



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 30th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE VATICAN TELEVISION CENTRE**

*To Msgr Dario Edoardo Viganò
Director of the Vatican Television Centre*

I would like to address my warm greeting to all present at the Conference which not only intends to commemorate 30 years of the Vatican Television Centre but, above all, to reflect on its prospects for an ever more attentive and qualified service. I greet the relators and guests, especially Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli and the members of the Administrative Board.

1. I would like first of all to stress that *your work is a service to the Gospel and to the Church*. The anniversary of CTV has as its background another important one: the 50th anniversary of the approval of the Conciliar Decree *Inter Mirifica*, which counts among the wonderful gifts of God the means of social communication, including, precisely, the medium of television. The Council Fathers' words seem prophetic to us now; they rightly stressed how important the use of these means is: "like salt and light, they will give savour to the earth and brighten the world", spreading the light of Jesus Christ and contributing to the progress of all humanity.

In recent decades technology has advanced at great speed, creating unforeseen interconnected networks. It is necessary to maintain the perspective of the Gospel in this kind of "global highway of communication", ever bearing in mind the goals that Blessed John Paul II wished to achieve by establishing the CTV: to render "the action of the Church more effective in the field of social communications... in order to offer new means by which to carry out in the world the universal mission of the Church (*Rescript* of 22 October 1983). As Benedict XVI also reminded you: "by making the images available to the most important world television agencies and the large national or commercial television broadcasting stations, you relay relevant news quickly on the life and

teaching of the Church in today's world, at the service of the dignity of the human person, justice, dialogue and peace" (*Address to CTV*, 18 December 2008). Therefore, do not forget that yours is an ecclesial service, within the evangelizing mission of the Church.

2. Thus — and this is the second point that I would like to underline — *in presenting events your outlook cannot be "worldly" but ecclesial*. We live in a world where almost nothing exists which does not pertain to the universe of the media. Increasingly sophisticated instruments only reinforce the increasingly pervasive role played by technology, the forms and languages of communication in the unfolding of daily life, and this is not only in the world of the youth. As I recalled the day after my election as Bishop of Rome, while meeting representatives of the social media in Rome for the Conclave, "the role of the mass media has expanded immensely in these years, so much so that they are an essential means of informing the world about the events of contemporary history". All of this is reflected in the life of the Church as well. But, if it is no simple task to relate the events of history, it is even more complex to relate events connected to the Church, which is the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God", the Body of Christ, the People of God, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This requires a special kind of responsibility, a strong capacity to read reality in a spiritual light. Indeed, the events of the Church "have one particular underlying feature: they follow a pattern which does not readily correspond to the 'worldly' categories which we are accustomed to use, and so it is not easy to interpret and communicate them to a wider and more varied public" (*Address to the representatives of the media*, 16 March 2013). Speaking of responsibility, a respectful vision of the events one wants to relate, means also awareness of the fact that the selection, organization, the broadcasting and sharing of content requires special attention because the instruments used are neither neutral nor transparent. Today this awareness permeates the CTV, engaged in a reorganization according to the technological paradigms that can better serve all the world's latitudes, and contributes to the breath of catholicity of the Church. I would like to thank you, Msgr Dario Edoardo Viganò, from my heart and all the staff of CTV, for your ability to create relationships with the different realities around the world, to build bridges, overcoming walls and ditches, and to bring the light of the Gospel. All in accordance with the indication of *Inter Mirifica* which states how in the media world too, effective apostolic action requires "unity of planning and resources" (n. 21). To converge rather than compete should be the strategy of media initiatives in the Catholic world.

3. Lastly, I would like to remind you that you do not carry out a role that is purely documental, "neutral" to events, but you *contribute to drawing the Church closer to the world*, eliminating distances, bringing the the words of the Pope to millions of Catholics, even where often professing the faith is a courageous choice. Thanks to images, CTV is journeying with the Pope to bring Christ to contemporary man's many forms of solitude, by reaching even the "most sophisticated technological peripheries". It is important to remember in your mission that the Church is present in the world of communication, in its many forms of expression, above all in leading people to encounter our Lord Jesus. In fact it is only the encounter with Jesus that can transform the heart and story of mankind. I thank you and I encourage you to move forward with honesty in your

witness to the Gospel, in dialogue with a world that needs to be heard, to be understood, and also needs to receive the message of true life.

Let us pray to the Lord that he make us capable of reaching the hearts of men and women, overcoming the barriers of diffidence, and we ask Our Lady to keep watch over our steps as “pilgrims of communication”. I ask you to pray for me, I need it! I invoke the intercession of St Clare, Patroness of television, and I accompany you with my Blessing.

From the Vatican, 18 October 2013

FRANCIS