

if these tools could talk
you scare me.



We are wired to connect

We care about you. deeply.

FIND the TRIBE

theology of Social Media

Preach the Gospel always [all-ways] ... if necessary use words.

ReMessage the Message

to the CYBER Body of CHRIST

LISTEN!

A culture that doesn't change is dead.

A church that doesn't change is empty.

Power = Social media



LINE/PLANE

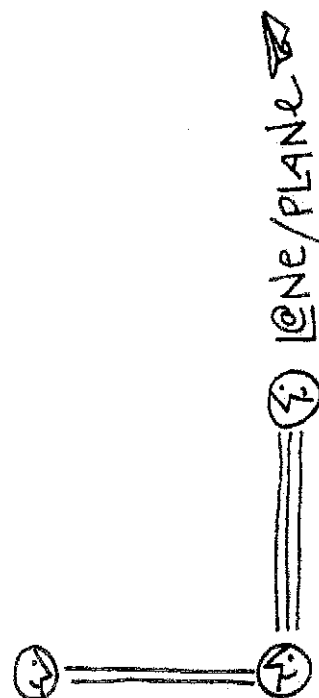
elaine Menard

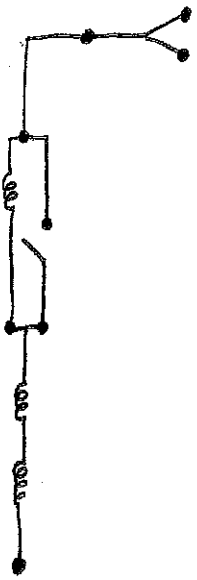
Theology of Social Media

BORN ON: 1 December 2012 in a wide variety of locations in the US.

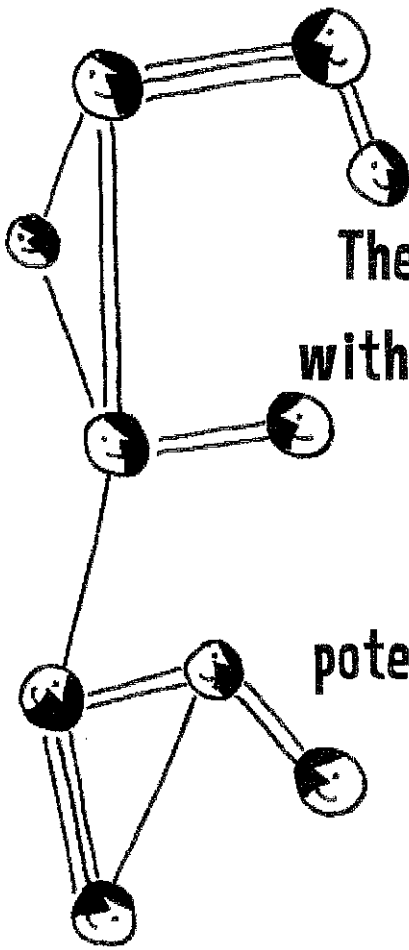
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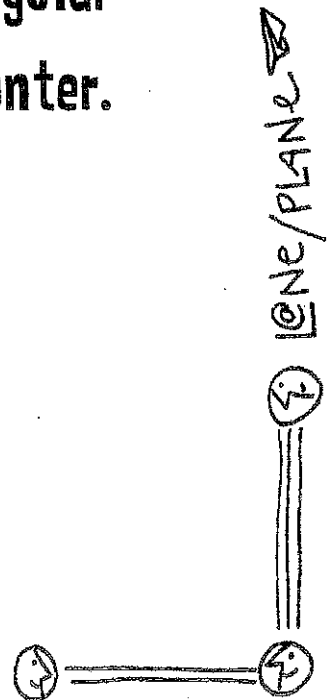




Our Goal



The real goal here is to connect with people that we never see in person so we can build a relationship that could potentially result in the regular face-to-face encounter.





Two Gaping Questions

Learning and living faith just don't seem to be priorities anymore. The ministry landscape has shifted under our feet and it's hard to know what to do next.

As ministers, we are always on the lookout for the perfect program that will renew enthusiasm for God and church in people's hearts. But the answers aren't easy. There are no magic programs or ideas that will instantly set people on fire for faith again.

Two huge questions consume the forefront of our ministry thinking these days. The first:

How do we connect with people and get them excited about faith?

It's a matter of going back to the basics. We have to reach out to people one by one just like Jesus did and build the relationships. Relationships are key.

The second question is:

Why should we use social media to do this?

Social media helps us connect. It's an effective and easy way for us to reach into people's lives to hear about what they experience daily. If they allow us in, we have an intimate opportunity to listen and be present to people. Plus, it's inexpensive. Social media tools fit quite nicely into tight church budgets.

More importantly, social media is where people of all ages hang out these days. It is not just reserved for the 20-something crowd and younger. The second fastest growing age group on Facebook is 55+ years-old. Couple that with the average age of an American Catholic parishioner—64 years-old—and we can conclude that many in our parishes are connecting and conversing on Facebook.

Connection is vital.

Social media connects us with others so we can share our stories. Jesus told stories that changed people's hearts and minds and that made them fall in love with him. For 2000 years, the Church has retold these stories in creative ways—cathedrals, music and art—that captured people's imaginations and engaged their spirits. Today, we have an amazing opportunity to tell these stories anew through the use of social media.

This book will help you explore what social media is and how it can be used to tell the stories

LOVE/PLANE



of Jesus and the Church to a new generation and an old one.

Let's go to where people are. Let's meet them in a new context so we can earn the right to listen in on the conversation and be part of their lives.

The 1st WHY

This book is for any disciple in ministry who works to spread the Gospel in these post-modern times of culture and church. If you are new to this calling, you see and understand a world of people who are submerged in an ocean of technology and social media, and you instinctively know the route to get to them.

