



Chapter 9

Christian Life and the Media



- After posting any content on social media, why do we continuously check for 'likes' and 'comments' on it?
- If we believe in 'You shall not kill,' do we ever wish for one character to kill another when we watch a movie where two characters clash? If so, why?
- Do you believe that everything you see and hear in the news is true? What makes you think this way?

Media are the companions of modern humans. Even if we close the windows and doors of our homes, media enters like uninvited guests without our knowledge. They influence our perspectives and become one of the key factors shaping our lives.



The Mystical Power of the Media

Media serve as constantly open windows to human emotions and thoughts, regardless of day or night. The world of media and communication devices that influence us is vast, encompassing books, publications, newspapers, radio, telephones, television, cinema, computers, smartphones, and the internet. The emergence of the internet was a revolutionary explosion in the field of information and knowledge, the emergence of new media and social media has originated

We must use the media to reveal the God in whom we believe and love.

(Catechetical Directory 217)

In the modern era, two major theories have been formulated regarding the influence of media on human life: the Cultivation Theory and the Mean World Syndrome.

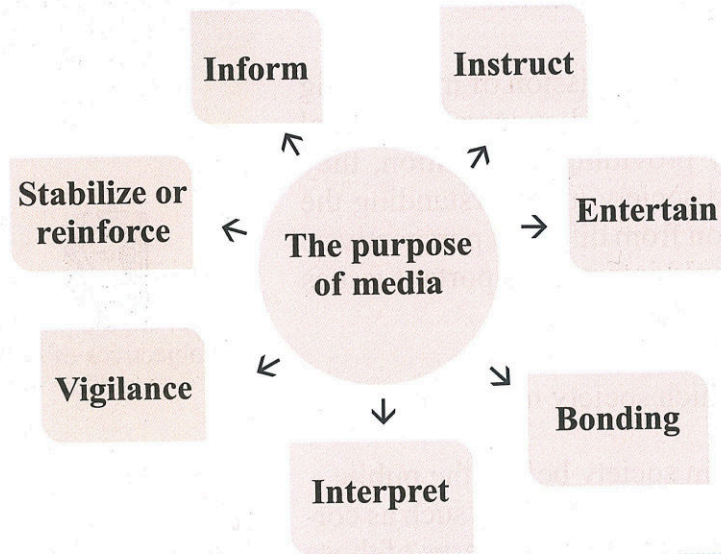
According to the cultivation theory, even if we do not imitate certain characters or values in real life, we identify with them when we see them on television or in movies. Through repeated exposure, these elements take root in our minds.

This influence is most significant in areas such as obscenity, violence, communalism, and extremist ideologies. The media, especially television and cinema, shape our perception of society with a view that is often filled with violence and danger.

from the infinite possibilities of the internet.

Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X, and Snapchat, etc., have shaped an entire "digital culture" (Catechetical Directory 213). This "digital culture" has now become an integral part of our daily lives.

- It brings events happening anywhere in the world before us instantly.
- It defines right and wrong according to its own interests.
- It influences what should be accepted and what should be rejected.
- It convinces us to believe that this is the truth.
- It even presents assumptions as realities.



1. The Provide Knowledge (Inform)

- Convey information about events happening around the world at the very moment they occur.
- Mold life visions and views.
- Determine the agenda of life.

2. Teach (Instruct)

- Develop and deepen knowledge.
- Open a vast repository of wisdom before students.

Our mission is to actively utilize the media, which unveils a great world of knowledge before humanity, to impart Gospel values (Catechetical Directory, 214).

Media cannot become a true teacher that imparts knowledge by recognizing and responding to the unique characteristics of a student's capabilities and nature.

The concept associated with the theory of cultivation is 'Mean World Syndrome.' According to this, those who continuously watch violent and obscene content on television, cinema, and social media especially minors and young people are more likely to imitate violence and engage in sexual experiences as if they were common behaviors that everyone participates in. There is also a significantly increased tendency to perceive the world as a highly dangerous place and to view people as inherently violent. This is one of the reasons why individuals often react aggressively in ordinary situations. "Human society has the right to receive information about events affecting individuals or communities in a manner suited to their respective circumstances" (IM 5).



