity, the Church advocates for a strategy that is both pastoral and prophetic. Ultimately, this represents a call for a new form of leadership capable of guiding the faithful through the complexities of a digital world.

Antiqua et Nova offers a more in-depth philosophical and theological distinction between human and artificial intelligence. “However, even as AI processes and simulates certain expressions of intelligence, it remains fundamentally confined to a logical-mathematical framework, which imposes inherent limitations. Human intelligence, in contrast, develops organically throughout the person’s physical and psychological growth, shaped by a myriad of lived experiences in the flesh” (AN 31). Building on this distinction, the document asserts that human intelligence is embodied, relational, and transcends the material world through the soul. AI, by contrast, operates on a purely functional level, imitating but not possessing the capacity for moral discernment, personal growth, or authentic relationships. The document warns against the temptation to turn to AI for meaning or fulfilment, which can only be found in communion with God.

Strategy for Future Leadership

Religious leaders must continue to move forward to understand the nuances of AI and cultivate a “wisdom of the heart” that prioritizes human dignity. This means helping people to discern the difference between a machine’s algorithmic output and true spiritual guidance. Leaders should emphasize that faith is rooted in embodied, relational experiences such as communal worship, personal encounters, and acts of justice that no algorithm can replicate. This also involves guiding the faithful to not

become overly reliant on AI for decision-making, as this can erode human freedom and moral responsibility.

The Church cannot address the ethical challenges of AI in isolation. A future strategy must involve active collaboration among religious leaders, ethicists, computer scientists, and policymakers. This interdisciplinary dialogue is crucial for shaping a shared framework for AI development that serves the common good. The Church can be a bridge-builder, bringing different sectors together to ensure that technology is developed with a human-centric focus and an awareness of its societal impact, especially on the poor and marginalized.

Prioritizing Digital Literacy for Pastoral Care

In a world increasingly shaped by AI, digital literacy is a vital skill for clergy and religious leaders. This goes beyond knowing how to use social media; it requires a deep understanding of the ethical, social, and psychological effects of AI on the faithful. A future strategy should integrate digital literacy into religious formation and ongoing education. Leaders must be equipped to guide their communities on issues like online addiction, the commodification of human data, and the risk of virtual spaces replacing authentic human connection.

The Church’s future strategy must focus on preserving the sacredness of human relationships and communal life. While AI-driven virtual spaces can be a tool for connection, leaders must ensure they do not undermine the importance of physical presence and embodied faith. A forward-thinking plan would involve creating space, both digital and physical, that fosters genuine human connection and community building. By embracing this new way of leadership, the Church can not only guide its members but also offer a vital voice of moral reason in the global conversation about the future of technology, ensuring that AI becomes a force for good in the service of the human family and our common home.



Reflection of the Participants on the Residential Seminar

1. Missionary Institutes in the Process of Synodality

Having participated at the SEDOS Seminar that was held at Nemi from 16th to 20th June 2025, I acknowledge that it was an extraordinary experience for me. About 30 Missionary Institutes were represented. This illustrates how international and intercultural the Seminar presented itself. By the diversity of the participants at the Seminar, it can easily be pointed out that the Spirit of Synodality was already in operation. The theme for the Seminar was as follows: *Missionary Institutes and Synodality: Charism, Prophecy and Witness*. One of the fundamental questions that helped me to get into the Seminar was: «How can the process of Synodality help us enrich our missionary experience? ». It's important to bear mind, in the first place, that Synodality is a continuous process. It calls for openness and conversion both at personal and community levels. Coming together to share our missionary experiences is something that has its significance in the process of Synodality. It somehow challenges each member of a particular Missionary Institute to take some time to recollect in order to draw some qualities from one's identity and origin, but at the same time to appreciate the value of other Missionary Institutes with which we are called to journey together.

In her introductory presentation, Sr. Mary Barron, OLA affirmed that Synodality is a way of being Church together. Together, we are called to respond to the needs of our time. Despite the fact that there are so many challenges and difficulties in the world today, Christ remains our hope¹. We can take Christ's example of how to encounter people from different cultures and religions. This will help us to develop a culture of encounter so that we may know how to interact or journey together with people from different cultures and origins. In fact, looking at the pluralism context today,

it's inevitable to live without taking into consideration the intercultural and interreligious aspects. As missionaries, we cannot be indifferent but instead, must search for means to create an environment that is favourable for every human person. In this regard: «How can we contribute to the promotion of life in the world today? To accept and to be ready to be transformed by the Holy Spirit will surely play a very important role if we would like to contribute favorably to the promotion of life in today's world. In fact, our openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit is a reminder that as we engage ourselves in mission today, God should be considered as the origin and the main objective for which our missionary life and activities are directed. As Sr. Mary Barron concluded her introductory presentation, she invited the participants in the following terms: «Let us use this time to listen, discern and to respond in our missionary journey»². I personally experienced this particular invitation to be the point of entrance into the Seminar itself and it motivated me to really feel part of the Seminar with renewed enthusiasm.



Walking together as missionaries

Walking together as missionaries is one of the tasks we are called to accomplish in order to respond to today's needs and challenges. In order to become a Church of hope, I think it's important that every baptized Christian develops a sense of belonging to the Church. It helps in assuming one's responsibilities. For this reason, I found this question very significant during the presentation of Cardinal Tagle: «How can I walk with others? ». The starting point should be with oneself before looking at the community level. Understanding the active participation in mission, each person is invited to accomplish it with an attitude of openness to God who is at the center of mission itself. In

¹ Cf. Sr. Mary Barron's introductory presentation at SEDOS 16-20/06/2025.

² Cf. *Ibidem*

fact, through our simple gestures and actions that are done on a daily basis, God always find his ways of reaching to each person.

Our engagement and efforts as missionaries may not always be recognized nor appreciated by others. But this should not discourage us. Jesus has something to teach us today. He continued his public ministry despite the Pharisees who criticized him of driving out the demons using the power of the prince of demons (cf. Mt 9:32-38). In living in a Synodal way, our call is to find ways and means to announce the person of Jesus that will be significant to people living in different contexts today. How could we find the language that will touch people's lives? Our engagement in mission today, should be based on our relationship we with God so as to be open to the signs of time and be ready to respond according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As missionaries in a Synodal Church, we are called to review our coming together as people of different cultures. It is in fact, to be regarded as the richness that we obtain through our interactions and relationships with one another. The Synodal process itself finds meaning and expression when the spirit of interculturality is respected and practised both inside and outside the Church. In this way, mission itself will be expressed in a renewed manner and at the same time the Church regains its sacramental effect in today's context.

Charism

Speaking about charism, it's important to note that it could be understood at different levels. No matter the form of charism, there's the Spirit that must be respected if we are to move together in the process of Synodality. According to St. Paul, charisms are meant to be used for the good of the whole community (Cf. 1 Cor 12:7-10; Rm 12:6-8). Once we understand this better, it helps us to avoid some personal charisms that may end up turning into ambitious personal projects that do not allow other community members to participate. This particular attitude is against the Spirit of walking together as a Synodal Church. It simply implies that if someone cannot live the charism inside his or her own Missionary Institute, it

will not be possible to live it with other people from other Institutes. Therefore, it is important to practice the charism of the Institute starting from his one's own community.

How do we help those who seem to have personal charisms within our communities? The first thing is to continue encouraging them and to help them believe in the value of their own talents. To be present and assure them our support when they are going through some challenges. Secondly, sometimes when we notice that they start lacking some patience because they want their project to move faster than the community, it will be important to dialogue with them about their personal charism. This kind of dialogue may help them to see how to collaborate with the objectives of the entire community and so help them to avoid separating themselves from the main charism of their Missionary Institute.

