



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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#iubilaeum2025 – Audience with participants in the Jubilee of Communication

At 11.30 this morning, in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father Francis met with participants in the Jubilee of Communication.

The following are the address prepared by the Pope for the occasion, which was handed to those present at the audience, and his impromptu remarks:

Impromptu remarks

Dear sisters and dear brothers, good morning! And thank you very much for coming!

In my hands I have a nine-page address. At this time, with the stomach feeling empty, reading nine pages would be a torture. I will give this to the Prefect, who will communicate it to you.

I would just like to say a word on *communication*. To communicate is to come out of oneself, to give what is mine to the other. And communication is not only going outwards, but also the encounter with the other. Knowing how to communicate is a great wisdom, a great wisdom!

I am pleased with this Jubilee of communicators. Your work is a work that builds: it builds society, it builds the Church, it makes everyone go forward, provided it is true. “Father, I always tell the truth...”. “But *you*, are you true? Not only the things you say, but you, inwardly, in your life, are you true?”. It is a major challenge. To communicate what God does with the Son, and the communication of God with the Son and the Holy Spirit. To communicate something divine. Thank you for what you do, thank you very much! I am pleased.

And now I would like to greet you, and first of all give the blessing.

Address of the Holy Father

Dear sisters and dear brothers, good morning!

I thank you all for coming in such large numbers and from so many different countries, far and near. It is truly beautiful to see you all here. I thank the guests who have spoken before me – Maria Ressa, Colum McCann and Mario Calabresi – and I thank Maestro Uto Ughi for the gift of music, which is a way of communication and hope.

This meeting of ours is the first major event of the Holy Year dedicated to a “living world”, the world of communication. The Jubilee is being celebrated at a difficult moment in the history of humanity, with the world still wounded by wars and violence, by the shedding of so much innocent blood. Therefore, I would first like to say thank you to all the communication workers who risk their own lives to seek out the truth and to report the horrors of war. I wish to remember in prayer all those who have sacrificed their lives in this last year, one of the most lethal for journalists. Let us pray in silence for your colleagues who have signed their service with their own blood.

I then also want to remember, together with you, all those who are imprisoned merely for having been faithful to the profession of journalist, photographer, video operator; for wanting to see with their own eyes and for trying to report what they have seen. There are many of them! [1] But in this Holy Year, in this jubilee of the world of communication, I ask those who have the power to do so to free all unjustly imprisoned journalists. May a “door” be opened for them too, through which they may return to freedom, because the freedom of journalists increases the freedom of us all. Their freedom is freedom for all of us.

I ask – as I have done several times, and as my predecessors have done before me too – that the freedom of the press and freedom of thought be defended and safeguarded along with the fundamental right to be informed. Free, responsible and correct information is a legacy of knowledge, experience and virtue that must be preserved and promoted. Without this, we risk no longer distinguishing truth from lies; without this, we expose ourselves to growing prejudices and polarizations that destroy the bonds of civil coexistence and prevent fraternity from being rebuilt.

Journalism is more than a profession. It is a vocation and a mission. You, communicators, have a fundamental role for society today, in reporting facts and in the way in which you report them. We know that the language, attitude and tones can be decisive and make the difference between communication that rekindles hope, builds bridges and opens doors, and communication that instead increases divisions, polarizations, and simplifications of reality.

Yours is a peculiar responsibility. Yours is a precious task. Your tools of the trade are words and images. But before these, study and reflection, the capacity to see and listen, to place yourselves in the position of those who are marginalized, of those who are neither seen nor heard, and also to revive, in the hearts of those who read, listen and look at you, the meaning of good and evil, and a nostalgia for the good that you report and, by reporting it, bear witness to.

I would like, in this special meeting, to deepen the dialogue with you. And I am grateful to be able to do it by starting out from the thoughts and questions that two of your colleagues shared just now.

Maria, you spoke of the importance of *courage* to initiate the change that history demands of us, the change necessary to overcome lies and hatred. It is true, it takes courage to initiate change. The word *courage* comes from the Latin *cor*, *cor habeo*, which means “to have heart”. It is that inner drive, that strength that comes from the heart that enables us to face difficulties and challenges without being overwhelmed by fear.