Take multiple newspapers from a particular day. Read aloud in class how these three newspapers report the same news. Identify and analyze the differences in their reporting. With the teacher's assistance, discuss how the general perspectives and standpoints of the newspapers influence the way they present the news.

3. Entertain

- Provide moments of relaxation amidst a busy life.
- Bring joy, inspiration, and encouragement to human hearts.
- Preserve and express the arts, music, dance, drama, and cinema as integral parts of each nation's culture without losing their uniqueness.
- Become ambassadors of culture in foreign lands.

4. Bonding

- Create, sustain, and nurture human relationships.
- Facilitate communication, connection, and friendship with individuals in distant places.
- Strengthen personal, family, and social relationships, fostering unity and growth in togetherness.

5. Interpret

The media must fulfill the essential mission of interpreting events, news, and circumstances based on moral and legal foundations. Beyond merely providing information, they should assist individuals and society in understanding the significance of the information from different perspectives. Editorials in print media should interpret important issues and bring them to public attention.

6. Vigilance

- Highlight the issues on which society must remain vigilant.
- Expose the disorders within society before the public.
- The media must be vigilant regarding issues such as corruption in socio-political spheres, crimes, biases of those in power, and the trade and use of prohibited substances like drugs.

7. Stabilise or Reinforce

- Remind the public of news and information that may be forgotten or not vivid in mind. Keep them alive in public consciousness.
- Promote desirable new approaches.

Negative Influences of the Media

The media can lead the human mind toward noble thoughts and refined perspectives on life. However, when commercial interests of the media cross their limits, an immoral and anarchic society is born.

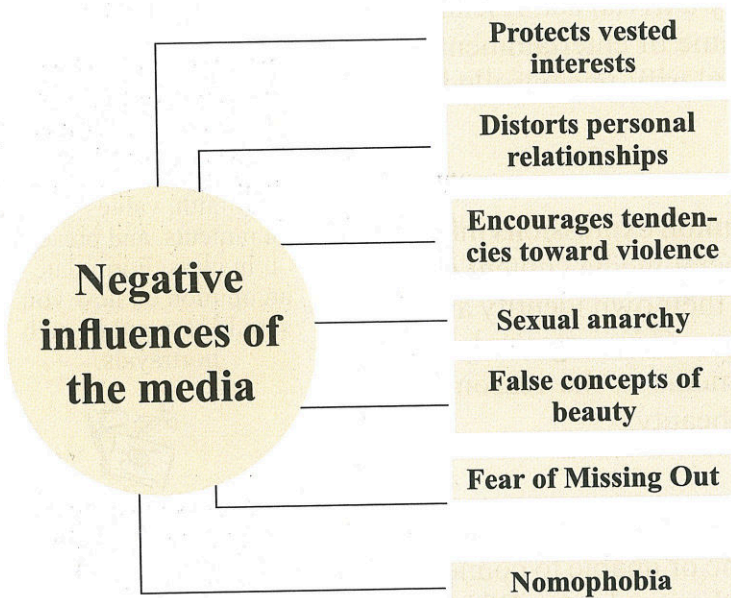
The first proclamation of faith and its deepening are not possible without the means of communication media. If these means, which human efforts continuously perfect as a force, are not utilized, one will have to stand guilty before the Lord. It is through them that the church preaches the message that one needs to protect from the rooftops (EV 45).



What are the primary objectives of the media?



Justin Rosenstein, who created the "Like" button on Facebook, removed apps from his mobile that were consuming his time. In his opinion, this is a driving force for "time poorly spent." This reduces our mental well-being and turns us into beggars thirsting for others' "approval" (approval beggars).



Protecting vested interests

Just as a farmer sows seeds for the harvest he desires and nurtures them, the media fill visual and auditory content with their intended interests and nurture them in human minds through continuous repetition. Those who are repeatedly exposed to media content filled with violence and obscenity especially minors and young people may begin to perceive these actions as "things that everyone does," increasing the likelihood of imitation.

Distorting Personal Relationships

Media, especially social networking platforms, instead of fostering personal relationships, alienate people from one another. Instead of seeing and maintaining relationships in a "real" sense, people are confined to "virtual" relationships.