It's important to note that each Institute has its own charism. The main charism of a particular Institute can be lived in different ways according to the various groups. For instance, the question of dialogue is very important when it involves different levels such as male, female, laity etc. Dialogue should not only be limited at this level; it should also do in collaboration with other actors of the society from different fields of specialization. Rediscovering the richness of collaborating with the Laity could be one aspect that may be so important when we consider the Spirit of a Synodal Church as well as our objective of journeying together as Missionary Institutes today. Our task is to find ways to respond to some challenges that the Church is still facing today such as clericalism, injustice, sexual abuse, corruption etc.

Prophecy

Prophecy in both the Old and New Testament has something to teach us about the Missionary Synodal Church today. Some Great Prophets teach us about their communion with God. They had very close relationship with God to which they remained faithful. According to Stephen Bevens, «a Prophet is someone who speaks forth. Once having discerned the Word of God, he faithfully announces a message either in words or deeds. Secondly, the Prophet "speaks

forth” the future; in the sense of setting out a vision of what God has in store for people in his plan of salvation». This shows how faithfulness to God’s word plays a very important role in the life of a Prophet.

Senior and Stuhlmüller affirm that, «The prophetic traditions, had developed a sophisticated theology of the Word. God’s Word, as in the famous text of Isaiah 55:9-11, was experienced as creative and inevitably fruitful. The power of the Word is seen in [...] God who is not silent and distant, but who speaks to his people».³ This particular relationship between the word of God and God’s relation with humanity shows much interest in what humanity is experiencing. Therefore, through the word of God, we get God’s message and understand our human experience as missionaries today.

Prophets are called to be «strong and courageous». Of course, in moments of violent reaction from the people, the Prophet has to be with great conviction in carrying out his responsibility and to present God’s message with boldness. This equally applies to our context today. Through the sacrament of Baptism, every Christian has received the grace of being a Prophet. But what are the qualities the Missionary Synodal Church need to have in today’s world? We are called to be the voice of the voice-less. There are so many people who suffer all sorts of injustice, poverty, violence, abandonment, persecution etc.

As we carry on with our experience as Missionary Institutes in the Synodal Church, Jesus teaches us how to assume our prophetic responsibility in the world. According to Senior and Stuhlmüller, «Jesus is the Spirit-filled prophet who challenges the exclusive attitude of his contemporaries and suffers the rejection that the prophets of Israel had endured before him. [...] Jesus also chooses the apt prophetic sign: table fellowship with outcasts, healings on the Sabbath, cleansing of the temple and so forth»⁴. We can clearly observe that Jesus shows some

fundamental qualities of a Prophet. He proves to be courageous, not being indifferent in front of certain social or political issues of his context. Despite the threats from the contemporary civil and religious leaders, he kept on evangelizing with an objective of promoting the well-being of humanity. With this particular model, our experience as Missionaries in today’s context with its challenges, it will be of great importance to always refer to Jesus in order to respond with courage and conviction in our prophetic ministry today.

Witness

«How can we be witnesses of Synodality as Missionaries in the Church and in the world? ». This question tackles our identity and our way of living in the Church and the world today. As we consider the aspect of pluralism today, we easily realize that witness plays a very important role as we carry on God’s mission through our specific charisms as missionaries. For instance, local churches are important places where plurality in the context of Synodality is lived and expressed. It’s in this area where we are called to collaborate together with other actors in the society in order to form a Synodal Church that encourages the Spirit of well-being for every human person. In this way, we should promote awareness that each Missionary Institute has something special to contribute to the Synodal Church.

There are some challenges that some Missionary Institutes are experiencing in some parts of the world today. Some challenges concern the denial of visas for missionaries who would like to enter some particular countries where they have been assigned for mission; other missionaries experience persecution and discrimination because of their identity as Christians, in some countries religious freedom remains a challenge etc. But how could we, as Missionary Institutes, resolve such challenges and difficulties today? In most cases, it’s not so easy to find solutions to these challenges. However, there are some initiatives that some Missionary Institutes are taking in order to respond to these challenges. For instance, in India, six Missionary Institutes of Religious Nuns work together in order to overcome the

³ D. SENIOR – C. STUHLMUELLER, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, Orbis Books, New York, 1983, 334.

⁴ D. SENIOR – C. STUHLMUELLER, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, Orbis Books, New York, 1983, 335.

challenges they face in that context⁵. Despite all these challenges and difficulties in our experience as Missionary institutes today, it's important to keep our hope and our zeal for the mission. Indeed, God never abandons us and he entrusts us with the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is really the protagonist of mission.

Although there are many areas in which the Church is witnessing positively according to the message of the Gospel, there are also some wounds in the Church that need to be healed. For instance, the lack of trust for one another as members of the same missionary Institute or as members of the same diocese or Parish, remains a challenge that affect the whole Church. The question of tribalism continues to affect some particular African contexts and other parts of the world. In addition, the strive for power or responsibilities in the diocese and in Missionary Institutes is equally seen to be one of the wounds from which the Church should be healed. In fact, in some contexts, it's not uncommon to note that some clergy tend to collaborate with the Laity with negative intentions of eliminating the other through poison or other means in order to obtain a post of responsibility in the Church. These examples are not in line with the message of the Gospel that we are called to proclaim. In fact, when we reach this extent, it clearly indicates that we are not in communion with the person of Jesus. Instead, we tend to give priority to our personal ambitions and selfishness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it's important to acknowledge the significance of this SEDOS Seminar in which members from different Missionary Institutes gathered and shared together this enriching experience. We are called to be open and to be humble as we continue God's mission through our various charisms. Journeying together as Missionary Institutes in a Synodal Church requires willingness to collaborate and to find ways to become the Church that is prophetic and a witness. In this way, we are called to be creative in searching for methods that allow us to respond to the current challenges of our time but also to keep on with evangelization. Having

put into consideration some challenges and difficulties, it's important to keep reminding ourselves and to keep working on them so as to be healed from wounds that the Church is suffering today. It is this particular effort and engagement that will help us to undergo the process of purification with an intention of renewing our true identity as true followers and witnesses of Christ's love today.

(Mukuka Humphrey, M.Afr)

2. Synodality as Unity in Christ



The Residential Seminar organized by the Service of Documentation and Study on Global Mission (SEDOS) exemplifies the principle of synodality, as its structure has been

carefully designed to support the very content of the discussions. In addition to traditional academic presentations, significant focus was placed on *Lectio Divina*, Conversations in the Spirit, and engaging group dynamics to promote an environment of sharing and dialogue. The gathering of representatives, mostly congregational leaders from various missionary institutes, was a simple outward sign of our unity in Christ.

The unity of Christ's calling to His disciples is deeply synodal, emphasizing the communal aspect of faith and mission. This unity is rooted in the shared life in Christ, where each disciple is called not only to follow but to actively participate in a mission that reflects His teachings and love. This unity underscores the significance of a collective identity within the body of Christ, where diversity is celebrated, yet all are united in purpose and faith. This foundational aspect reinforces the idea that being a disciple is not merely an individual journey but a communal one, with each member contributing to the greater mission of spreading the Gospel.

The Greek word «synodos» (σύνδοξ) translates to «meeting» or «assembly». Historically, it refers to gatherings, particularly in religious or political contexts, where decisions are made or discussions occur. In the context of the early

⁵ Cf. Sr. Maria Nirmalini's presentation, 19/06/2025.

church, it often denoted councils of bishops coming together to address theological disputes or governance issues. The original concept of a synod comes from the idea of being gathered into an assembly united by shared faith as they face challenges together. Therefore, a synod is often considered equivalent to a council and is associated with terms like collegiality, sobornost, and conciliarity. The concept of synod has continued to influence modern church structures, where synods serve as significant decision-making bodies within various Christian groups, dating back to the Council of Nicaea.⁶

The theological concept of synodality emphasizes the importance of communal discernment and collaboration within the Church. It recognizes that the Holy Spirit guides not just the leadership but all members of the Church in their shared journey of faith. The concepts of synod and synodality do not primarily represent individual citizens; rather, they signify the *vinculum communionis* among members. The insights gained are reflected in the specific research experience and the practice of our mission.⁷ Synodality is not merely a shared journey along the way (ὁδός); it is actively participating in the One who calls Himself the *Way*, the truth, and the life. Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδός!