If you are a seasoned veteran in ministry, then this landscape has shifted under your feet, perhaps quite significantly. Gone are the days of packed Sunday pews and knowing every person in the parish. The up-close-and-personal encounter has changed to hit-and-miss conversations where there are typically more misses than hits.

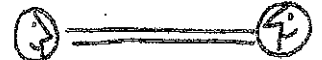
The task at hand is to know, understand, and meet the Body of Christ in this new context. We must learn how to reconnect because the rules—and tools—of engagement are changing, and will continue to change. Not if, but when. In and of itself that knowledge can scare us.

The time to act is now.

We don't need statistics to tell us that overall participation in church is dropping. We see it with our own eyes. But the data confirms it.

- Regular Sunday worship attendance is about 22% in the US.
- Most people who leave the Catholic Church walk away between the ages of 18 and 23.
- 50% of those who leave go to other religions.
- More alarming: 50% become un-affiliated with any religion.

[Find this data at Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports#> and the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate: <http://cara.georgetown.edu/index.html>.]



Why do they leave? Their spiritual needs aren't being met. Basically... they're bored.

We have two options. We can get defensive and say to ourselves—*We're not boring!*—and hope that the situation will self-correct... eventually.

Or we can admit out loud—*We've got to make a change!*— and step up to the plate. Go find the tribe and help them connect to us and to each other. [Read more about tribes in *The WHY.*]

Some may want to complicate the matter with *if's/and's/but's...* we will still be left with those two options: We either connect or don't connect.

You can read this book in about an hour. It is meant to be shared with anyone and everyone. This is for priests and deacons and bishops; paid and volunteer parish staff; youth ministers and DREs; catechists, teachers and parents; parish, finance and stewardship councils; Altar and Rosary societies; sacramental prep and RCIA teams; candidates and catechumens; Catholic school principals, teachers, parents and families; ministries to all language groups—English, Spanish, Korean, Filipino, Chinese, Russian, Polish and more; Eucharistic ministers, lectors and altar servers; music ministers and choirs and liturgists; and adults of all ages—all the people in the pews.

The ministry of being the Body of Christ involves us all.

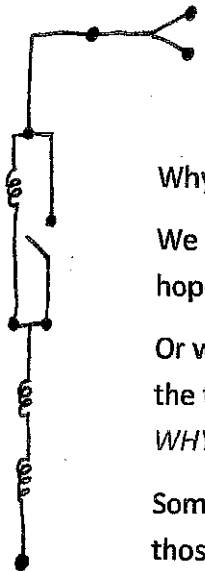
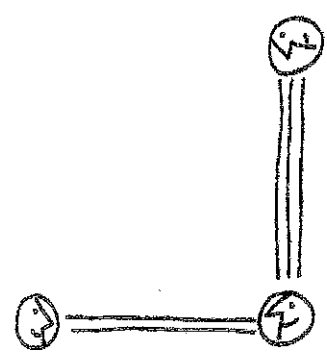
Share these ideas. Chew on them. Disagree with them. Talk about them in your particular context. Have heated discussions.

[Just don't change the original text... and please do give proper credit to the author.]

Once you've had a chance to digest and shape your own opinions and perspectives, call or email and share your discovery so that your insight can be shared with others in a similar situation. Send in your answer to this question: *How will this play out in your ministry setting?*

We can all work together to teach the message and create strategies for achieving your parish ministry goals. Go to LanePlane.com for more.

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Elaine Menardi is a tech-geek and Catholic ministry social media strategist. She solves problems and makes ideas happen. Her prime directive is to connect the Body of Christ online.


She is a seasoned ministry veteran who has served in Catholic parish/diocesan/national youth ministry circles for 23+ years.

She has great expertise working in mission dioceses in rural and small town ministry.

Elaine works with Catholic parishes teaching the theology of social media to help them create strategies that connect the Body of Christ locally and globally.

The ministry ground has shifted significantly during her time in ministry... but she's quick on her feet. She is married to a youth minister/junior high math teacher and they have two Millennial daughters who constantly challenge them to keep up.

You can reach her at: LanePlane.com.

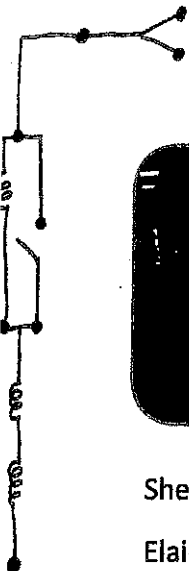
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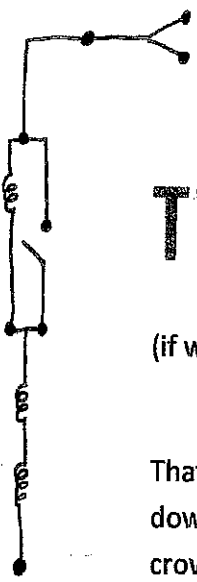
Looking @ New Evangelization from a Different Plane

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Social Media Strategies for Catholic Ministry

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The Parable of the Tech-Geek

(if we told it today...)