Encourages tendencies toward violence

Studies have shown that continuous exposure to violent media content and frequent engagement with such games can create violent tendencies in individuals.

Sexual Anarchy

Those who continuously watch sexually explicit programs are led toward distorted sexual behaviors. Such indulgence



Discuss and identify the steps to be taken according to cultivation theory to spread Christian values in your families, educational institutions, and the wider society. Based on the ideas thus identified, create a social media group for your class where only content aligned with Christian values is posted, and actively participate in it.

Many people, especially children, think that whatever they see in the media is real. If in the name of entertainment violence is glorified, antisocial behavior is approved of, and human sexuality is trivialized, this is a sin both of those in the media who are responsible and also of those supervisory authorities that ought to put a stop to it. (Youcat 460)



What dangers does the misuse of media lead to?

in sexuality leads to a generalization that "everyone does it," reducing sexuality to merely a trivial act. It leads to the degradation of values in the name of entertainment. Some media content and celebrities glorify uncontrolled sexual behavior and drug use.

False Concepts of Beauty

Continuous advertisements, opinion expressions influenced by established interests, and social media content can lead individuals to despise and hate their own identity and body while desiring something else. This negatively affects a person's self-esteem. Such media is the reason for the formation of false concepts of beauty.

Fear of Missing Out

Uncontrolled thoughts about missing out on social media opportunities when one is offline or unable to connect with others is dangerous. Such thoughts can lead to FOMO. Unchecked FOMO can result in sleeplessness, a decline in overall quality of life, emotional distress, anxiety, and a lack of emotional regulation.

Nomophobia

"Nomophobia" is the abbreviation for "no-mobile-phone phobia." It refers to the excessive fear that arises due to excessive mobile phone use when one loses their phone, does not have it in hand, runs out of battery, exhausts their recharge, or lacks network connectivity. This fear can lead to severe consequences such as extreme anxiety, irregular breathing, difficulty concentrating, fear, and rejection.

The media play a major role in the social disintegration occurring in the world today. It has reached a stage where media dictate and control aspects such as dietary habits, clothing styles, language usage, and religious beliefs. Media also have a significant influence in disrupting human moral consciousness by promoting sexual anarchy, moral relativism, and excessive influence of advertisements. Rather than awakening the divine nature within humanity, today's media culture largely strives to stimulate its beastly instincts. Therefore, as Christians, we must be aware of the negative influences of the media.



Prepare an investigative report at the group level on recent films that oppose Christian faith, values, and sacraments, and present it in class. Formulate an opinion on how you should respond to such portrayals.



Discuss the dangers posed by the media (Youcat, 460).

The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good. Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity: The proper exercise of this right demands that the content of the communication be true and - within the limits set by justice and charity - complete. Further, it should be communicated honestly and properly. This means that in the gathering and in the publication of news, the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man should be upheld. (CCC 2494)

Things to Keep in Mind While Using Media

The Word of God reminds us: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be" (Mt 6:21). Let us examine some aspects to consider while using media.

1. Approach Media with a Critical Perspective

Individuals living in an audio-visual media culture should be able to discern what is good and what is bad. It is essential to reject media content that contradicts Christian values and to encourage others to do the same. We must be able to make the right choices regarding what to watch, listen to, and read. Parents, faith formators, and pastors have a responsibility to provide clear guidance to the younger generation in this regard.

2. Be Vigilant Against Media Enslavement

We must remain vigilant about the potential for media enslavement that can arise from the use of audiovisual media. Media consumes a significant portion of our valuable time. Although the information and entertainment obtained through these sources may be beneficial, becoming enslaved to them in a way that negatively affects studies, work, family relationships, prayer, and other essential aspects of life leads to failure in life.

3. Use Media as a Means of Good

We must strive to use media as a means of good (CCC 2494). While it is necessary to reject harmful media productions, we cannot ignore the potential to use media for good. Based on the principle of overcoming evil with good, we must utilize media to promote moral values, literature, and art that contribute to the holistic growth of humanity. Ultimately, the goal of media should be the glorification of God and the well-being of humanity.