Pope Francis' call for synodality orients us into a discipleship in Christ and reflects a desire to reform and renew the Church's structures and practices, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and participation. This shift aims to make the Church more closely in the spirit of Christ, that is, more responsive to the needs of the faithful and to enhance its mission of evangelization. By promoting a change in mentality and culture, the Church seeks to embody the Gospel more authentically, aligning more closely with the teachings and spirit of Jesus Christ.⁸ This aligns

with the theological concept within the Catholic Church regarding the nature of the Church as the People of God, emphasizing the role of the faithful based on their baptism. The totality of the people of God emphasizes the belief that the Church is not just a hierarchical institution but a community made up of all its members, each of whom shares in the mission of Christ, known as the *tria munera Christi* (the threefold office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king).⁹

According to the Final Document of the *Synod on Synodality*, the synodal journey of the Church has provided us with a valuable opportunity to acknowledge the diverse charisms, vocations, and ministries that enrich our community. At the heart of this journey is our shared baptismal dignity, a gift that is imparted to each individual and invites us to embody the teachings of Christ, fostering our connection with one another. The designation «Christian», which we are honored to hold, signifies the grace that sustains our existence and empowers us to journey together in collaboration and unity in Christ. The residential seminar organized by SEDOS aims to promote unity in Christ. It includes a review of initial and ongoing formation, the structure of governance and decision-making among these missionary institutes, and most importantly, the appreciation of every role one has been called to in the life of the Church. Those on the peripheries of the Church assume their roles and do their work not because they are substitutes for what is lacking in the Church, but because they are fulfilling their proper role as God's People.

This understanding underscores that through baptism, every individual is called to partake in the life of the Church and contribute to its mission. The synodal concept of the People of God underscores the interconnectedness and mutual responsibility among the faithful. This notion serves as a guiding lens, or a hermeneutical principle, for understanding one's role within the community. The ontological normativity inherent in this category

⁶ M.B. Billones, *The Ecclesiological Principle of Synodality in Eugenio Corecco*, 190-191.

⁷ A. Melloni – S. Scatena, ed., *Synod and Synodality: Theology, History, Canon Law and Ecumenism in New Contact: International Colloquium Bruges 2003*, 001, 2.

⁸ N. Becquart – P.G. Renczes, ed., *Theology Responding to the Challenge of Synodality: Proceedings of International Conference held at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 27-29 April 2023 = La teologia alla prova della sinodalità: atti della Conferenza*

internazionale tenuta alla Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma, 27-29 aprile 2023, iv-v.

⁹ R. Luciani, *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church*, 45-47.

informs and shapes the distinct functions of each individual, *Christifidelis*, as they contribute to the ongoing development of the Church. This processual approach emphasizes that each member plays a vital role in the collective journey of faith, fostering a sense of unity and purpose within the broader spiritual family.¹⁰

It is hoped that as the concept of synodality is increasingly embraced in the Church, missionary institutes will not only focus on practical means of social relations for harmonious coexistence but also, more importantly, foster an environment in the Church where people become united primarily in Christ, and as a result, become also united with others. Synodality, therefore, is not simply a solitary journey but a journey in Christ. People of our time may simply travel together, sharing the same path and space, but they are often divided by selfish aims, resulting in mere coexistence.

However, people from all walks of life can still travel together, carrying with them different aims in an age of plurality and diversity, but they can be united in the spirit of Christ. It is only through unity in Christ that true synodality is achieved, where Christ is seen as the foundation of our journey and the ultimate goal of all our aims and efforts. The spirit of synodality is aptly recapitulated in the motto of Pope Leo XIV: *In Illo uno unum*, In the One, we are one!

(Antonio Gilberto Marqueses, SVD)

3. Synodality at the Service of the New Evangelization



In a world undergoing constant and rapid transformation, the Church constantly questions how to bring the ever-new proclamation of the Gospel to contemporary humanity. Certainly, it is not a matter of changing the message, but of finding ways to revive dormant faith with the witness of life and seeking new

paths, new languages, and new passions to revive the beauty and joy of hope. Today, the world needs to see a Christ centered Church capable of walking alongside the People of God, engaging all the baptized in profound, mutual listening. It is a way of life for the Church that reflects its most intimate nature of communion. *Synodality* is truly a concept deeply rooted in the tradition of the Catholic Church, but it has taken on a renewed centrality in the pontificate of Pope Francis. This intrinsically communitarian dimension of the Church is today more crucial than ever for addressing the challenges and opportunities of the *New Evangelization*.

The “new evangelization and synodality” emerge as pillars of the Church’s mission because, on the one hand, the new evangelization calls for renewed fervor and innovative methods to proclaim the Gospel, while on the other, synodality proposes a path of co-responsibility and profound listening within the ecclesial community. We know that the new evangelization is not simply a rehash of past strategies, but a call to rethink the Christian message in an age characterized by secularization, religious pluralism, and indifference.

Many Western societies, once rooted in Christian tradition, today show a significant decline in religious practice and a disinterest in spiritual matters. The proclamation of the Gospel must therefore to commit with a people that often fails to perceive the relevance of faith in their lives. The New Evangelization is not simply an activity but a renewed commitment to bringing the Gospel to those who, despite living in traditionally Christian contexts, have lost touch with the faith.

Synodality as a Path of Hope and Renewal

Synodality, is a journey, an ongoing process, in which all members of the People of God from bishops to laity, from priests to religious—are called to actively participate in the life and mission of the Church, listening to one another and discerning God’s will together. This participatory approach represents a true path of hope and renewal. Today, synodality presents itself as a vital response to the complex

¹⁰ R. Luciani, *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church*, 53.

challenges facing the Church in the contemporary world: from secularization to the crisis of confidence, from the need for greater inclusion to the search for new paths for evangelization. It is an invitation to rediscover the rich diversity of charisms and ministries within the Church, valuing the contribution of each individual.

Synodality generates hope because it promises a more open, inclusive, and representative Church. Through mutual listening and sincere dialogue, a space is created where everyone's voices can be heard, especially those of the most marginalized and forgotten. This process of "walking together" allows us to identify new perspectives, address unresolved problems, and find more effective and shared solutions. Synodality is not just a matter of governance, but a way to experience communion more fully, strengthening fraternal bonds and overcoming divisions. A synodal Church is a Church that better reflects the Kingdom of God, where justice, peace, and fraternity are at the center.

Synodality is a *path of hope* because it points to a future in which the Church will be more authentic, credible, and capable of evangelizing the world. It is a *path of renewal* because it calls all its members to ongoing conversion, both personally and communally, to faithfully respond to Christ's call. It is a dynamic and ongoing process, requiring patience, courage, and profound trust in the working of the Holy Spirit, but it promises to transform the Church into a more vibrant witness to the Gospel in today's world. Developing a synodal Church at the service of the New Evangelization is not without challenges. It requires a change of mindset, a willingness to question oneself, and to overcome resistance. It requires formation, patience, and a profound trust in the workings of the Holy Spirit. A Church that walks together is a more vibrant, more dynamic Church, better able to listen to the world's questions and respond with the joy of the Gospel. Synodality, therefore, is not an end in itself, but a privileged path to rediscovering and fully living the Church's evangelizing vocation today.

Synodality has a welcoming potential with different nuances:

It offers a welcoming potential and understanding that transforms the way the

Church operates and interacts with the world. This includes:

- **The potential of Listening:** An authentic synodal process begins with listening. Listening to the Word of God, mutual listening among all members of the People of God, and listening to the "signs of the times." It is a listening that aims to **discern** God's will, guided by the Holy Spirit. This profound listening allows us to understand the needs and questions of contemporary humanity, for a relevant and effective proclamation of the Gospel. Communal discernment, the fruit of this listening, allows us to identify the best ways to reach hearts and minds.