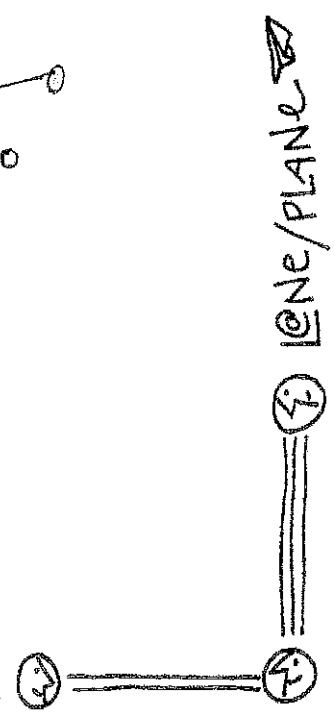
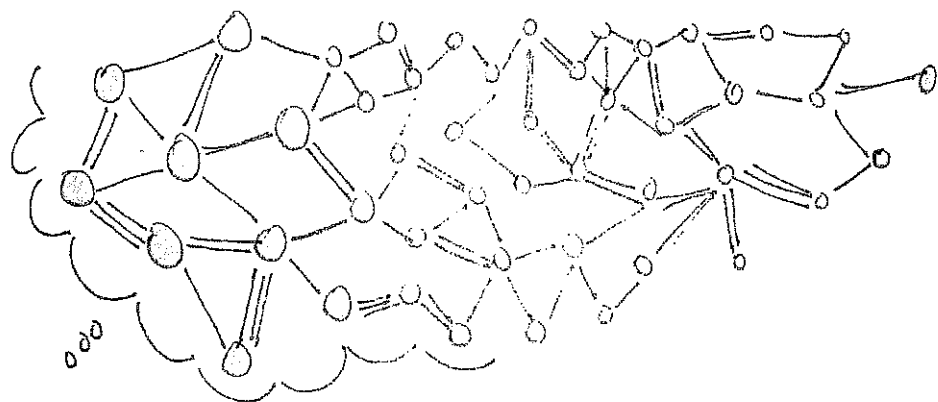
LISTEN!

That same day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down at the neighborhood Starbucks. Such great crowds of coffee-enthusiasts gathered around him that he climbed up on the barista's counter and began teaching them as they sunk into the comfy couches around the cozy room. And he told them many parables.

Listen! A techie logged onto Facebook.

And as he Facebooked, some status updates uploaded onto Twitter where trolls retweeted them using inappropriate hashtags and ate them whole. Other status updates were Instagramed and linked to mobile upload photo albums which had no depth and so they were quickly ignored. Other posts were shocking with foul language and innuendo so they were reported and blocked by FB friends. But some updates were meaningful and uplifting and encouraged many 'Likes', comments and RT's—30, 60 and 100 times over—and went viral!

Let anyone with fingers type and click away!



Connection = Pre-Evangelization aka, Fostering Interest in the Gospel

Evangelization and catechesis are by-products of connection.

If we want to put this in terms of evangelization and catechesis, we should look at the work of connection as missionary work/pre-evangelization/fostering interest in the Gospel. [Read at paragraphs 46-58 in the *General Directory of Catechesis*.]

The process of evangelization, consequently, is structured in stages or "essential moments": missionary activity directed toward non-believers and those who live in religious indifference; initial catechetical activity for those who choose the Gospel and for those who need to complete or modify their initiation; pastoral activity directed toward the Christian faithful of mature faith in the bosom of the Christian community. (GDC 49).

We can make a great case that the "essential moment" in play now is "the missionary activity directed toward those who live in religious indifference."

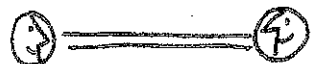
When we help people connect, they evangelize each other. Our goal is to provide the means to connect in the first place.

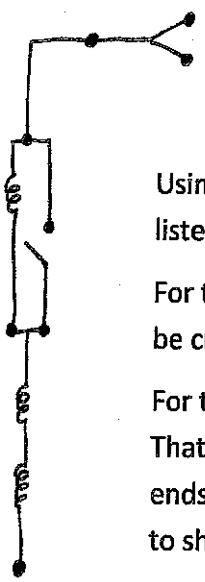
This goes against the grain for people in ministry because we think that we are the primary evangelizers... that we hold the keys to knowing and understanding God and God's work in our lives. But really we don't. We're just mostly preparing the soil.

And in the context of technology and cyberworld, the internet is the soil. Social media tools are the seeds. The blogger/social media editor is the sower. The connections are the seeds sprouting in good soil.

Using these tools for the 'New Evangelization' is the HOW. Before we use the tools, we need to focus on the WHY: *We are the Body of Christ and we need to be connected.* In a lot of cases, we have either lost or not yet earned the right to be heard. We don't want to believe that's true but it is.

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Using social media for evangelization and catechesis will only be successful once people are listening again.

For those who are already listening, we have a pretty good reach. However, we still need to be creative and relevant.

For those who aren't listening, we need to connect. Remember, belonging leads to believing. That's a fundamental shift in attitude for anyone working in ministry because it totally up-ends what we have always done in ministry and how we have done it. As ministers, we need to shift our approach as well.

Connect by telling our stories.

We can use social media to tell our stories. It's really not any different than telling a joke or personal story in a homily or small group. It's almost the same as Jesus sitting around the fire telling parables to the disciples.

We do it all the time in our own lives at family celebrations and holidays... on camping trips with roasted marshmallows... in religious education classrooms and youth ministry groups and a whole gamut of other parish events when we gather as the Body of Christ. The only difference is the platform... it's online storytelling.

As Catholics, we are great storytellers! It's in our DNA. If people hear our story and are enticed by it, they will come and see.

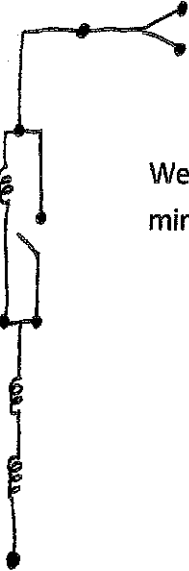
Share the Extraordinary Product

"We have a product which is extraordinary and we have to get our act together to bring it to as many people as possible. The way we [communicate] things at times is a total disaster and we have to be humble and say, 'we need to do better'. We need to start using language that people understand... We need to tell people we are not here to impose, but that we are here to propose."

