

Religious Message Overload: What are reliable Catholic resources?

Objective: We live in a world fractured by religious, political, and social disagreements. These disagreements have reached loud, angry, and disrespectful heights which are reflected in all forms of media, even those we might reach out to for religious support. How are we supposed to navigate the variety of Catholic resources and discern the truth found in them? The goal of this lesson is to come up with a plan for discerning which Catholic resources are reliable.

Song Suggestion: Here I am Lord

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Ephesians 5: 6-10

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be associated with them. For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Catechism 2496-2497

The means of social communication (especially the mass media) can give rise to a certain passivity among users, making them less than vigilant consumers of what is said or shown. Users should practice moderation and discipline in their approach to the mass media. They will want to form enlightened and correct consciences the more easily to resist unwholesome influences.

By the very nature of their profession, journalists have an obligation to serve the truth and not offend against charity in disseminating information. They should strive to respect, with equal care, the nature of the facts and the limits of critical judgment concerning individuals. They should not stoop to defamation.

Saint: Maximilian Kolbe was a “multimedia” saint. He wrote and edited magazines and newspapers in many countries, including Poland and Japan and broadcast radio sermons in Italy. He used these platforms to proclaim the Word of God and to defend the Church and Her mission.

Vignette:

While looking at Facebook one evening, Joe read about a disagreement within the Catholic Church regarding the Latin Mass. He had not heard of such as issue and did not know what to think about it, so he spent some time Googling it. He looked at several blogs, some mainstream articles, the Vatican’s website, and opinion pieces in the National Catholic Reporter and the National Catholic Register. By the time he finished, he was tired, angry, confused, and more unsure than when he began. He made a note for himself to see what the Catechism might say about what he read.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Describe a time when you were overwhelmed by the breadth of resources while trying to learn something about the Catholic Church.

When was the last time you read the Catechism of the Catholic Church? Have you ever looked at the Compendium of the Catechism or been involved in a study of the Catechism? What did you learn?

How often do your Catholic resources cite Scripture? The Catechism? The writings of saints or papal encyclicals?

Action Plan:

Pray for the grace to understand and interpret what we consume.

As a small group, share books/authors/publishers/podcasts that specifically cite Catholic doctrine, Holy Scripture, and saints.

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