- **The potential of Co-Responsibility:**

Synodality values the co-responsibility of all the baptized in the Church's evangelizing mission. This is not just the task of ordained ministers, but of every Christian. This means overcoming a clerical vision of the Church, promoting the active participation of the laity in the life and mission of the Church. When each member feels an integral and responsible part of the message, the community's evangelizing power grows exponentially.

- **The Potential of Communion in Diversity:**

The synodal "walking together" fosters greater communion within the Church. A united and supportive Church is a more credible witness to the Gospel. Synodality also invites greater inclusion, valuing the diversity of charisms and ministries present in the ecclesial community. Everyone is called to contribute, and the wealth of diverse perspectives enriches the process of evangelization. This process aims to strengthen the **unity** of the Church, not by eliminating diversity, but by integrating it into a fruitful communion.

- **The potential of Credible Witness:** A Church that lives synodally, that displays a power of listening, participation, and communion, becomes an eloquent witness to the Gospel. Its ability to dialogue, welcome, and journey together, even in diversity, makes the Christian message more credible and attractive in an often fragmented and polarized world.

Synodality as an Ecclesial Style

Synodality is a true **ecclesial style**, that permeates every aspect of the life of the Church and makes it more effective in the New Evangelization. Synodality pushes the Church to be an “**outgoing Church**,” one that does not close in on itself but reaches out to the **existential peripheries**. This missionary style, so dear to Pope Francis, means abandoning the mindset of waiting to embrace the initiative of reaching out to those who are far away, with an attitude of dialogue and proximity. Through community discernment, the Church can read the “signs of the times” and offer relevant evangelical responses, becoming a prophetic voice. It requires to change habits, styles, languages, and structures to be closer to contemporary people and proclaim the Gospel in a new and meaningful way. It has also valued **popular piety** as an evangelizing force and emphasizes the importance of **inculturating the Gospel**, that is, of integrating it into different cultures, so that faith can speak to people’s hearts in their own language and traditions. It is not one option among many, but the **path** God expects of the Church in the third millennium for an authentic and fruitful New Evangelization. It allows the Church to rediscover its nature as a journeying People of God, united in listening and mission. It is the path to being an **open, dialoguing, participatory, and missionary** Church, capable of radiating the joy of the Gospel throughout the world. It is a commitment to reawaken faith in those who have drifted away or have never truly encountered Christ, and to strengthen the faith of believers. Today’s world is a mosaic of cultures, subcultures, and worldviews. The church must therefore learn to engage with diverse sensibilities, languages, and ways of life, avoiding monolithic approaches and favoring authentic listening to personal experiences.

Pope Francis himself is the main promoter of synodality, insisting on the concept of “**the Church as the People of God**,” as expressed in the Second Vatican Council’s *Lumen Gentium*. The new thing, he believes, is to recover this contribution, drawing attention to the co-responsibility of all the baptized in the missionary project of the Church. The challenges of the new evangelization and

synodality require a change of mentality and practices within the Church. The concept of the “New Evangelization” emerged forcefully in the magisterium of **Saint John Paul II**, particularly in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), and later developed with the 2012 Synod of Bishops and the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) by **Pope Francis**. The **Preparatory Document of the Synod on the New Evangelization (2012)** underlined how secularization has made it difficult to understand the Gospel, inviting a critique of the lifestyles, structures of thought and communicative languages of the Church itself, for a renewal of faith.

Synodality is not an end in itself, but aims at the mission that Christ entrusted to the Church in the Spirit. Evangelizing is “the essential mission of the Church”. The objective of the mission (evangelization) gives meaning and direction to the synodal journey. Synodality offers the “way” or “style” to be a more effective Church in proclaiming the Gospel today, promoting communion, unity, participation, and co-responsibility. The New Evangelization, in turn, provides the “motivation” and “impetus” for the synodal journey, constantly orienting it towards the mission of bringing Christ to the world. Archbishop **Rino Fisichella** has long been a central figure in promoting the new evangelization, especially as **President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization**. For him, the new evangelization is not about “new contents” of faith, which remain the same as always, but about **new conditions and methods of proclamation**. The adjective “new” refers to the urgency and challenges of the current context, particularly in the Western world, where there has been a significant **detachment from faith**, growing religious indifference, and a loss of the sense of the sacred. The Western world, once deeply imbued with the Gospel, has become a “new mission land” due to secularism, relativism, and indifference. Evangelization is no longer limited to distant lands, but is also necessary in contexts of ancient Christian tradition.

Jesús-Ángel Barreda is a theologian and missiologist, a professor at the Faculty of

Missiology at the Pontifical Urbaniana University. His perspective on the new evangelization often focuses on the **intrinsic missionary nature of the Church** and the need for profound **ecclesial self-evangelization**. Barreda analyses the profound anthropological and cultural transformations of contemporary Europe, recognizing it as a “new mission land.” His vision begins with a perceptive diagnosis of current challenges. For Barreda, evangelization is not only directed “outward” (to non-believers or those distant), but also involves a **regeneration and rediscovery of faith within the Church itself**.

Both agree that the “new evangelization” is not about changing the message, but rather a radical renewal in the **spirit, methods, and expression** with which the faith is proclaimed, especially in contexts where Christianity has lost its centrality and vitality. Of course, the message is always Jesus Christ, his person, his life, death, and resurrection, and the mystery of the Church. It’s not about changing the message, but the way it is presented. The Christian lifestyle is fundamental. Charity and consistent witness are considered essential elements to make the message credible.

For theologians like **Bishop Timothy Radcliffe, OP**, synodality reflects the Trinitarian nature of God, where the divine persons are in perpetual relationship and communion. This intrinsic communion impels the Church to be missionary, to “go forth” to share the joy of the Gospel. Synodality allows the Church to be a more transparent sign of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of communion and love that it is called to proclaim. And a synodal Church, recognizing the common baptismal dignity, empowers each member to contribute their gifts to the proclamation of the Gospel, making Christian witness more widespread and incisive in society. Many theologians see synodality as a source of **credibility** for the New Evangelization. When the Church experiences communion, dialogue, and listening, it itself becomes a visible sign of the Gospel it proclaims. **Archbishop Marcello Semeraro**, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, has often emphasized how a Church that walks together, that overcomes internal divisions, and that knows how to show

a welcoming and fraternal face, is much more persuasive than a Church that preaches but does not practice communion.

The witness of an authentically synodal ecclesial community thus becomes the first and most powerful form of the New Evangelization, inviting the world to discover the joy and beauty of a life lived in Christ. It is through a synodal journey that the Church can rediscover its capacity to be a “**welcoming home**,” a place where the experience of faith translates into authentic relationships, concrete solidarity, and a credible proclamation of the joy of the Gospel. Synodality, far from being a passing fad, therefore emerges as the **path to an authentically incarnated New Evangelization**, capable of generating hope, healing wounds, and building bridges in a world desperately in need. It pushes us to be a Church unafraid to question itself, to convert, and to always begin again from the heart of the message: The Risen Christ, the source of new life for all.

(Rifat Arya, SOC)

4. My Transformative Experience at the SEDOS Residential Seminar

My name is Glory Beda, a Holy Union Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. From June 16th to 20th, 2025, I had the privilege of attending the SEDOS Residential Seminar in Rome. It wasn’t just a learning opportunity it became a deeply personal and spiritual experience. As someone preparing for final vows, the timing was especially meaningful. The seminar gave me space to reflect on the themes of Charism, Prophecy, and Witness in a Synodal Church and to think more clearly about how my vocation fits into the Church’s broader mission.