Charles J. Scicluna
 Auxiliary Bishop-elect of Malta
 Interview with The Sunday Times
 14 October 2012

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We tell stories in order to share our extraordinary product. Spend some time with your ministry team answering these questions:

What extraordinary product do we have to offer?

Why is it so compelling that we want to share it with others?

What do you want to propose?

We're NOT Using Social Media to 'Do' Theology

What is the primary task of Catholic ministry today?

Some would argue that first and foremost, we need to be about evangelization and catechesis.

If people just knew the basic prayers and teachings... if people would just understand why it's important to go to Mass and confession ... if people would just believe in the Real Presence ... then they would have deep faith and know God and we could all return to the full glory of the Catholic Church's yesteryears. Too often the proper solution is thought to be: *Reach out to them and teach them the contents of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

I would argue differently. I think the primary challenge today is inviting people to the relationship... with Jesus Christ and with each other.

The ultimate goal is to help people get connected or re-connected, as the case may be.

Even without the hard data, anecdotally we can tell that regular participation in weekly liturgy and other parish activities is declining. People just aren't there anymore. The numbers don't lie.

It's tempting to view social media as another platform to preach. It's easy. It's free. And it's everywhere. Use it this way and we will miss the boat.

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Unless we approach social media with a different mindset we won't be able to harness its full power for the work of our ministry.

What are we talking about here? First what it's not.

Not: theology *and* social media. Not: theology *on* social media. Not: using social media *to talk about or do* theology.

The theology of social media is very simple.

It's Body of Christ theology. As Catholic Church, we know Body of Christ theology. It is all about relationship. We should be able to do social media well because we know how to do relationship.

We are all connected. One bread... one body... one community.

That is a simple idea in theory... but a very hard idea in practice.

Social media itself is just the tool. But the theology of social media reaches to the heart of our faith: *We are connected through Jesus in the Body of Christ*. And how does the Body of Christ live and express itself in the world today? Largely through social media.

Technology and social media give us unprecedented ways to connect with people in our parishes, across our dioceses and even across the world.

As we delve into the greater implications about how to use these tools to accomplish the tasks of ministry, we start to see the greater possibilities for spreading the Good News. The potential is virtually unlimited.

But it all comes down to the connection.

It's about being a relevant presence in people's lives in the places where they congregate. Today... that's online more than it is in the traditional parish settings. People take their web connection with them wherever they go via smartphones, iPads and tablets.

The theology of social media is really what we have known and lived in our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. It is all of us acting as simple evangelizers in our everyday interactions with people. It's the understanding that everyone is connected and needed to complete the mystical Body of Christ on earth.

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The classic quote from St. Teresa of Avila fits here:

Christ has no body but yours. No hand or feet on earth but yours.

When we illustrate that with technology and social media tools, it makes the universal Body of Christ dynamic and vibrant in our midst in a totally new way. It is simply amazing.

The gift of social media is a fresh new entry point in people's everyday lives. The opportunity to meet them where they gather—in their homes, activities, friendships—in the places and spaces where real life happens.

That is a tremendous opportunity... and responsibility.

If we show up in their living rooms with pious, preachy words... even online... we are nothing short of the Bible-thumping, door-to-door evangelists who get doors slammed in their faces, rejected without a second thought. On Facebook you will be unfriend-ed or block-ed, on Twitter you will be unfollow-ed, and on LinkedIn you will be unconnected. At the very least, you will be the ignored, unopened email.

If we are to use social media to our greatest benefit, we have to go in with the mindset of creating and nurturing real relationships. We have to earn the right to be heard.

It's back to the basics of Relational Ministry 101. The connections we create can be supported by social media and potentially help open up a personal one-on-one relationship.

Just for a moment, let's compare traditional ways we have connected with people to the new ways:

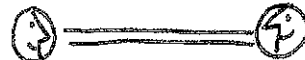
Traditional Connections

- Sunday Mass
- Parish bulletins
- Parish events
- Youth ministry nights
- RE classes
- Service projects/soup kitchens
- Universal church documents and news

New Ways to Connect

- Blogs
- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- YouTube—Vlogs

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Should we abandon the traditional ways? Absolutely not! But we do need to make some intentional connections between the two columns.

We need to reimagine, maybe reinvent how to reach people when we can't connect in the traditional ways. We must be aware that when they are not gathered with us in person, they are present—and can be reached—in the new ways.

We Are Wired to Connect

Why is relationship so important today?

For two reasons I think.

First, we are more isolated than ever these days in spite of these social media tools. A lot of people will be quick to point to the evils of technology as the culprit, illustrating the

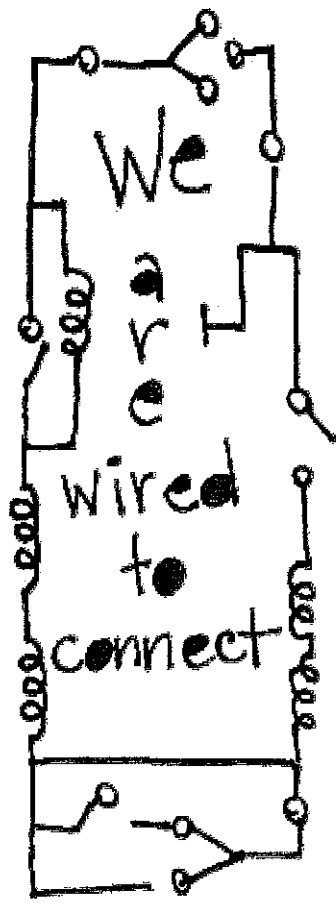
ridiculousness of seeing two teenagers texting each other in the same room... or a couple at dinner together glued to their smartphones instead of engaging in conversation. No doubt, technology's accessibility has changed the nature of our relationships in profound and sometimes not altogether healthy ways.