With the word *courage* we can recapitulate all the reflections of the World Days of Social Communications in recent years, up to the Message with yesterday’s date: *listen with the heart, speak with the heart, safeguard the wisdom of the heart, share the hope of the heart*. In recent years it has indeed therefore been the heart that has

dictated to me the guideline for our reflection on communication. I would therefore like to add to my appeal for the liberation of journalists another “appeal” that concerns us all: for the “liberation” of the inner strength of the heart. Of every heart! It is up to none other than us to respond to this appeal.

Freedom is the courage to choose. Let us take the opportunity of the Jubilee to renew, to rediscover this courage. The courage to free the heart from what corrupts it. Let us place respect for the highest and most noble part of our humanity at the centre of the heart, let us avoid filling it with what decays and makes it decay. The choices we all make count, for example, in expelling that “brain rot” caused by dependence on continual scrolling on social media, defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the word of the year. Where can we find the cure for this disease if not in working, all together, on formation, especially of the young?

We need media literacy, to educate ourselves and to educate others in critical thought, the patience of discernment necessary for knowledge, and to promote the personal growth and active participation of every one of us in the future of our own communities. We need courageous entrepreneurs, courageous information engineers, so that the beauty of communication is not corrupted. Great change cannot be the result of a multitude of sleeping minds, but rather begins with the communion of enlightened hearts.

Such a heart was that of Saint Paul. The Church celebrates his conversion this very day. The change that took place in this man was so decisive that it marked not only his personal history, but that of the entire Church. And Paul's metamorphosis was brought about by his face-to-face encounter with the risen and living Jesus. The power to set out on a path of transformative change is always generated by direct communication between people. Think of how much power for change is potentially hidden in your work every time you bring together realities that - through ignorance or prejudice - are in opposition! The conversion, in Paul, derived from the light that enveloped him and the explanation that Ananias then gave him in Damascus. Your work too can and must provide this service: finding the right words for those rays of light that succeed in touching the heart and making us see things differently.

And here I would like to engage with the theme of the transformative power of *storytelling*, of telling and listening to stories, which Colum highlighted. Let us return for a moment to Paul's conversion. The event is narrated in the Acts of the Apostles three times (9:1-19; 22:1-21; 26:2-23), but the nucleus always remains Saul's personal encounter with Christ; the method of narration changes, but the foundational and transformative experience remains unchanged.

Telling a story corresponds to an invitation to have an experience. When the first disciples approached Jesus asking, “Master, where are you staying?” (*Jn* 1:38), He did not answer by giving them the address of their home, but said, “Come, and you will see” (v. 39).

The stories reveal our being part of a living fabric, the interweaving of threads by which we are connected to one another. [2] Not all stories are good, and yet these too must be told. Evil must be seen in order to be redeemed; but it is necessary to be told well so as not to wear out the fragile threads of cohabitation.

In this Jubilee, I therefore make another appeal to you gathered here, and to communicators all over the world: also tell stories of hope, stories that nurture life. May your *storytelling* also be *hopetelling*. When you report on evil, leave space for the possibility of mending what has been torn, for the dynamism of good that can repair what is broken. Ask questions. Telling of hope means seeing the crumbs of good hidden even in what appears to be lost; it means allowing hope against all hope. [3] It means being aware of the shoots that emerge when the earth is still covered with ashes. Recounting hope means having an outlook that transforms things, that makes them become what they could, what they should be. It means making things walk towards their destiny.

This is the power of stories. And this is what I encourage you to do: tell of hope, share it. This is, as Saint Paul would say, your “good fight”.

Thank you, dear friends! I bless you all and your work from my heart. And please, do not forget to pray for me.

[1] According to *Reporters without Borders*, there are over 500. In a press release published at the end of 2024, RWF emphasizes that “incarceration remains one of the preferred methods of those who undermine press freedom”.

[2] Cf. “*That you may tell your children and grandchildren*” (*Ex 10:2*) *Life becomes history*, Message for the 54th World Day of Social Communications, 2020.

[3] Cf. *Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts* (*cf. 1 Pet 3:15-16*), Message for the 59th World Day of Social Communications, 2025.