This was my first time at the SEDOS seminar and my first experience at an international Church gathering of this kind. I was only able to attend because of a generous scholarship, which helped cover the costs my institute couldn’t manage, as we have seven sisters currently in formation. I’m deeply grateful for that support. I

arrived in Rome with an open heart and left feeling renewed in mission, connection, and spirit.

Encountering the Global Church

One of the first things that struck me was the diversity of the participants. People had come from across the world; Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and Oceania. We were religious, lay collaborators, missionaries, and theologians. Even with our differences in background and language, we were united by a shared desire to reflect on the Church's mission in today's world. There was a real spirit of welcome, prayer, and listening. I was touched by how genuinely people engaged with each other's stories, including mine. Conversations during meals, coffee breaks, and small group sessions helped me see the richness of religious life lived in many different contexts. I began to feel that I belonged not just to my own institute, but to a wider missionary family, one that stretches across borders, languages, and generations.

A Keynote of Challenge and Hope

The seminar opened with a talk by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle. His words were both encouraging and challenging. He reminded us that Synodality isn't just a strategy it's at the heart of being Church. He spoke about walking together, listening deeply, and discerning in communion. One phrase stayed with me: "The Church is at its most authentic when it listens especially to the margins." It reminded me that mission begins with listening: to the Spirit, to each other, and to the world's cries.

Before this seminar, I'd heard the word Synodality many times, especially in formation meetings, but it always felt a bit abstract. Cardinal Tagle's talk changed that. Synodality came alive for me not as a structure, but as a way of being. That shift shaped my experience of the entire week.

Learning by Doing: Conversation in the Spirit

One of the most powerful parts of the seminar was the method we used throughout: Conversation in the Spirit. I'd never experienced this kind of dialogue before, and it made a deep impression on me. At first, I wasn't

sure what to expect. It was very different from typical discussions. Each day began with silent reflection and prayer, followed by sharing in small groups without interruptions or debate. We listened attentively and trusted that the Spirit would speak through our shared experiences. It wasn't easy at first, especially the silence and the discipline of listening. But as the days passed, I began to hear not just words, but hearts. I came to see Synodality as something more than Church reform it's a spiritual practice, a way of making room for the Spirit in community life. I hope to bring this into my own community's formation meetings.

Rediscovering Charism

We explored the theme of Charism from many angles during the week. I've always valued the charism of my institute, but this experience gave me a new perspective. One speaker reminded us that charisms aren't personal property or fixed in time they are gifts meant for the wider Church and world. That challenged me. I began asking myself: Are we truly living our charism in today's world? Are we faithful to our founder's vision while staying open to the Spirit's movement? These questions now guide my ongoing reflection.

Prophecy: Living the Gospel Boldly

We also looked deeply at Prophecy. One of the most powerful sessions was led by a sister working in conflict zones. Her stories of walking with displaced people and standing up for justice were deeply moving. She didn't speak with drama or pride, but with quiet courage. She showed us that prophecy isn't about making noise it's about being faithful, especially in hard places. I asked myself: Am I being prophetic in my own life? Do I speak up when it's uncomfortable? Am I truly in solidarity with the poor not just in words, but through action? These questions stay with me.

Witness: Daily Fidelity

The final theme was Witness how we live out our charism and prophetic calling day by day. Witness isn't only about what we do it's how we live, especially in ordinary moments. Lay collaborators shared stories of how religious had touched their lives simply by being present sharing burdens, showing up, and living joyfully.

That reminded me that the most powerful witness often comes in the small things. I now ask myself: What kind of witness do I offer in daily life? Do I reflect the joy of my vocation? Are my actions rooted in the Gospel? These questions aren't theoretical they are daily invitations to go deeper.

Lasting Impact and Moving Forward

This seminar left a deep mark on me. It wasn't just an academic or theological event it was spiritual, relational, and life-giving. I've returned with a desire to share what I've received. I plan to introduce Conversation in the Spirit in our formation sessions and to lead a session on Synodality for my sisters. I also want to write a reflection on our charism for today's world, to spark conversation in our community. These may seem like small steps, but I believe they matter. And above all, I now know I'm not alone. I belong to a global family walking together in mission.

Conclusion

The 2025 SEDOS Residential Seminar wasn't just a conference it was an experience of encounter, reflection, and transformation. I arrived in Nemi with questions. I returned home with hope, clarity, and a stronger sense of belonging to the universal Church. I now understand Synodality not as a structure or idea, but as a way of living a path of listening, discernment, and shared journeying. I am truly grateful to SEDOS for the scholarship that made this possible. That generosity will bear fruit not just in my life, but, I hope, in the lives of those I will walk with and serve in the years ahead.

May the Spirit who guided us in Rome continue to lead our Church as we walk together in faith, love, and mission. During the seminar, the rhythm of daily life also contributed to the depth of the experience. Each morning began with shared prayer and Eucharist in the evening, which grounded us in our faith. The liturgies were beautifully diverse, often reflecting the cultural traditions of different participants. I remember one Mass celebrated in French language with nice music where the hymns and dance created a truly joyful worship

(Glory Beda, SUSC)

5. Walking Together - My Experience at the SEDOS Residential Seminar

From June 16 to June 20, 2025, I had the immense privilege of participating in the SEDOS Residential Seminar held at Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi, Italy. I came into the seminar with anticipation, and I left deeply transformed — spiritually renewed, theologically challenged, and communally enriched. The experience remains etched in my memory as a truly synodal encounter: a journey of walking together, listening with the heart, and embracing the diversity that reflects the very beauty of the universal Church.

The theme of this year's seminar, "Missionary Institutes and Synodality: Charism, Prophecy, and Witness," could not have been more relevant or timely. In the spirit of the ongoing synodal journey of the Church, the seminar invited us not merely to learn or discuss but to truly live the synodal way — through intercultural fellowship, deep prayer, reflection, and especially through "Conversation in the Spirit" (CIS), a method of discernment that permeated our group work and collective listening.

A Tapestry of Nations: Intercultural Living

The seminar brought together around seventy missionaries from thirty different missionary institutes, representing thirty-two nationalities across all continents — lay men and women, religious brothers and sisters, and priests. Sharing meals, prayers, and conversations with such a richly diverse group was a formative experience. We did not only learn about synodality — we embodied it.

Despite our different backgrounds, languages, and charisms, we formed a temporary yet powerful community of communion. This experience taught me that interculturality is not an obstacle to unity but a means by which unity is deepened. The intercultural living, we shared demonstrated, in concrete ways, the message that synodality calls us to: to walk together not by erasing difference, but by weaving it into the tapestry of shared mission.

June 16th evening was day one, the seminar began with the opening address by Fr. Alain Mayama, CSSp, setting a prayerful tone for our days ahead. In the evening, Sr. Mary Barron, OLA, President of SEDOS, welcomed us warmly and formally inaugurated the seminar.

She reminded us that our gathering was not simply for intellectual engagement but was a “faithful moment” — a sacred time for discernment, listening, and response to the Holy Spirit’s invitation. Her message stirred something within me: a deeper awareness that as missionary disciples, we are not just functionaries of Church programs, but living signs and sacraments of Christ’s presence in the world.

She spoke prophetically about the urgency of this moment in Church history. Synodality, she stressed, is not a method but a way of being Church. It involves all of us — laity, clergy, and religious — in shaping a missionary Church that listens, discerns, and walks together. She challenged us to engage this journey with courage, humility, and openness to the Spirit.

The keynote address by His Eminence Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle also gave us the thematic compass for our shared reflection.

Synodality: A Way of Being, Not Just a Process

One of the most insightful themes throughout the seminar was the understanding of synodality not as an event or a structural reform, but as an ecclesial spirituality — a new way of being Church that is relational, participatory, and Spirit-led.