But I think there's also a higher level factor at work here.

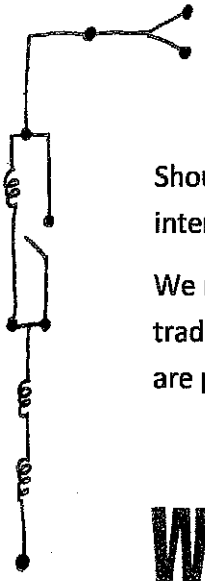
Instant access via technology has made the world a global village. We know this and experience it daily. More easily than ever before we are able to peek right inside someone else's life to see, to hear, to vicariously experience another world viewpoint. That can be a really cool thing... and it makes us feel educated, intelligent, cultured, and virtuous.

But at some point it becomes overwhelming.

Too often we compare our own lives with someone else's and when we fall short, we feel inadequate. When we supersede, we become arrogant. If we are honest, seldom is it a comparison to search for common ground.



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Technology has given us so many entry points to highlight our differences that its effect on the psyche has been to show us how uniquely individual each of us are.

How often do you see a homemade video or a photo or a status update proclaiming someone's amazing awesomeness? [Google "I am awesome" to do a quick research study with over 1 billion hits.]

The paradox here: we feel more isolated than ever in our own uniqueness. There is a grander, higher, deeper level of competition between people via technology than any World Series/BCS/World Cup game could match. The tool that should be helping us to feel connected might actually be making us feel more alone.

[Read more from Pew Internet and American Life Project: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/18--Social-Isolation-and-New-Technology.aspx>.]

The second reason is simple: Human beings are wired to connect. We are wired for meaningful relationships, yet too often social media is used to create superficial relationships.

Outside of any relationship we don't really know who we are or what or why we're created. We find our identity through our relationships. Other people mirror us back to ourselves... in good and bad ways... and we either accept this image or reject it. We grow from someone who mirrors back a loving image or we wither from a negative image.

The Significant Other

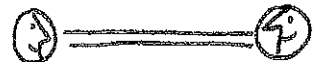
This is why it's so important and valuable to have a significant other in your life.

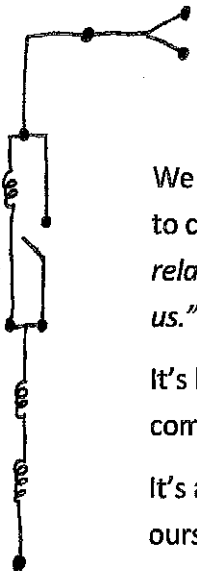
"Without 'some significant other' naming us, we have a very fragile sense of ourselves. Without a significant other who is also 'The Significant Other' we are burdened with being our own center and circumference." (Things Hidden 57)

If we have no grounded center, then our own center shifts every time a new superstar of our favorite variety shows up on the scene... be it an athlete, a singer, an author, an actor, etc., and we fall back into isolation.

There is one face that we can turn and re-turn to for definition and validation—the face of God. That desire sets up the whole relationship thing... because God is Trinity, *the* connection, *the* relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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We are made in this image. We are wired to connect with each other because we are wired to connect with God. *"How we relate to God reveals how we relate to people. And how we relate to people is an almost infallible indicator of how we relate to God and let God relate to us."* (Things Hidden 56)

It's basic to our Catholic faith. Connection comes from the image of the Trinity. God is a communion of persons—Father, Son and Spirit.

It's a huge risk to live in communion. We open ourselves to accountability and make ourselves vulnerable to heartache. And still we enter into relationships. Most people do anyway. Because we have that inherent, human-nature need to connect with each other. That is so important to us that we're willing to risk being in relationship with a significant other and The Significant Other.

We can and should use technology and social media to help people make those connections deeper and more meaningful.

Communication vs. Connection

Experts say we receive upwards of 35,000 messages each day. Most people speak about 16,000 words per day. Then add in how many more come in texts/emails/snail mail, etc.

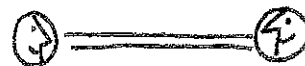
Talk is easy. Everybody talks. Talk is cheap. So is preaching. The question is: How do you make it count?

How do we really communicate with others? More than just passing on information, how do we connect?

Back in the Day

In the early days of social media, we had Web 1.0. Basically, everyone rushed to create some sort of web presence and typically that involved giving the world general information about who you were and what you did. Websites were really more like electronic bulletin boards. Information was communicated in plain vanilla ways.

Then the internet evolved, and along came Web 2.0. The whole medium changed with the



invention of online buying, social media and blogs. Suddenly, people were able to respond to the information, not merely consume it. It became a two-way conversation. It became connection.

Web 1.0 was the one-way communication or 'push' of information. Web 2.0 changed the dynamic to a two-way connection by allowing people to talk back and engage in the conversation.

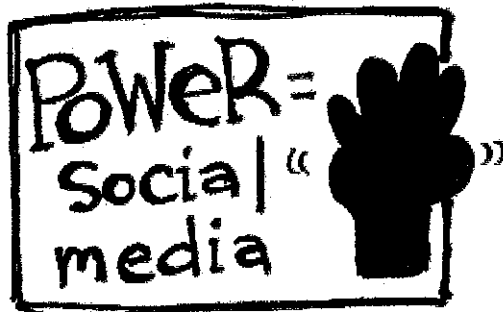
Social media took us from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0.

{ *We shifted from monologue to dialogue to multi-logue.* }

The Power of Social Media

We have witnessed firsthand the power of social media as it helped to :

- Overthrow governments. In February 2011, the Egyptian people told their president of 30 years, Hosni Mubarak: *It's time for a change.*
- Scoop the news. In May 2011, news of the death of Osama bin Laden raced across Twitter before it appeared on CNN several minutes later. Tweets were already being sent at a rate of 4000/minute while President Obama was announcing the news to the world on television.
- Topple public figures who make bad choices, i.e., Congressman Anthony Weiner scandal in June 2011 and Australian Olympic swimmers who were punished for posting inappropriate Facebook photos in June 2012.



