

We know that Pope Francis is a superb communicator. His knowledge and intuition about the impact that the media have in today's society is reflected in his documents, exhortations, interviews, comments and also in his gestures. Many wonder and ask themselves “what is the secret of the Pope's success as a communicator?”

Someone has commented that perhaps the "secret" lies precisely is the fact that he puts the human person, at the center. In his first Message for the Day of Social Communications, he wrote that the parable of the Good Samaritan "is also a parable of the communicator" because whoever communicates "**draws near**".

With words and gestures, Francis tells us that it is necessary to "take risks" in order to communicate, risk for others, as the man from Samaria did on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Only in this way, in fact, by recognizing *ourselves* as *sisters and brothers* can we build a better future, a world that is worthy of our common humanity.

On November 12, 2022 Pope Francis spoke to communicators saying that

“The contribution of communication is precisely that of making possible this communal dimension, this relational capacity, this vocation to connections. And, therefore, we understand that it is the task of communication to promote closeness, to give a voice to those who are excluded, to attract attention to what we normally reject and ignore. Communication is, so to speak, the *craft of connections*, within which the voice of God resonates and makes itself heard”

This is the context in which UISG seeks to bring together those whose ministry is that of communication within religious congregations. Theirs is the task of communicating the beauty of the vocation of a consecrated person and the richness of each charism and spirituality which nourishes the congregation’s mission and ministry. Both the communicators and those who minister put the person at the centre, reaching out particularly to those who are on the margins of life suffering and forgotten. The communicator and the sisters and brothers in ministry can promote closeness and help us to draw near so that we hear, see, touch, taste the cries of the poor and neglected.

Seeing that Pope Francis reminds us that communication is the craft of connections, it seems important to us at the International Union of Superiors

General that we work together across congregations, that we create vibrant networks that communicate the dignity of the human person and the mission given to us all to build a better future, worthy of our common humanity. Communicators within religious congregations have skills and capacities to share; experiences and insights to nourish one another. Casting out their nets, using different media – communicators will offer different insights into how the message of Jesus inspires many to work and to pray so that all find a deeper meaning and purpose in life.

The ministry of the communicator is one that holds the possibility of nurturing, challenging, questioning, enlightening and inspiring. Words, gestures, symbols, photos can all carry meanings and messages to be explored. But it is together as a community of communicators in dialogue, in reflection, in conversation, in discernment with others that the way forward will unfold. We are excited to being this journey and look forward to First International Meeting of Communicators for Religious life. May this particular synodal journey be a blessed and graced encounter for all?

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