Cardinal Tagle helped us explore Biblical foundations, especially the prophet Micah’s words: “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). This humble walking with God became for us a symbol of synodality. Whoever walks humbly with God will also walk humbly with others.

He guided us in reflecting on freedom as essential to the synodal path. Without freedom — the kind rooted in spiritual maturity and openness to others — we cannot genuinely choose to walk together. Moreover, cultural

intelligence emerged as a vital synodal skill: to be at home in one’s culture, yet fully open to welcoming the culture of others.

One facilitator beautifully described synodality as “a reimagining of mission”— a shift from a Church that sends to a Church that goes forth in communion; a Church that welcomes as much as it evangelizes.

Charism: A Shared Gift to Be Renewed

We spent significant time reflecting on charism — not only the founding charisms of our Institutes but also the personal charisms of individual members. Each person is unique, and our Institutes thrive not in uniformity but in diversity. A synodal Church, we learned, is one that integrates and uplifts all gifts.

I found this aspect particularly enlightening. Often, in community life, individual charisms are subdued under the banner of “community cohesion.” But synodality invites us to do the opposite: to recognize that our Institutes grow because of the creative, Spirit-given contributions of each member. As one speaker said, “The Charism belongs to everyone — it is lived by consecrated men and women, and by lay people in different forms.”

This calls for humility, collaboration, and deep listening. We were reminded that we cannot understand or rejuvenate our charism unless we listen attentively to the needs of the times and the cries of our people.

Prophecy: A Missionary’s Bold Call

“Are missionaries today sufficiently prophetic?”

This was one of the most probing questions we reflected on during the Conversation in the Spirit. It made us pause and ask: what does it mean to be a prophet today?

A prophet is not merely one who predicts the future. Rather, a prophet is one who reads the signs of the times in light of the Gospel and speaks the truth with courage — even when it is unpopular or dangerous. In today’s world of war, injustice, environmental degradation, and spiritual confusion, being prophetic means being counter-cultural and grounded in Christ.

Using the words of the facilitator who quotes “A prophet is someone who speaks forth” Stephen Bevans, SVD and “a prophet is one who sees the world with the eyes of God.” Joshua Heschel.

Mission, we were reminded, belongs to God. We are not the owners of the mission; we are participants in God's ongoing redemptive work. By our baptism, we are all missionaries and prophets. As missionary institutes, our challenge is to resist institutional complacency and allow ourselves to be disturbed by the Spirit into prophetic action.

Witness: Evangelizing Through Presence and Relationship

Witness is often the most powerful form of evangelization. One facilitator said something that deeply resonated with me: “We become witnesses and prophets not only through preaching but through our presence — especially among the poor, the marginalized, and people of other faiths.”

Human relationships, built on respect, listening, and mutual transformation, are central to mission. In our interreligious and intercultural world, being a witness often means being present — with love, without judgment, and with a genuine desire to listen. Through presence, we proclaim Christ in silence and service.

The seminar emphasized that evangelization should be about communion, accompaniment, and witness through our shared vulnerability and mutual learning. Together in mission with the universal Church, we are called to be signs of unity, healing, and peace.

Conversation in the Spirit: A Sacred Process of Discernment

Perhaps the most powerful methodology we practiced was the “Conversation in the Spirit” (CIS). In small groups, we followed a three-round sharing process designed to help us listen not only to others but to the voice of the Spirit speaking through others.

Each round called for prayerful silence, deep listening, and heartfelt sharing. This method

helped us move beyond debate or problem-solving into genuine spiritual discernment. We learned to speak from the heart and to listen with the heart — allowing the Spirit to guide us toward communal insight.

The CIS process showed me the power of communal discernment. It was not always easy, but it bore fruit. I left each session feeling heard, respected, and spiritually energized. It is a practice I hope to bring back to my own community.

A Prophetic Communal Statement

At the conclusion of our seminar, a group was assigned to come up with a statement which I now own because I was a participant in this seminar and in summary it is as follows: we issued a joint statement — a prophetic call to the Church and the world. We acknowledged the global crises of war, violence, environmental degradation, and the cry of the poor. As missionary men and women, we affirmed our commitment to become witnesses of hope, channels of peace, and instruments of justice.

We echoed Pope Leo XIV's plea: “Let everything possible be done to achieve genuine, just and lasting peace as soon as possible.” We were challenged not only to pray for peace but to become agents of peace — within our communities, our ministries, and the world.

A Final Reflection: Becoming Pilgrims of Hope

Looking back, the SEDOS Residential Seminar was not simply an academic exercise or a conference. It was a pilgrimage — a spiritual journey into the heart of the Church, into the heart of mission, and into the heart of God. I return to my community with renewed passion, a clearer sense of my call, and a deeper appreciation of the richness of the Church. I am convinced that the future of mission lies in the path of synodality — where all voices are heard. It was truly a time for interconnectedness and encounter. May the Good Lord bless all the organizers of SEDOS and all who made this experience enriching, enlightening, encouraging, challenging and spirit filled for us.

(Josephine Tansho Sikem, SUSC)

Mary Barron, OLA

Opening Message & Prayer

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Mission,



Welcome to the 2025 SEDOS Annual General Assembly. This morning the opening prayer will be combined with the welcome address. As we begin this Assembly, three key words come to mind: *gratitude, peace and hope.*

GRATITUDE

Let us take a moment to look back over the SEDOS Year with gratitude in our hearts. Each event we experienced together in 2025 has shaped our common horizon and strengthened our capacity to be missionary disciples witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ in ways that are attentive to history, prophetic in critique, and humble in service.

In March, we did not organize a separate Spring Seminar but collaborated with the SVD fathers in promoting their excellent conference which was held at the Pontifical Gregorian University centred on the theme *Missio Dei in Today's World: Healing Wounds, Challenged by Postmodernity, Learning from Cultures, Inspired by Religions.* **Theologically** the conference reinforced a shift from an overly programmatic mission to a *Missio Dei* posture that foregrounds healing, listening, and learning. Keynote reflections framed mission as participation in God's reconciling work—an invitation to further deepen the move toward relational, contextual witness in a world shaped by pluralism and uncertainty.

Residential Seminar

In June the Residential **Seminar on Synodality, Charism, Prophecy and Witness (June)** June's residential seminar gave us space for deeper reflection and formation. Grounded in questions of synodality, the seminar explored how missionary institutes live their founding

charisms in a synodal Church: how communal decision-making, shared responsibility, and the prophetic memory of a charism can renew forms of leadership, discernment, formation and mission. It was a time for contemplative listening and rigorous exchange, helping us to discern the path we need to take to witness with integrity amid complexity.

We deepened our grasp of how charism and synodality cohere: charisms are gifts for the mission God entrusts to the Church; synodality is the practice that discerns how those gifts are received and exercised in community. This clarity helps us form missionaries whose identity is both rooted and outward-looking.

For our Pastoral praxis we are challenged to move from ideas to practices: accompaniment that listens before advising; formation that is contextual and reciprocal; projects that share power and resources rather than simply transferring them.

We were reminded that witness requires prophetic courage: to name injustice, to stand with the excluded, and to propose alternative social imaginaries shaped by Gospel justice and care for creation.

The Autumn Webinar: From Ad Gentes to Inter Gentes (October) traced the arc from the missionary vision of Ad Gentes to a living practice of inter-gentes mission today. Speakers and participants reflected on how mission increasingly entails encounter, reciprocal relationships, collaborative initiatives across cultures and continents, new models of solidarity that resist paternalism and foster co-responsibility. Mission inter-gentes is rooted in a deep spirituality, it embodies mutuality, is rooted in mysticism and must engage synodally for a reciprocal expression of mission among all collaborators... Pope Francis was hailed as the most important missiologist in recent times.

We also had a brief encounter with Pope Leo when we attended the General audience on June 11th and had a photo with him... another special moment for those in attendance for which we are grateful.