4. Adhere to Cyber Laws

Cybercrimes are offenses committed through new media and the internet. These crimes violate divine commandments and moral values. Cybercrimes, which impact the spiritual, physical, mental, and cultural aspects of human life, are evils that destroy the moral consciousness and well-being of society. Therefore, everyone must remain vigilant and refrain from engaging in such punishable offenses.

Three Sieves

When conveying information, one must use Socrates' "Three Sieves."

- Is it true?
- Is it kind?
- Is it helpful?

This applies to journalists and those posting information on social media as well. Revealing the truth must be done with prudence and in the context of love for others. (Youcat 457)



Gal 1:10

Cyber Crimes

- Phone tapping,
- Use of viruses and malware,
- Hacking,
- Pornography,
- Stealing personal information,
- Cyber defamation,
- Online financial fraud, etc.



Explain the things to be mindful of when using media?

Each country has its own cyber laws related to the use of media, especially internet-based social networking platforms. You must understand the cyber laws of the country in which you reside and act accordingly.

Media and Social Responsibility

Today, since media greatly influence the human mind, social responsibility holds the utmost importance for both media and media professionals. Society has the right to receive information based on truth, freedom, justice, and compassion (CCC 2494). Those working in the field of media must adhere to the principles of justice, love, and morality (CCC 2495). Therefore, media and those involved in the media sector must pay attention to the following matters.

- The media must be willing to withdraw from programs and presentations that do not conform to the moral standards of society.
- Public awareness must be awakened against social evils such as superstitions, harmful customs, and caste-based atrocities.
- Efforts to eliminate corruption and nepotism in society should be encouraged.
- In the rapid expansion of commercialization and professionalism, morality must be preserved without compromise.
- The media should act as the conscience of society rather than as protectors of established interests.
- By presenting the truth objectively, the media should be able to guide the nation towards progress and goodness.
- The media should emphasize an alternative culture that leads people toward a genuine sense of values.

Media and Evangelization

Mass communication media are highly beneficial for enkindling and nurturing the Christian faith, as well as for facilitating the proclamation of the Word.

To transform media into tools that foster Christian life:

- Newspapers, magazines, radio, television, mobile phones, cinema, the internet, and social media should all be utilized for the proclamation of the Word.
- Media that incorporate values that contribute to the spiritual and cultural growth of humanity should be encouraged.

The way advertisements attract us

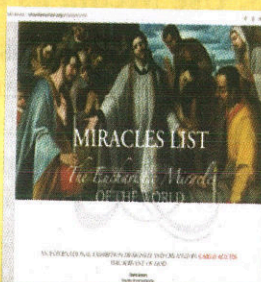
1. Capture attention
2. Arouse interest
3. Create desire
4. Motivate action



What should we do to transform the media into instruments that nurture Christian life?



What are the key aspects that media and media professionals should focus-on in social commitment?



Drawing inspiration from the life example of Blessed Carlo Acutis, prepare a project report as a group on how new media can be effectively used for evangelization and present it in class.

- The service of those skilled in the field of media should be effectively utilized in various ways for missionary activities (IM 13).
- In discussions within the media that oppose faith, a firm and proactive stance should be taken in favor of the Christian faith.

Media should be regarded as gifts from God and as elements that unite people in fraternity (Pope Francis, Message for World Communications Day, January 24, 2019). The Mother Church recognizes that if media are used properly, they can become powerful aids to humanity. This is because they greatly contribute to mental relaxation, intellectual formation, the expansion of God's Kingdom, and its affirmation (IM 2).



My Convictions

- I must use media with the intention of glorifying God and promoting the well-being of humanity.
- Not everything seen and heard in the media is entirely true. I should discern between good and evil in the media and accept only what is good.
- Media should be utilized for evangelization and the betterment of society.



Let us read the Word of God

Acts of the Apostles
Chapters 13-16



Let us illuminate our hearts

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect"
(Rom 12:2).

My Resolution

I will use social media only in accordance with Christian values and will encourage others to do the same.



How can media be used for evangelization?

Duties of Youth and Parents

- Practice moderation and self-control in the use of media.
- Critically evaluate media content.
- Discuss with teachers and experts and strive to arrive at the right conclusions.
- Parents must remain constantly vigilant to ensure that content harmful to faith and morality does not enter their homes or influence their children.

(IM 10)