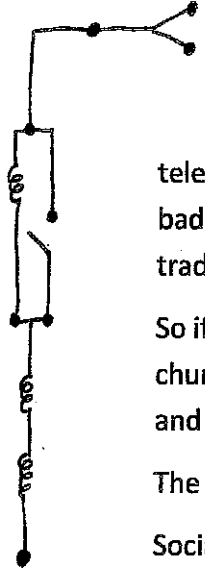
There is a lot of fear among ministry professionals about what can happen on social media because of stories like these.

So we need to pay attention to what we are doing: to think carefully before we click *Send* or *Post*; to try to envision how other people will react/respond/interpret what we put out there. If we use care and prudence, then we can minimize the impact and the fear.

Like any kind of tool—face-to-face conversations, newspapers, parish bulletins, homilies,

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television, radio, advertising, phone calls and the like—social media can be used for good or bad. We have to use the same kind of care with social media that we already use with traditional media.

So if we want to reach people—all people, but especially those that we want to see in our churches and parishes but don't—we need to be using social media to connect with them and to talk with them.

The modern-day call is to be fishers of people... to go get them one-by-one. Like Jesus did.

Social media gives us an effective and inexpensive option for trying to reconnect with people. It's the new 'drop-your-nets-and-come-follow-me' call.

An Integral Part of Human Life

Pope Benedict also recognizes that the internet is “contributing to the development of new and more complex intellectual and spiritual horizons”. The internet has opened up a higher level of personal sophistication to everyone. New media challenges all of us in ministry to evolve in our understanding as well as our practices.

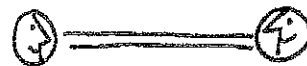
New horizons are now open that were until recently unimaginable; they stir our wonder at the possibilities offered by these new media and, at the same time, urgently demand a serious reflection on the significance of communication in the digital age. This is particularly evident when we are confronted with the extraordinary potential of the internet and the complexity of its uses. As with every other fruit of human ingenuity, the new communications technologies must be placed at the service of the integral good of the individual and of the whole of humanity. If used wisely, they can contribute to the satisfaction of the desire for meaning, truth and unity which remain the most profound aspirations of each human being.

I would like then to invite Christians, confidently and with an informed and responsible creativity, to join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible. This is not simply to satisfy the desire to be present, but because this network is an integral part of human life. The web is contributing to the development of new and more complex intellectual and spiritual horizons, new forms of shared awareness. In this field too we are called to proclaim our faith that Christ is God, the Savior of humanity and of history, the one in whom all things find their fulfillment.

Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 45th World Communications Day

June 5, 2011

ONE/PLANE



Marketing Is a Dirty Word

Say the word 'marketing' and many people will finish your sentence with 'and sales'. Unfortunately, our society's mindset has come to associate marketing almost exclusively with promoting a product for profit. And using 'church' and 'marketing' in the same breath, can make us cringe. We cry out: *"We have never, do not now, nor will we ever be 'selling' faith."*

And yet... we are selling faith. Not for money. Not for profit. But we would like people to invest some time and energy... right?

Marketing makes us cringe as ministry people because we immediately think of deceptive tactics, dishonest methods, annoying salespeople. We want none of that represented in our churches. Agreed. But those are merely stereotypes that hopefully we have not experienced in parishes during our years of church ministry.

Our goal isn't to use slick and shiny business marketing that drains people's wallets or cashes in on their souls. Our goal is to communicate and connect with people. Our goal is to be authentic in faith.

Our goal is to tell people how being part of the church makes their lives better.

We shouldn't do bad marketing and we really shouldn't do poor marketing... like bulletins with typos or glossy photos of people who don't actually belong to our parishes. But we still need to communicate with our people.

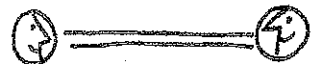
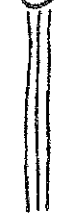
Marketing is an inherently business term and, as such, is linked to the idea of making money. So it doesn't feel like it fits with church work or language. But what if we were to look at it from the angle of making disciples?

Our marketing goal is to communicate and draw attention to the act of disciple-making. We are not selling a product.

We are introducing the person of Jesus.

And we want that person to be real. Could we use our God-given creativity to put out an effective, clear, and beautiful message about Jesus?

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Afraid the Message Will Change

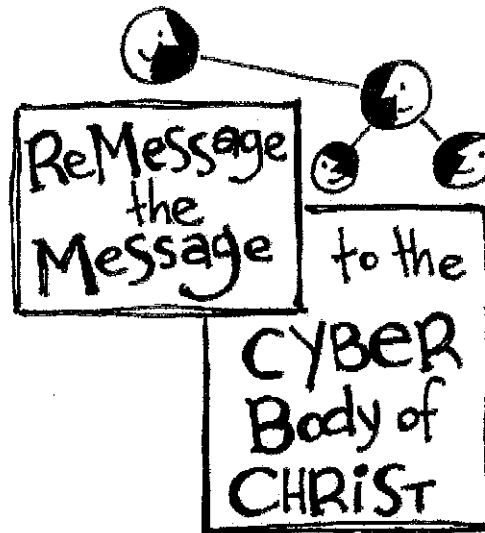
The staunchest opposition to change in the Catholic Church... any kind of change... is:

We are afraid that *the message will change*.

The message, aka, the Good News, doesn't change. Never has. Never will. The Good News always stays the same.

But the presentation of the message has to change with the signs of the times.

We must: Re-message the same message!



To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.