We have much to be grateful for as a SEDOS Organisation and we give thanks for the fruitfulness of these sessions and encounters. No doubt seeds have been planted; something is growing somewhere as a result of these different initiatives... it is not ours to know how or to control how but to trust it will grow to maturity in God's time.

On a personal note, I am extremely grateful to all the members of the SEDOS Executive Committee who have made our collaboration both enjoyable and effective. Each has given their best to continue to guide the various activities of SEDOS to help us all deepen our understanding of the call to mission in our time. Gratitude also to the Staff, to Fr. John Paul Herman, Srs. Celine Kokkat and Christy and to Ms Philippa Woodridge who we rarely see but who continues to work quietly in the background. And gratitude to all members whose participation ensures SEDOS events are always joy filled moments of encounter.

Let us take a moment to remember the year and to give thanks for what has been.

And so, to sum up this gratitude to the Lord, let us take a moment to reflect on this short passage from scripture...

1 Thessalonians 5:18 — “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Hymn: Tu Modo Cristobal Fones...

HOPE

Jubilee Year where we are all invited to be Pilgrims of Hope... Last month, October, was an intense month for missionaries as so many of the Jubilees came together in October... the Jubilee of World Missions, the Jubilee of Migrants, the Jubilee for Consecrated Life, the Jubilee for Synodal Teams, for the world of Education.... This call to Hope still echoes within us... how do we as missionaries witness to the hope that does not disappoint ...

I was fortunate to be in a village in the peripheries of Milan Archdiocese for their Missionary Prayer Vigil a couple of weeks ago... where the testimony was given by Fr. Gigi Macalli, SMA Fr Gigi shared his testimony with us during our residential seminar last year 2024. As always, his testimony was extremely touching and challenging. What touched me deeply was experience of going back to Niger from where he had been kidnapped in September 2018. He went there in September 2024. He was not able to go to the parish where he worked... it is simply too dangerous now. But he went to Niamey and his people came to celebrate with him. He spoke of the great joy they shared but also the great hope his liberation offered them. They shared with him that his liberation from captivity shows them that they can continue to hope, that God will also answer their prayer, that they too can be liberated from their captivity, from their experience of persecution. This was a powerful witness and again it challenges me, it challenges us to live our lives as missionaries in a way that witnesses to hope....

Let us take moment to pray for all missionaries that we may be true witnesses to hope, keeping hope alive for many whose situations seem hopeless...

Scripture text... “And hope does not disappoint us for the love of God has been poured out into our hearts.” **(Rom. 5:5)**

Silence:

Hymn: Fiamma Viva



PEACE

Although in choosing November 11th as the date for our Assembly, we did so out of convenience, I believe it is no coincidence that we convene today, November 11th, a date etched in global memory as a threshold of peace. On this day in 1918, after four years of the first World War, the guns of war fell silent, and the world dared to imagine reconciliation. Peace is another key word for our gathering. The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month...

November 11 as summons to Peace-making

Meeting on November 11 adds a crucial symbolic dimension to our deliberations. The day's memory of ceasefire and fragile hope summons us to be architects of peace in every place we serve—working for reconciliation between peoples, restoring dignity to those harmed by violence and structural injustice, and cultivating interior dispositions of humility and courage that enable truthful, compassionate dialogue.

Pope Francis spoke of a third world war being fought piece meal... *Today the third world war is taking place in a globalized world where conflicts involve only certain areas of the planet directly, but in fact involve them all. Nor can we forget that war particularly affects those who are most fragile – children, the elderly, the disabled – and leaves an indelible mark on families.*

Peace-making for missionaries means attending both to systems that must change and to the interior conversion that sustains long-term reconciliation.

Today, as missionaries, we are called not only to remember but to embody that hope — to be artisans of peace in fractured landscapes, bridge-builders across cultures, and witnesses to the Gospel's reconciling power.

Let us take a moment to reflect in silence, to call to mind all those who are suffering from these various wars, conflicts and tensions; to call to mind those who work for transformation of

the tensions to peaceful co-existence ... for all our missionaries working in these areas...

Scripture Text: Jeremiah: 29 11

“I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope.”

HYMN: Keith Duke My Peace:

A Pastoral Invitation

May this Assembly be a sacramental space where memory and hope meet

- where we honour what we have learned together this year through our encounters and our sharing;
- where we notice and name the wounds that persist among and around us and discern how we might address some of these concerns in our reflections in the years ahead.

Let us commit to continuing our journey together, seeking to form communities that are both faithful to their charisms and open to the mutual transformations required by inter-gentes solidarity. May our plans flow from prayer, be informed by the experiences we have shared, and be strengthened by the cross-bearing love of Christ that sends us. May this Assembly be a space of listening, discernment, and renewal. May our reflections echo the Spirit's invitation to walk humbly, love boldly, and labour tirelessly for the peace that Christ alone can give. Amen.



John Paul Herman, SVD

SEDOS Annual Report 2025

I. Mission and Membership

SEDOS is a forum open to Institutes of Consecrated Life dedicated to deepening their understanding of **global mission**. We promote research and facilitate the sharing of information through the *Bulletin*, website, public conferences, working groups, and the Annual Residential Seminar.



Membership Status

- **Current Membership:** SEDOS currently has **83 Member Congregations**, including the Union of Superiors General (USG) and the International Union of Superiors General (UISG).
- **Departures:** The Congregation of Paris Foreign Missions (MEP) and the Congregation of Christian Brothers (CFC) withdrew their membership this year.
- **Financial Challenge:** Due to financial constraints, some congregations are withdrawing or hesitating to join SEDOS. To ensure our mission continues, we must promote new membership and encourage all current members and partners to support SEDOS generously.

II. SEDOS Activities 2025

A. Seminars and Special Events

Event	Theme & Date	Key Highlights
Spring Seminar	<i>“Missio Dei in Today’s World...”</i> (March 27-29, 2025)	SEDOS did not hold its own Spring Seminar this year. Instead, participated in the International Conference on Mission organized by the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) at the Gregorian University . The theme was, “Missio Dei in Today’s World: Healing Wounds Challenged by Postmodernity, Learning from Cultures, Inspired by Religions.” The conference, which featured prominent global speakers , attracted 250 participants, demonstrating SEDOS’s commitment to promoting mission-focused dialogue across various perspectives.
Residential Seminar	<i>“Missionary Institutes and Synodality: Charism, Prophecy and Witness”</i> (June 16-20, 2025)	The Residential Seminar was held in Nemi, near Rome , with a total of 72 participants. The theme was “Missionary Institutes and Synodality: Charism, Prophecy and Witness.” The seminar began with an inspiring keynote address by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle . Each subsequent day focused on a sub-topic: Fr. Fabio Ciardi, OMI , spoke on Charism; Fr. Márcio Flávio Martins, CICM presented on Prophecy; and the final day on Witness featured panelists Sr. Maria Nirmalini, AC, Sr. Joan Agnes, MC, Fr. Antonio Porcellato, SMA, and Donatella Acerbi . The synodal experience (“walking together”) was highly valued by participants. Five scholarships were offered to students and deserving members.

