



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 21st ADMINISTRATIVE
SYMPOSIUM OF THE EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION**

Thursday, 3 October 1985

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to greet the participants in the Twenty-first Administrative Symposium of the European Broadcasting Union. You have come to Rome during these days to study the economic and organizational problems associated with broadcasting. At the same time, you have wished to include in your activities this meeting with the Pope, the universal Pastor of the Catholic Church. I am honoured by your presence and I welcome you most cordially to the Vatican.

1. As we meet today, I am reminded of the *tremendous potential for good* which radio and television possess, and which is constantly increasing. At the same time, I am aware that the opposite possibility is also there, the ever greater capacity for evil, because of the temptation to use these sophisticated means of social communications in ways that distort the truth, or which offend the dignity and freedom of the human person.

Thus a truly heavy responsibility rests on your shoulders. You hold a privileged position in our technological society. Your decisions and activities can greatly shape the education and the cultural development of vast numbers of people. You can significantly influence the thinking and the modes of work and leisure of present and future generations.

2. The transmission of information, and even programmes aimed primarily at leisure and light entertainment, always have an impact on the moral and spiritual values of the human person. That is why I stated earlier this year in a message for the Nineteenth World Communications Day: "Information cannot remain indifferent to *values which touch human existence down to the roots*, such as the primacy of life from the moment of its conception, the moral and spiritual dimension, peace and justice. Information cannot be neutral in the face of problems and situations which on the national and international levels damage the connective fabric of society, such as war, the

violation of human rights, poverty, violence and drugs” (IOANNIS PAULI PP. II *Nuntius scripto datus ob diem ad rectum usum fovendum instrumentorum Communicationis Socialis statutum*, 2, 26 apr. 1985: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, VIII, 1 (1985) 1118).

Your request for this audience today is a sign of your recognition of the impact of television and radio on the minds and hearts of viewers and listeners. I urge you to seek always to place the electronic media at the service of humanity and the good of all. Be attentive to the deeply rooted cultural and religious values of your audiences, for these have a primary influence on the social and interpersonal character of human existence. They determine, to a great extent, the unity and harmony of society. If your efforts serve to strengthen these values, you will be offering an invaluable service to humanity.

3. We who belong to the Catholic Church seek in every age to proclaim the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we seek ever more effective means of carrying out this mission in the world. You can easily understand, then, why we have such great interest in the latest developments in radio and television. We have much to learn from people like yourselves. It is our conviction that the *mass media can and must be employed in the Church's pastoral work* That is why Vatican Radio was established over fifty years ago with the help of Guglielmo Marconi, and it has constantly expanded and improved its services over the years. Many local Churches around the world also have taken advantage of the resources of radio and television in order to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation and to serve God's people in truth and freedom. In obedience to her mission from Christ, the Church welcomes the opportunity to come to know professionals in radio and television and to collaborate with them for the good of all.

I wish to take this occasion therefore to assure you of my genuine interest in your work and in your efforts to promote communication. As you know very well, communication is more than the process of passing on information or stirring up emotions. At its deepest level, it is a personal act of love, a generous giving of self, both mind and heart. May God give you the grace to be good communicators whose work fosters unity and peace. And may he grant abundant blessings to you and your families.

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