Pastoral Constitution On The Church In The Modern World

Gaudium Et Spes

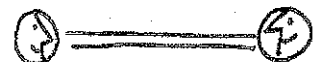
Promulgated By His Holiness, Pope Paul VI On December 7, 1965

[Did you catch that date? 1965! What a prophetic statement.]

To do this we will need a new marketing and advertising strategy.

Yes. It actually boils down to marketing and advertising the faith. We know we're not 'selling' faith. But it is about motivating people to give you their time, energy and attention to hear the Gospel and to encounter Christ. That's almost the same as trying to exchange money for a product. Think about it.

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Churches Are Conversations

Go back in time to 1999 when a great piece of business writing emerged: *The Cluetrain Manifesto* by Doc Searles and friends. It set the stage for a good chunk of business strategizing and leadership writing today. [Learn more by going to their website: <http://www.cluetrain.com/>.]

Cluetrain posed 95 theses for how to market products better. The number one insight—and one that rocked the business thinking of that time—was this: *Markets are conversations.*

Revolutionary Ideas

This was a revolutionary idea for its time because those were the days of Web 1.0. The internet was just beginning to work its way into people's everyday lives and it was basically a one-way communication or 'push' of information. Until then, customers only bought products after having a face-to-face interaction with a salesperson. If you were a good salesperson, employing honest and open tactics, then you sold a lot of products. And while there may have been conversation in the act of selling, to think of these markets as conversations with customers was an entirely foreign idea.

The idea of forming relationships with customers totally changed how business was done. Speaking with customers also made business more successful. Traditional marketing strategies began to shift... at least for the smart companies.

Global Conversations

The internet created a powerful new global conversation. People quickly discovered how to share what they learned and experienced, and as a result, they got collectively smarter. Businesses caught wind of the undercurrent conversations and they too, had to get smarter to keep up with their customers. Their top priority was to start listening to what people were saying about them and the internet gave greater access to hear honest dialogue about how customers felt about companies and their products.

Where people talk naturally in genuine, open and direct language, many businesses still can only communicate in their mission-statement-brochure sound-bites.

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It's really not any different today than it was back then. Same old tone, same old inauthentic relationship with customers. Is it any wonder that people have no respect for companies that don't speak their language? We crave the real human conversation... but only when it is a sincere, friendly voice that we encounter. How exasperated do you get when a computerized customer service voice asks you to press 1 or 2 or 3 for the right department?

If we asked the same question about the reception or connection that the general public have with our churches, would we be disappointed in the answer?

The top six theses in *Cluetrain* lay a strong foundation for all of us to build on in ministry. We need to pay attention.

1. Markets are conversations.
2. Markets consist of human beings, not demographic sectors.
3. Conversations among human beings sound human. They are conducted in a human voice.
4. Whether delivering information, opinions, perspectives, dissenting arguments, or humorous asides, the human voice is typically open, natural, uncontrived.
5. People recognize each other as such from the sound of this voice.
6. The Internet is enabling conversations among human beings that were simply not possible in the era of mass media.

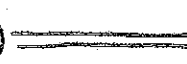
From The Cluetrain Manifesto

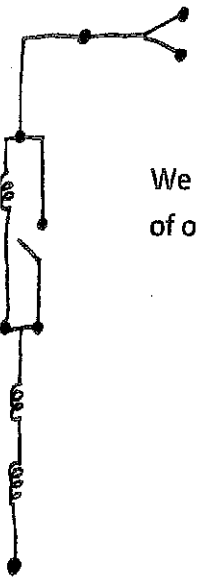
Are we listening?

Let's translate these for use in our ministry settings.

1. Churches are conversations.
2. Churches consist of human beings, not sacramental classes.
3. Conversations among human beings sound like everyday life stories.
4. The human voice is typically open, genuine and real-life as compared to the "churchy" language of faith we want and expect to hear.
5. People recognize relevant, real-life voices of people of faith and they connect to those.
6. The internet helps the Body of Christ to connect in a way that was not previously possible.

LOVE/PLANET





We have always known this. It has been part and parcel of our tradition from the early days of oral storytelling and everyday living. Look at Acts 2:42-47 for just one example.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Conversation takes the form of prayer and worship, faith-sharing and community-building, living as the Body of Christ.

And yet somewhere along the way we lost the ability to really engage the response across the board. Churches turned into one-way communication "pushes" in a lot of cases. The conversation was broken. We lost the connection.

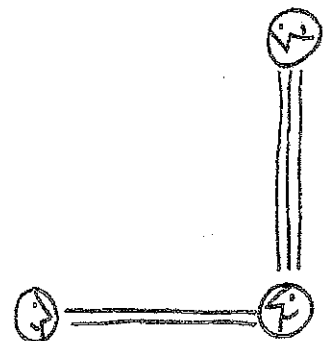
*If we want to re-engage the connection
then we have to re-establish the conversation.*

If our people are not physically present in our churches, parishes, and programs—then where can we talk to them?

On social media, where the data tells us they are.

We need to ask people what they want. A great question to start with is: *What do you struggle with?*

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If These Tools Could Talk...

Oh wait a minute... they do.