<p>Autumn Seminar</p>	<p>“From Ad Gentes to Inter Gentes” (October 23, 2025)</p>	<p>Celebrated the 60th Anniversary of <i>Ad Gentes</i>. The event held at UISG, saw 66 participants from 30 congregations and featured three key speakers. Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu gave an informative talk on mission, followed by Prof. Paolo Trianni, who spoke on mission continuity and innovation, and Sr. Gloria Liliana Franco, (Order of the Company of Mary our Lady) who addressed the theme from a spiritual point of view.</p>
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B. Special Events

- **The Triple Event (December 18, 2024):** The **Annual General Assembly (AGA)**, **SEDOS 60th Birthday Celebration**, and Christmas Party were combined.
 - **AGA:** Held in the morning with 18 member congregations present. **Sr. Nirmala Gnanapragasam, FMM, and Fr. Edgardo A. Guzman, CMF, were elected** as new Executive Committee members.
 - **Celebration:** Though well-received, the venue was deemed less ideal for the combined celebration due to congestion. **The Executive Committee decided to separate the AGA and the Christmas Party** in the future.
- **General Audience and Photograph with Pope Leo XIV (June 11, 2025):** SEDOS was privileged to participate in a general audience with the Holy Father on the occasion of SEDOS 60th Anniversary, a follow-up made possible after the passing of Pope Francis.
- **Other Engagements:** SEDOS participated in several key events, including the **JPIC Annual General Assembly** on 19th May and the **JPIC Way of the Cross** on 4th April. Offered congratulations and participated in the **Canonization of St. Maria Troncatti** on 17th October, and most recently, SEDOS participated in celebrating the **60th year of *Nostra Aetate*** at Vatican on 28th October.
- **SEDOS Survey:** A survey was conducted for the 60th Anniversary on SEDOS Identity, Seminars, Website, and the *Bulletin*. **Positive results were encouraging**, and suggested changes are currently being implemented. The results are published in the *Bulletin* and on the website.

III. SEDOS Administration

A. Administrative Team

The dedicated staff ensures all SEDOS activities run smoothly:

- **Director (Fr. John Paul Herman, SVD):** Actively works to enhance SEDOS’ various activities and outreach to members.
- **Bursar (Sr. Maria Jerly, SSpS):** Manages all finance operations, ensuring quick and efficient receipts and payments. She has kept the budget well within limits and maintained **financial stability**.
- **Secretary (Sr. Celine, JMJ):** Serves as the backbone of SEDOS, meticulously organizing all seminars and workshops, managing the *Bulletin* layout, and handling general office tasks.
- **Digital Assistant (Sr. Christina, JMJ):** Keeps the website up-to-date, efficiently designs logos, and manages other digital programs. She has successfully implemented a **new, attractive, and user-friendly look** for the website (*sedosmission.org*).
- **Translation Services (Ms. Philippa Wooldridge):** Continues to deliver prompt translations of articles and essential documents.

B. Executive Committee

The **ten-member Executive Committee** is a vital asset to SEDOS. They meet regularly to provide insights and ensure **balanced leadership** through **gender and continental representation**.

The current committee members are:

- Sr. Mary Barron, OLA (President)
 - Fr. Alain Mayama, CSSp (Vice President)
 - Fr. John Paul Herman, SVD (Director)
 - Sr. Maria Jerly, SSpS (Treasurer)
 - Sr. Nirmala Gnanapragasam, FMM
 - Fr. Edgardo A. Guzman, CMF
 - Sr. Oyidu Okwori, SHCJ
 - Fr. Márcio Flávio Martins, CICM
 - Bro. René Stockman, FC
 - Sr. Anna Damas, SSpS
- **Gratitude:** We offer our heartfelt thanks to **Sr. Mary Barron, OLA**, as she completes her six-year term with SEDOS (three years as Vice President and three years as President). **Her dedicated service** elevated SEDOS to new heights. We also extend our deep gratitude to **Bro. René Stockman, FC** and **Sr. Anna Damas, SSpS** for their three years of service on the Executive team, marked by **creative insights** and active participation.

C. Publications and Digital Platforms

- **SEDOS Bulletin:** Highly regarded for its well-researched content. Accessible to scholars and students through a collaboration with **EBSCO agency**.
- **New Schedule:** Now published **quarterly** (per survey suggestion).
- **Distribution:** 210 copies of SEDOS Bulletin are produced every three months; most members now prefer the digital version, opting for one hard copy for documentation.
- **Website and social media:** The website (*sedosmission.org*) has a **new look** that is simpler and more attractive. The **Facebook Page (SEDOS Roma)** is well managed, extending our reach and engagement.
- **Library:** Consistently updated with new books, including contributions from Member Congregations, and new acquisitions are featured on the website.

IV. Financial Overview

The financial situation of SEDOS remains **stable**, well within the set limit of €100,000. Our operations rely primarily on annual membership fees.

- “This year, we successfully **reduced overall expenses to €91,135.41**.
- While we incurred additional costs for the **60th SEDOS Anniversary**, including a survey and website update, these were offset by successfully **collaborating on the SEDOS Spring Seminar** with the SVD Jubilee International Conference.
- Despite a **decline in membership and subsequent income**, our financial position remains **stable**. We have covered all current year expenses and are optimistic about maintaining this stability in 2026.
- We urge all members to **encourage new registrations** for our upcoming seminars. Your active **participation and support** are vital not only for the growth and sustenance of SEDOS but also for our **long-term financial sustainability**. Furthermore, we are actively following up on a few outstanding membership fees and are hopeful for their prompt receipt.”

Financial Compliance

SEDOS ensures financial agreements comply with State requirements:

- **Religious Staff:** Compensated through donations to their respective congregations.
- **Cleaning Staff & Translators:** Provide fiscal invoices for their services.

V. Basic Schedule for 2026

- **Spring Seminar:** Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at UISG, Rome.
- **Residential Seminar:** May 4 – 8, 2026, at Nemi.
- **Autumn Seminar:** Thursday, October 20, 2026, at UISG, Rome.
- **Annual General Assembly and Christmas party (2026):** Date to be announced.

(Next Event: **Christmas Party:** Friday, December 12, 2025, at SVD Generalate, Rome.)

I am honoured to recognize the **SEDOS team and its members** for the **vibrant life and energy** they bring to our organization. We are grateful for the **positive feedback** we continue to receive regarding our work.

The **commitment of our members** is most evident during our seminars. Their active engagement—sharing creative insights and innovative ideas — makes these gatherings consistently **valuable** for all participants. Attendees leave equipped with **fresh perspectives, new insights, and clear, actionable steps** for their future work.

I strongly encourage all SEDOS Members to **increase participation** in these Seminars. They are an **excellent opportunity** to share experiences, **strengthen our organization**, and **deepen your personal missionary journey** as you face the challenges of today.

Let us renew our dedication to **missionary life**, striving for **greater zeal and demonstrable impact**.

Fr. John Paul Herman, SVD





MISSION AS DEPENDENCE ON GOD AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE MARGINALIZED

MONDAY, 4th May 2026

**Keynote Address: Mission as Dependence on God and
Solidarity with the Marginalized**

**Speaker: Archbishop Samuele Sangalli,
Adjunct Secretary, Dicastery for Evangelization**

TUESDAY, 5th May 2026

Topic: Franciscan Response to the Cry of the New Poor
**Speaker: Fr. Dinh Anh Nhue Nguyen, Secretary General,
Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU)**

WEDNESDAY, 6th May 2026

Topic: God Chooses the Poor
Speaker: Fr. Edgardo A. Guzman, CMF

THURSDAY, 7th May 2026

Format: Panel Discussion
Sr. Paola Vizzotto, PIME: Prison Ministry (Italian)
Fr. Massimo Vedova, FMC: Street Children Ministry (Italian)
Fr. Vincent Anes, CMF: JPIC Ministry (Indian)
Sr. Anicette Lantokpode, OLA: Migrant and Prostitution Ministry (French)

FRIDAY, 8th May 2026

Activity: Group Sharing and Creative reporting

*SEDOS Residential Seminar 2026





Autumn seminar 2026

**THEME: "MISSION
AS COMMUNION:
ONE IN CHRIST –
UNITED IN MISSION"**

OCTOBER 20, 2026 at UISG, ROME

VENUE: UISG, ROME



EASTER BLESSINGS

**SEDOS wishes to all the
members and readers
a joyful and meaningful
Easter celebration**

CHRIST IS RISEN! ALLELUIA!

MAY THE RISEN LORD FILL YOUR HEARTS WITH
PEACE, HOPE, AND RENEWED MISSIONARY ZEAL.