



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Social media guide launched for World Communications Day

Media Release

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The Australian Catholic Media Council has launched a resource encouraging parishes to embrace Pope Francis' invitation to share the Gospel story – online and in person – as the Church in Australia marks World Communications Day this Sunday, May 17.

Pope Francis' message for World Communications Day 2020, released in January, focuses on the importance of storytelling, including the sharing of stories between generations.

Adapting the theme of storytelling to the current communications context, the Media Council has today launched the *Guide to Social Media for Parishes*.

“The Gospels have been described as ‘the greatest story ever told’, and certainly must be the story told most often,” Archbishop Patrick O’Regan, the Bishop Delegate for Media, wrote in the guide’s foreword.

“But the story of the Gospel today isn’t told only through those ancient texts. It is told in the life of our Catholic families and communities. It is told in the vibrant life of a parish.

“Social media is a tool through which the stories of our communities can be told using a range of mediums. At its best, social media helps build human relationships, augments the human interaction that we have IRL – “in real life”.

The guide explains general principles for the creation and management of social media in parishes, many of which would be applicable to other ministries and agencies. It focuses on Facebook and Instagram, the two platforms considered most suitable for parishes.

Completed in February 2020, the guide was amended in recent weeks to reflect the changed online environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additions include information about Facebook Live and other live-streaming services for Masses and other parts of Church life.

Archbishop O’Regan, citing the past three popes, said the Church recognises the great opportunities that the internet has created, but is well aware of the dangerous and destructive behaviour also present online.

“The Church is called to harness the good of social media, being faithful witnesses in the content we share and in the ways that we use digital technology,” he said.

Debra Vermeer, chair of the Australian Catholic Media Council, said communications and World Communications Day is not solely the task of those who earn a living in that field.

“The work of spreading the Gospel is one that all Catholics, all Christians, have a duty to undertake,” Mrs Vermeer said.

“Our witness, through our actions and through our spoken and written words, can tell the ancient story that is ever new – especially as we journey through this season of Easter.”

Click [here](#) to download the *Guide to Social Media for Parishes*.