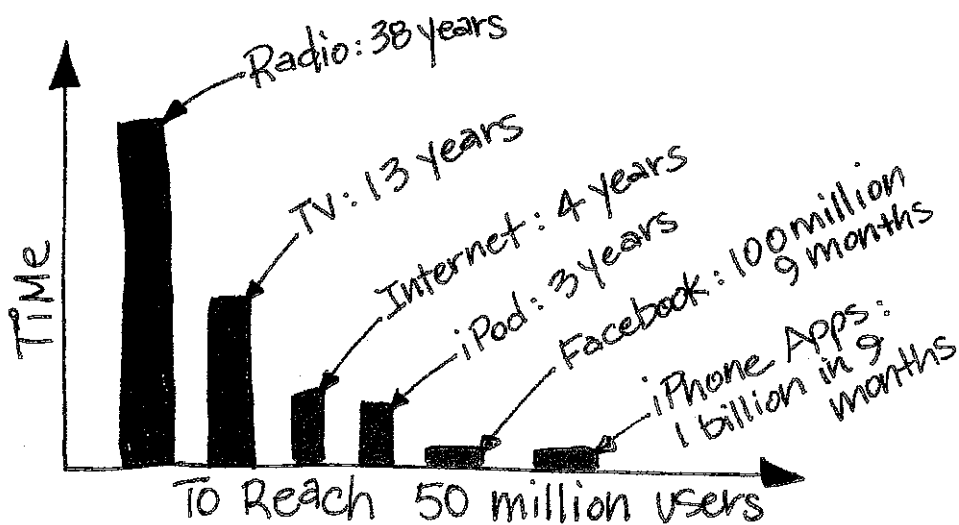
Here is a short list of the top seven types of traditional media we have used in Catholic ministry.

Traditional Media

1. TV
 2. Radio
 3. Newspaper
 4. Billboards
 5. Sunday bulletins
 6. Conferences and vendor exhibits
 7. Direct mailings
- {We can add websites, although estimates suggest that less than 40% of parishes have an actual website. Does your parish have a good one?}

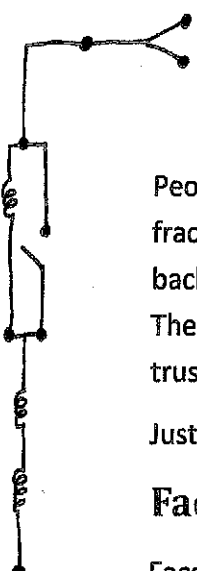
Here is the number of years it took each type of media to reach 50 million users:

- Radio: 38 years
- Television: 13 years
- Internet: 4 years
- iPod: 3 years
- Facebook: 100 million users in 9 months
- iPhone Apps: 1 billion downloads in 9 months



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① ————— ②



People have a hard time accepting that social media is real and worthwhile because it took a fraction of the time traditional mediums took to develop. We didn't have a chance to sit back and watch and learn the way we did with television, radio, or even the first websites. Therefore, most people have an inherent and reasonable skepticism and tendency to not trust social media.

Just because it happened so fast doesn't mean it's a fad.

Facebook

Facebook has now grown to over 1 billion users—150 million of those are in the US. More than 50% of users log in every day on multiple devices, i.e., desktop, laptop, smartphone, iPad, tablets.

The fastest growing age group of users is 18 to 24-year olds. But the second fastest growing age group is 55+! Couple that with the statistic that the average age of a Catholic parishioner across the US is 64 and we can conclude that many in our parishes are active on social media.

The average user is connected to 130 friends and 80 pages and groups. That means the potential reach of a single message is in the 1000s.

Facebook is a huge and vast vineyard. Send in the harvesters!

Twitter

Twitter has approximately 500 million accounts—27 million users in the US. The average age of a Twitter user is 39.

LinkedIn

There are 175 million users worldwide and approximately 43% of those are in the US, or nearly 75 million. The average age of LinkedIn user is 44. LinkedIn is very popular among business professionals and is a great resource for connecting to national Catholic ministry organizations.

Pinterest

Pinterest is an online pinboard with pictures, quotes, designs and graphics. Approaching 20 million users in 3 ½ years, it is used mostly by women but men are signing on more and more.

What is unique about Pinterest? It is feeding the visually stimulated learning styles. How could we use it for catechesis?

LENE/PLANE



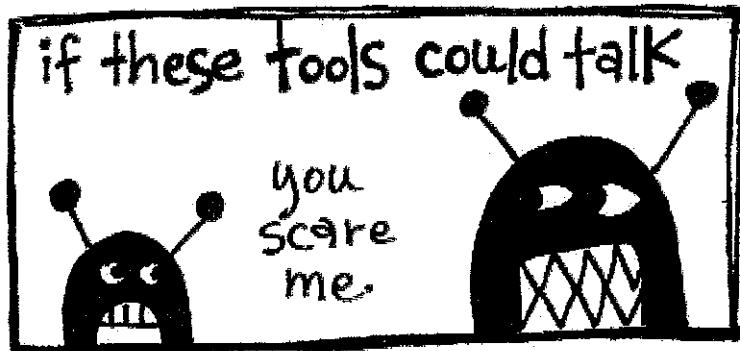
Broad Use Numbers

- 77% of people in the US have internet in their homes.
- 66% of US adults with internet use social media.
- 2 billion people worldwide are online.

These numbers are staggering. And the trend will only continue to deepen as more and more people gain access to technology and the internet. The use of these and other social media tools are changing the whole landscape of how we live/breathe/communicate. It's changing the nature of our relationships. It's changing the ways we think and learn.

Gatekeepers are no longer in control of what information is released and where it goes. We

can choose what we read, when and where we read it, and how we want to respond or not respond. More importantly, we can choose more easily what we want to ignore.



What should we do with these tools?

Use them to connect with people and begin the relationship.

On any given day, there are upwards of 5 million Google searches on the word 'God'. That is huge!

Today's Millennial generation *expects* a two-way conversation. They want a connection, not just information. They want to dialogue, to talk with someone about the meaning and purpose of their lives.

[Read the article How parish websites can better connect with Catholics: <http://www.osv.com/tabid/7621/itemid/6084/How-parish-websites-can-better-connect-with-Cathol.aspx>.]

Individually and collectively, these social media tools offer tremendous access to reach and teach people and engage them in new ways. The possibilities for evangelization are virtually unlimited. What can we do with these tools?

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